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PEACE: WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

Participation of women in political life and decision-making

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

In 1990, the Commission on the Status of Women decided to include "Women in international decision-making" on the agenda of its thirty-ninth session in 1995 as the priority theme under the rubric "Peace". The present report, the fifth in the framework of considerations by the Commission of the issue of the participation of women in political life and decision-making, focuses on the participation of women in peace and security areas at the national and international levels, including the United Nations peace and security operations. It provides an analysis of new data on the participation of women in parliaments and Governments world wide, with special emphasis on peace and security areas, and in the United Nations system, including peace and security operations. It states the hypothesis that women's participation brought new elements, values and perspectives to those operations. It also presents the argument that if women were involved on an equal basis in political life, including decision-making, at the national and international levels, they would make a qualitative difference, in terms of content and style, to the benefit of society and the achievement of the goal of peace.

* E/CN.6/1995/1.

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INTRODUCTION

1. In 1990, the Commission on the Status of Women decided to include "Women in international decision-making" on the agenda of its thirty-ninth session in 1995 as the priority theme under the rubric "Peace".

2. The present report, the fifth in a series of reports to the Commission on the issue of the participation of women in political life and decision-making, focuses on the participation of women in peace and security areas at the national and international levels, including the United Nations peace and security operations.

3. In order to assist with the preparation of the report, an expert group meeting on gender and the Agenda for Peace was convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, in New York, from 5 to 9 December 1994. The meeting focused on the participation of women in the implementation of the agenda for peace and worked out recommendations aimed at increased participation of women in the United Nations peace and security operations and incorporation of women's perspectives in all peace-related activities. Particularly relevant recommendations of the meeting are included in the report.

I. PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL DECISION-MAKING: AN ANALYSIS

4. One of the most significant and prevailing gaps between de jure and de facto equality is the low participation of women in politics and decision-making. Despite the long existence of international norms and electoral rights at the national level which allow women to vote and to hold office on equal terms with men, the proportion of women in decision-making bodies remains low.

5. The lack of equal participation of women in political decision-making, deprives women of the enjoyment of important rights and responsibilities as citizens. Women's interests and perspectives cannot be represented and protected at the policy-making levels. Women cannot influence key decisions, whether in terms of national budgets, major reforms or socio-economic models to be chosen, all of which have consequences for the society as a whole and for future generations. The decision-making process is deprived of women's skills and distinctive perspectives.

6. Existing evidence indicates that in the areas of peace, security, conflict resolution and international peace negotiations, the participation of women in general and in decision-making in particular is lower than in any other area. These areas, however, are critical for the basic choices which humankind makes concerning war or peace; public policy and spending on military or civilian purposes; the proliferation of weapons through the arms trade; or disarmament and reconversion of military resources for peaceful purposes.

A. Women in national decision-making

7. In history there have been only 23 female heads of State or government, democratically elected (table 1). All of them held office after the Second World War and most, in the past 10 years.

Table 1. Percentage of women in government decision-making positions, all sectors, by level and region, 1987 and 1994

Region	1987			1994		
	Ministerial	Sub-ministerial	Total	Ministerial	Sub-ministerial	Total
Africa	2.9	5.0	4.0	5.4	6.8	6.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	3.1	8.2	7.3	7.5	11.4	10.4
Western Europe and others	7.1	7.8	9.6	15.2	12.3	13.0
Asia and Pacific	1.8	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.9
Eastern Europe	3.0	3.9	3.5	2.6	6.1	5.0
World	3.4	5.7	5.4	6.2	7.1	6.8

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women, from World Government Directory, 1994 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994)

8. According to the latest data compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at 30 June 1994, the average percentage of women in parliaments was 10.51 per cent, with 10.8 per cent on average in a single, or lower, chamber and 8.6 per cent in other chambers. In only 21 out of 178 national parliaments did women constitute 20-39.4 per cent of the membership. Only in Norway and Finland did the proportion rise above 39 per cent. There is no information on the distribution of women among the parliamentary committees and commissions, but there is an indication that, as in Governments, most of women concentrate in the committees dealing with social issues, education, labour or health, while a lower proportion of women is found in the committees concerned with foreign affairs, military and the interior.

