



INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN

TOWARD A MORE FEMINIST UNITED NATIONS

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This paper articulates a vision for a more feminist UN and recommends both transformative and practical steps that can be taken by a number of actors, including the next Secretary-General, to achieve it.

The principles and recommendations outlined here have been offered by leading, feminist thinkers in civil society, philanthropy, academia, as well as current and former UN staff. They were collected and collated by Sarah Gammage, Lyric Thompson and Rachel Clement of the International Center for Research on Women. The following recommendations, which are directed to various levels at which reform is urgently needed, are the result of this group's brainstorming and represent a starting point that would, if implemented, begin to correct this imbalance and to foster a more feminist United Nations.



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INTRODUCTION

Founded at the end of the Second World War with the explicit aim of maintaining world peace and international security and upholding respect for human rights, the preamble of the United Nations Charter explicitly affirms a “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.”

Central to the human rights of all individuals, it is imperative that the UN system, its actors, and policies reflect and embrace gender equality as a fundamental human right. This commitment goes beyond language in critical cornerstone documents and into actionable deeds that embrace gender equality and the human rights of women and girls to ensure more equal representation of and by men, women, and people of all genders throughout the system itself and in the policies and practices that it upholds. This document describes concrete steps that could be taken to promote women’s rights, including marginalized women such as stateless, indigenous or disabled women, and to ensure greater gender equality at the United Nations, both in its internal operations and in fulfilling its mission to promote human rights, peace and sustainable development globally.

The UN has been a crucial site for negotiation of visionary and rights-based global normative agreements that have fueled groundbreaking changes in countries worldwide, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. One could argue that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the process that produced this remarkable agreement suggest that the UN system has made space for the voices of “nations large and small,” as mandated by the UN charter, and that a new chapter in the evolution of multilateral governance is possible. Women and girls, and other traditionally marginalized groups such as indigenous persons or the disabled, are better represented in the Global Goals and their targets than at any other time in the history of the UN.

Yet the institution that has catalyzed and facilitated these breakthrough processes to secure visionary commitments to gender equality has consistently failed to implement these commitments in its internal policies and practices, as well as in the programs that it advocates for and supports.

The occasion of selecting the 9th Secretary-General has been, for the first time, increasingly and intentionally more transparent. A slate of candidates held public, televised debates to defend their platforms for leadership. Additionally, there has been unprecedented public demand for not only a female, but for a female, feminist leader. The outcry has caused many candidates to outline their own beliefs and propose strategies to recognize, protect and promote women’s rights and voice as a key strategy in the larger goal of transforming all social relations that exploit, oppress or marginalize any set of people.

Given this backdrop, the global community is at a potentially critical turning point in the history of the United Nations. In the selection of new leadership, and the crafting of that new leadership’s agenda, there is great opportunity to conduct a feminist analysis of existing internal and external practices and to enshrine a greater degree of accountability to gender equality globally. To fulfill the UN’s human rights mandate, there is an increasingly urgent need to embrace human rights completely, and to ensure a plurality of voices in its operations and functions. The time is right and the critical conditions are in place for the realization of gender equality.

Despite this great opportunity, the race to the UN’s top post looks increasingly likely to be plagued by politics-as-usual. When the UN was created, global peace and security were the main goals, and it is important to note that the original and lasting structure of the institution remains influenced by its military beginnings. Gender discrimination is one of the most pervasive forms of exploitation and subjugation in the world, and the UN is not immune to reinforcing deeply-entrenched social norms which prioritize men and traditionally male attributes in leadership. Many insiders are citing unwritten rules regarding hiring, even for this

top position, based on quid-pro-quo politics, gender discrimination at all levels, and patriarchal processes that are making a female SG look unlikely, and a feminist UN seem all but impossible