9. Government decision-making takes place ultimately at the ministerial level, where decisions are formally taken by the members of cabinet, and at sub-ministerial levels, where most of decisions are prepared and where key decision makers are located. The proportion of women in these positions in 1987

and 1994 is shown in table 1. In 1994, 62 countries had no women ministers at the cabinet level.

10. In political ministries, such as foreign affairs, interior, and defence, women constituted an even lower proportion, as can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Percentage of women in decision-making positions in political ministries, a/ by level and region, 1987 and 1994

Region	1987			1994		
	Ministerial	Sub-ministerial	Total	Ministerial	Sub-ministerial	Total
Africa	1.3	4.5	2.0	3.6	4.1	4.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	3.4	8.6	5.0	3.4	12.1	10.4
Western Europe and others	4.1	9.2	6.1	7.5	10.6	9.5
Asia and the Pacific	0.2	1.4	1.0	2.8	2.5	3.0
Eastern Europe	2.9	2.1	2.4	0.0	0.5	0.5
World	2.0	5.2	3.1	3.6	5.5	5.3
Nordic	11.7	10.1	11.8	27.3	12.6	19.2
Caribbean	10.0	23.6	11.5	3.3	23.4	18.9
East and South-east Asia	0.0	1.4	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.3

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women, from World Government Directory, 1994 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994).

a/ Foreign affairs, defence, interior.

11. There are two paths to power and political decision-making: through the political process itself and through the civil service. The first leads mainly to participation in parliaments and other elected bodies, in positions as elected head of State or Government, and to nominations to the position of cabinet minister or other top political function. The second path leads to high positions within the administration, up to sub-ministerial levels. The positions are, in principle, non-political, although they are, in practice, often politically influenced, especially at the top. The professional career path appears to be most typical at the decision-making level in political areas. Most of high-level functionaries in foreign affairs, defence and the interior arrive at these positions through long-term career development, in the foreign service, military, security or the police. They also constitute the main

recruitment pool from which international peace negotiators, peace keepers, security and disarmament experts are drawn. Since women are a minority in the foreign services of most countries and are highly underrepresented in the areas of security, the military and the police, they are practically excluded from decision-making or prevented from reaching what has been termed a "critical mass" where one sex is no longer in a significant minority and can function naturally in these areas, both at the national and international levels.

B. Women in the United Nations

12. The United Nations is similar in structure to national mechanisms of power and decision-making. It consists of parliament-like organs to which representatives are designated by their respective countries; and it has an international civil service, which has some of the characteristics of a national bureaucracy, including its organizing principles related to recruitment, promotion and career development.

13. Throughout its 50 years of history, the vast majority of the delegates selected by their national Governments to represent their countries at United Nations bodies have been male. Very few women have been designated to participate, especially at the decision-making level and in political areas. For example, of the 49 presidents of the General Assembly, elected since 1945, only two were women, Ms. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit of India in 1953 (eighth session) and Ms. Angie Brooks of Liberia in 1969 (twenty-fourth session). Since its establishment in 1945, the International Court of Justice has had no women judges. Among the numerous United Nations conferences held since 1945 and headed by appointed senior officials of the United Nations, only six were headed by women, and four of those were world conferences on women.

14. Of the 89 executive heads of various organizations of the United Nations system elected or appointed by member States, there have been no women. However, four women have been confirmed by the General Assembly as heads of major United Nations programmes, including the High Commissioner for Refugees (Ms. Sadako Ogata, of Japan), the Executive Director of the UN/FAO World Food Programme (Ms. Catherine Bertini, of the United States), the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (Ms. Elizabeth Dowdswell, of Canada) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (Dr. Nafis Sadik, of Pakistan).

15. In the United Nations Secretariat, women have always constituted a minority of the professional staff. Following the conclusions of the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, the General Assembly set a target of 30 per cent women among the professional staff in the Secretariat by 1990. This target was met in 1991 and subsequently revised to 35 per cent by the year 1995, with a target of 25 per cent set for the upper, middle, and senior management levels. The percentage of women professionals in the United Nations Secretariat by level, in the period 1949-1993 is reflected in table 3 below.

16. The representation of women professionals in the United Nations Secretariat, in selected agencies and in political areas are presented in tables 3, 4 and 5 below.

Table 3. Percentage of women professionals in the United Nations Secretariat, by level, 1949-1993

Year	D-2 and above	D-1 and P-5	P-4 and P-3	P-2 and P-1	All professionals
1949	2.00	3.36	19.43	42.88	23.42
1955	0.00	2.15	13.26	30.19	16.76
1960	1.82	3.04	17.93	31.71	18.73
1965	0.00	4.26	20.10	24.65	17.84
1970	5.10	5.90	18.79	36.12	20.18
1975	2.88	7.28	19.38	33.83	19.40
1980	4.72	8.49	24.47	39.08	22.40
1985	4.73	10.60	28.60	40.33	25.36
1990	8.13	15.64	33.79	43.78	29.98
1993	12.75	18.69	33.87	47.46	31.19

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women, compiled from reports of the Secretary-General.

Table 4. Gender distribution of professional staff in the political areas of the United Nations Secretariat, by department or office and by grade, as of 30 June 1994

Department/Office	USG F	USG M	ASG F	ASG M	D-2 F	D-2 M	Percentage of women at D-2 and above	Total F	Total M	Percentage of women professionals
Dept. of Peace-keeping Operations	0	1	0	2	1	3	14.3	11	22	33.3
Dept. of Political Affairs	0	1	1	0	1	9	16.7	54	82	39.7
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	0	1	0	3	1	1	16.7	11	16	40.7
Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs	0	1	0	0	0	3	0.0	8	30	21.1

Source: "Human resources management: composition of the Secretariat" (A/49/527).

Note: F Female
M Male

Table 5. Percentage of staff members in selected United Nations agencies and of total staff who are women at the professional level or at the D-2 level or above, 1975-1994

Agency	Professional staff 1975	1979	1986	1992	1994	Staff at D-2 level or above 1975	1979	1986	1992
UNHCR	14.1	15.0	23.4	32.0	32.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7
UNRWA	7.4	2.7	..	15.6	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
IAEA	11.9	11.1	11.6	14.2	14.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total staff	15.8	17.2	22.8	24.9	28.0	1.6	2.6	3.6	6.7

Source: "Personnel questions: composition of the Secretariat" from 1976, 1980, 1987 and 1993 (A/31/154, A/35/528, A/42/636, A/48/559); 1994 data from "Human resources management" (A/49/527).

C. Women in multilateral diplomacy

17. The data on the participation of women in diplomacy are fragmented and incomplete; no world-wide survey has been carried out in order to assess the current situation. Only a few countries reported on women in diplomacy in the 1994 review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. However, they emphasized that women's participation in the foreign service and diplomacy did not match their substantive contributions to peace at the non-governmental level. The number of women ambassadors remained very low. Only a few women diplomats have been involved in peace or disarmament negotiations world wide. Even in the Scandinavian countries, where the status of women is more advanced, the participation of women in diplomacy remains relatively low, especially in political areas.

18. Women continue to be largely absent in the highest ranks of the permanent missions to the United Nations in New York. In 1989, in the permanent missions to the United Nations women constituted 20 per cent of the diplomatic personnel, and 57 delegations had no women on their diplomatic staff. As of January 1994, only seven missions out of 187 were headed by women. Among the 240 delegates holding ambassadorial rank, only 11 were women. Of the total diplomatic staff of missions, women represented only 22 per cent. In the permanent missions of 67 member States, there were no women at all. The figures reflect negligible increase since 1949, when women at the diplomatic level in permanent missions to the United Nations constituted 16 per cent of the total.

19. Women continue to be underrepresented in such areas of multilateral diplomacy as disarmament, security, peace negotiations and conflict resolution, which are crucial for the preservation of peace and stability as compared to other fields of multilateral diplomacy - i.e., social or cultural fields.

D. Women in national military and police forces

20. The participation of women in military service has been considered a controversial issue. Many men and women think that it is a concern primarily of men.

21. By being outside of the military, women cannot be involved in decision-making regarding the use of military forces, changes in military institutions and overall control over its performance. Any military normally accounts for a large proportion of public expenditure, constitutes an important employer and provides career opportunities and training which can lead to non-military careers.

22. The accessibility of the military service to women has been rarely reported by the States parties to CEDAW. Some countries - for example, Australia, Austria, Germany, New Zealand and Thailand - have certain reservations to various provisions of the Convention, including articles 7 and 8 which refer to the participation of women in the military service. The largest amount of data exists on the members States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union. Half of these countries have legislation and policies excluding women from combat, although women's service in other areas of

the military has been encouraged with equal pay, training and discipline as those of men. Most rules permit pregnant women to remain in the service and provide parental leave, but many limit the rank that women can achieve.

23. In only a few countries are combat positions fully open to women. They include Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Venezuela and Zambia. But even in those armies, a majority of women are not in combat units. In most countries, women in the military remain continue to be represented mainly in the medical, administrative, legal, communication, logistics, transportation and teaching branches. According to the national reports for the second review and appraisal of the Nairobi Strategies, the participation of women in the armed forces, as officers and even at the highest posts, is on the increase, reaching around 12 per cent in a few countries, including a few countries with women in the top ranks. The same tendency was noted with regard to women cadets and graduates of military academies.

24. Analyses of national reports submitted by the 19 countries addressing this subject in the review and appraisal suggested that, in most of the 19 countries, the participation of women in the police force, both in terms of numbers and rank, was on the increase. Most of the increase took place in the past five years. The same is true for female cadets and trainees, who in 1993 reached 33 per cent of the total in one country. In one country the percentage of female police chiefs was 13 per cent. However, most women in the police force were said to have been assigned to areas dealing with violence against women, including rape, and to female prisons and women prisoners, with limited possibilities for promotion and career development.

E. Women in peace-keeping

25. The issue of the participation of women in the military and police takes on particular significance in the United Nations peace and security operations, the main purpose of which is to avoid or defuse conflict and to work out peaceful solutions. The absence of women among the military personnel in the United Nations peace-keeping forces reflects the absence of women in the military forces of those countries which provide troops to United Nations peace-keeping operations. Women, however, have been active, although highly underrepresented, participants in peace-keeping operations in civilian roles, performing a variety of functions as medical and administrative personnel, in supply and logistics, in supervising elections and as negotiators and trainers for national reconciliation and democracy-building.

26. From the establishment of the United Nations through 1993 there were 36 peace and security operations, 20 of which took place after 1986. Almost all early peace-keeping operations, except for one in the Congo from 1960 to 1964, were exclusively military in orientation. In the period 1957-1989, there were only 20 women in a total of approximately 10,000 military personnel. This was mainly the result of the exclusion of women from national military forces in the majority of countries and an even greater prohibition of women in combat roles. As a result, fewer women were included in the national military contingents, and those women who were included were mainly in the medical field. Despite an expansion in the number of peace-keeping operations to 17 in 1993 and the

presence of women as officers in combat units, of four countries, the percentage of women in military and police peace-keeping missions remained very low, around 2 per cent. The distribution of female personnel among various missions is shown in tables 6 and 7.

27. During the period 1945-1988, the participation of women in the civilian components of the peace-keeping operations ranged from 5.3 per cent to 23 per cent, with the highest participation in the 1961 Congo operation. With their roles expanded beyond strictly military functions to supervision of elections, protection of human rights, police work, advisory and humanitarian assistance, and promotion of national reconciliation and democracy, more women have participated. For example, in 1989 the percentage of women in the Professional category (P-1 to P-4) of the peace-keeping operations was 38.6 per cent, in comparison with 35 per cent in the Secretariat, and at the P-5 level, 18 per cent and 13.5 per cent, respectively. This relatively high percentage resulted from the greater participation of women in UNTAG (Namibia) due to the creation of a more non-discriminatory and transparent selection process by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Women constituted 40 per cent of Professional staff and were represented at the senior level in UNTAG. Although the top posts were held by men, there were 5 women at the Assistant Director (D-1, D-2) level, and 3 out of 10 regional directors were women.

28. The positive experience of Namibia has not, however, been replicated in any other peace-keeping operation. Another large operation, in Cambodia (UNAMIC and UNTAC, 1991-1993), was particularly disappointing. Women held no decision-making posts even though many female civilians were involved. All 7 D-2 director's posts and the 13 regional director's posts (P-5 to D-1) were occupied by men.

29. In 1993, women constituted 31.8 per cent of the civilian staff (excluding locally recruited staff) serving in 11 out of 19 peace and security missions. The 12 missions with the greatest participation of women were established after 1990. However, the majority of the women in those missions were in clerical grades.

30. Throughout the history of peace-keeping there have been only two women at the top decision-making level: Ms. Margaret Anstee, Special Representative in Angola (UNAVEM) and Ms. Angela King, the Chief of Mission in South Africa and then Deputy Special Representative. Ms. Anstee was the only woman among 25 Special Representatives appointed by the Secretary-General since 1945. Ms. King was a head of UNOMSA in its earliest phase, when it was small and included 50 per cent women. With the expansion of the mission before the elections and the arrival of a new male head of mission and of many male monitors selected by Governments, the participation of women dropped dramatically.

Table 6. International United Nations civilian staff in peace-keeping and peacemaking missions, by category and mission, December 1993

		All categories		P5-USG		P1-P4		GS1-GS7		FS1-FS7	
Mission	Country	Total	Percentage female	Total	Percentage female	Total	Percentage female	Total	Percentage female	Total	Percentage female
UNOSOM II	Somalia	373	27	18	0	108	15.7	150	54	97	3.1
UNTAC	Cambodia	338	39.9	6	0	45	15.6	209	57.9	78	9
UNPROFOR	Yugoslavia	314	41.4	20	15	83	18.1	159	68.6	52	5.8
ONUMOZ	Mozambique	167	35.5	10	10	41	34.1	68	58.8	49	8.2
UNIFIL	Lebanon	103	21.6	3	0	15	6.7	44	70.6	101	3
UNFICYP	Cyprus	31	22.6	4	0	2	50	6	66.7	19	10.6
UNDOF	Golan Heights	30	6.7	2	0	0	0	0	0	28	7.1
ONUSAL	El Salvador	140	42.1	17	5.9	82	48.8	26	65.4	16	6.3
UNIKOM	Kuwait/Iraq	78	17.9	4	25	5	0	26	46.2	43	2.3
MINURSO	Western Sahara	100	25	5	0	23	26.1	47	40.4	27	0
UNAVEM II	Angola	50	28	5	0	7	14.3	22	59.1	16	0
UNAMIR	Rwanda	48	29.2	3	0	4	25	21	61.9	20	0
UNTSO	Jerusalem	141	13.5	3	0	0	0	16	81.3	122	4.9
UNOMIL	Liberia	22	31.8	0	0	2	0	11	54.5	9	11.1
MICIVIH	Haiti			0		0		0		0	
UNMOGIP	India/ Pakistan	24	12.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	23	13
UNOMIG	Georgia	4	25	1		0	0	1	0	2	50

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women, from information provided by the Field Operations Division.

Table 7. Current personnel contributed by Member States to United Nations peace-keeping missions, by mission, 1993

		All personnel		Military a/		Civilian police		Military observers	
Mission	Country	Total	Percentage female	Total	Percentage female	Total	Percentage female	Total	Percentage female
UNOSOM II	Somalia	29 703	2.1	29 703	2.1	0	na		
UNTAC b/	Cambodia	19 232	na	15 684	na	3 548	0.2	486	na
UNPROFOR	Yugoslavia	24 853	1.6	24 200	1.6	653	2.1	592	0
ONUMOZ	Mozambique	6 501	0.1	6 501	0.1	0	na	302	0
UNIFIL	Lebanon	5 247	2.3	5 247	2.3	0	na		
UNFICYP	Cyprus	1 237	1.1	1 201	0.7	36	16.7	12	0
UNDOF	Golan Heights	1 103	4.0	1 103	4.0	0	na		
ONUSAL c/	El Salvador	706	0.3	161	0.6	545	0.2	161	0.6
UNIKOM	Kuwait/Iraq	369	1.9	369	1.9	0	na	254	0
MINURSO d/	Western Sahara	350	9.4	324	10.2	26	0	233	3
UNAVEM II	Angola	316	1.0	256	0	60	5	256	0
UNAMIR	Rwanda	512	0	510	0	2	0	66	0
UNTSO	Jerusalem	220	0	220	0	0	na	220	0
UNOMIL	Liberia	246	0	246	0	0		181	0
MICIVIH	Haiti	113	2.7	62	0	51	5.9		
UNMOGIP	India/ Pakistan	38	0	38	0	0		38	0
UNOMIG	Georgia	12	0	12	0	0		12	0

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women, from information provided by the Field Operations Division.

a/ Including all military personnel (e.g., officers, enlisted military observers), excluding civilian police.

b/ Figures reflect staffing levels at second quarter, 1993.

c/ Figures reflect deployment of personnel during the entire period of 1993.

d/ Military figures based on field communiqué and lengths of rotations among Member State contributors.

31. National reports in the second review and appraisal provided information on national contingents - in particular, in "Operation Desert Storm" in Kuwait in 1990-1991 - where women represented 7 per cent of the military forces. They worked in all locations, including undeveloped desert areas, as clerks, mechanics, health care providers, fuel handlers, intelligence analysts, helicopter pilots, military police. They were banned from combat but received all relevant allowances and medals. Perceptions of women's performance were highly positive. Women endured harsh conditions similar to those of men. Their physical strength was not an issue. Gender was not a deterrent to a unit's cohesion, and mixed units were sometimes judged to have performed better than others.

32. Women, whether military, police, or civilian, have participated at all levels of the operations and have proved to be efficient, dedicated and ready to endure hardship and undertake any assignment. However, women do not receive equal treatment with men in recruitment to peace and security operations, placement, assignment of responsibilities and full utilization of their skills. With increased civilian and political functions in these operations, women's almost complete exclusion from national military contingents is no longer an excuse for their relatively low representation.

II. CONTRIBUTIONS BY, OBSTACLES AND INCENTIVES TO WOMEN IN PEACE AND SECURITY

33. Small-group research on task-oriented bodies suggests that, in order to bring substantive difference into decision-making in terms of content and priorities, style, working climate, and group dynamics, a "critical mass" must be reached, involving at least 30-35 per cent of any minority group. Women have achieved this critical mass at the national decision-making level in only a few countries. Experience shows that when women in those countries acted in solidarity they were able to have a visible impact on political decisions and political culture. Women's different political style has also been noted. Whenever women have joined decision-making bodies in sufficient numbers, they have created a more collaborative atmosphere, characterized by mutual respect, independent of prevailing political differences, and sought consensus. They were focused more on solving than discussing problems. All of those characteristics would be particularly beneficial if applied to peace and security matters, conflict prevention and resolution, and peace-building.

34. While information on women's influence at the top decision-making level is naturally limited to those few countries that achieved "critical mass", there is increasing evidence that the attitudes of women politicians, and in particular women's groups at the grass-roots level, are different from those of men to many world problems, including peace and security.

35. According to public opinion polls, surveys and other sources of information in North America and Western Europe, women are less militaristic, more concerned with the preservation of peace and more opposed to any form of increased militarization or nuclear energy than men. The differences between the attitudes of men and women towards national policy issues, including peace and security issues, have been observed in a number of countries. For example,

studies in the United States have shown that women office holders have different attitudes to war and peace, nuclear energy, capital punishment and reproductive rights. Analyses of voting patterns in the United States House of Representatives during 1969-1983 confirmed these differences. Women political leaders were more opposed to use of military force and more supportive of international organizations.

36. For example, in the second review and appraisal, the United States national report confirmed the existence of a gender gap in men's and women's attitudes to war and peace, and substantial differences were reflected by public opinion polls in relation to defence spending, social programmes and funding priorities.

37. In some developing countries women have succeeded in placing issues of their concern on the public agenda. Women in India and Kenya have greatly changed public attitudes and policies towards environmental issues. Women in Mexico and Brazil have changed both attitudes and legislation related to rape and domestic violence, making them serious criminal offences. Women in South Africa have proposed gender-sensitive and balanced legislation.

38. With regard to United Nations evidence on peace and security operations, an internal review by male and female participants in recent peace and security operations of the United Nations concluded that the participation of women was a catalyst for a number of new attitudes and initiatives. For example:

(a) When there was a critical mass of women in the peace and security operation, women in the host country also tended to mobilize themselves;

(b) Such issues as the need for a code of conduct for the participants in peace and security operations were placed on the agenda;

(c) The women were perceived as diffusers of tension, as compassionate, unwilling to apply force, providing an element of reconciliation; better prepared to listen and to learn from the situation at hand; reflecting the image of stability and moral authority which fostered the peace process. Their presence seemed to reinforce a commitment to the principle that United Nations peace-keepers were not armed and could only use their weapons in self-defence;

(d) The women demonstrated an ability to gain the confidence and trust of local people;

(e) The women were perceived as less threatening negotiators; active in proposing solutions; more action-oriented and more willing to undertake "unorthodox" actions such as participating in community meetings in polarized communities undergoing conflict, joining in prayers or songs in order to achieve reconciliation;

(f) The women reached groups that men might have found difficult to reach and participated in community projects such as voter education;

(g) The women helped to dismiss traditional views and images of women;

(h) The women were available for deployment, not restrained because of danger, and were willing to accept the challenges of working in the field. They worked effectively with both the military and the police. They considered their field experience stimulating, since they were often given greater job responsibilities than at headquarters;

(i) Even in countries that were portrayed as traditional and "culturally sensitive" to the presence of women, the women proved to be effective.

39. In addition to the normal obstacles faced by women in obtaining decision-making positions, which have been detailed in previous reports, specific obstacles were encountered by women with regard to peace and security operations. The first is related to recruitment, placement and the overall situation of women in the United Nations system. The second is related to participation in the mission. The following obstacles were identified:

(a) The participation of women, like that of men, to these missions did not lead to any formal recognition or promotion upon return to Headquarters. In some cases, participation in the missions turned out to be counter-productive in terms of their career development and promotion. Some participants were not able to return to their original posts;

(b) The criteria of recruitment for missions and procedures for applying are neither transparent nor sufficiently publicized. The positive experience of Namibia was not used as a model in terms of recruiting more women in the United Nations system for mission assignment;

(c) Although a lack of exit interviews to record the experience of mission participants relates to both men and women, it affects women particularly because of their position as "newcomers" and a "minority" on the missions and the fact that women’s particular contribution is not documented;

(d) The incorrect perception that women required greater security, were weak and vulnerable or unable to tolerate hardship may have limited the scope of their assignments and often their involvement in some missions.

40. Factors conducive to the participation of women in peace and security operations included the commitment of the leadership of the mission; respect for the United Nations principles, including gender balance and equal opportunities of career development and employment throughout the process of planning the mission, its conduct and assessment; transparency in recruitment, placement and evaluation of staff involved in the mission; interdependency between the conduct during the mission and career development prospects; active attempts to recruit qualified women for mission service within the United Nations system and to issue policy directives encouraging Governments to submit female candidates; and inclusion of a gender component to the training of leadership and national contingents.

41. It should be noted that an increase in women in senior decision-making levels brings as a consequence a greater possibility for career advancement for women. In the four United Nations agencies headed by women executives, there

has been a general increase in the proportion of women professionals, overall and, for most, at both the middle and senior management levels.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND SECURITY AREAS

42. In fulfilment of the target for improving the situation of women in the United Nations, efforts should be made to increase the proportion of women in peace and security areas, thus:

(a) All lists of candidates for any post be comprised of both men and women;

(b) Programme managers should request rosters of qualified women as part of every personnel search, which could be extended to member States, other intergovernmental organizations, women's groups of all kinds and professional associations.

43. In order to make effective use of women's perspectives in all United Nations peace-related activities

(a) Efforts should be made to increase the proportion of women in all peace-keeping, peacemaking, peace-building, preventive diplomacy, and preventive activities including fact-finding and observer missions and in all stages of peace negotiations, aiming at a target of at least 40 per cent;

(b) All-female fact-finding and assistance teams should be put together when the situation can best be handled by women, such as instances in which there are cultural constraints or there is a need to deal with problems related to violence against women, especially rape;

(c) In conformity with already agreed targets, States should increase the percentage of women participating in all United Nations forums and activities concerned with peace and security.

44. With a view to finding and employing alternatives to force and military action, a number of initiatives could be taken:

(a) Weapons development, production, deployment and sales should be registered with a view to their elimination and as a first step, the United Nations Register of Arms Transfers could be expanded to include production, be made obligatory and include all types of weapons;

(b) National and local Governments could impose regulations on hand guns and personal weapons;

(c) Parents, teachers, child advocacy groups and similar organizations could undertake a public education campaign to call attention to the connection between violent play, toy weapons and the culture of violence;

(d) Given that United Nations Volunteers and volunteers from non-governmental organizations world wide have made significant contributions to the establishment of peace, especially at the community level and in situations in which men could not have success - e.g., counselling rape victims, women's increased participation in recognized volunteer roles should be encouraged;

(e) Gender-sensitive traditional practices of conflict resolution and reconciliation such as those cited in the Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace could be added to the repertoire of peacemaking procedures available to the United Nations;

(f) Recognition and support should be given to indigenous women's initiatives and creative local actions for peace, which are undertaken at great risk and in areas of extremely violent conflict.

45. In order to improve the capacity of the United Nations to promote peace and security in a gender-sensitive way, including elimination of sexual discrimination, harassment and abuse, a number of measures merit consideration and action:

(a) Rape in the conduct of war should be defined as a serious war crime comparable to terrorism or torture and thus added to Article 75 of the Fourth Geneva Protocol;

(b) Gender-sensitivity training should be compulsory for all personnel (male and female) in peace and security-related activities, as a primary responsibility of troop-contributing countries but be re-enforced and augmented by the United Nations for all peace-keeping operations;

(c) Compliance with policies relating to non-discrimination, as set out in the Charter, staff rules and regulations and in policies of the Secretary-General, should be considered in all job performance reviews and should have appropriate weight in the determination of contractual status and promotion throughout the United Nations system;

(d) Research could be conducted by the United Nations, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and peace research institutes, on the extent, nature and effectiveness of women's participation in international, national and local peace processes and movements; traditional mechanisms for the containment of violence and resolution of conflict, and grass-roots concepts of peace and security.

Notes

1/ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex, para. 7.

2/ Ibid., para. 8.
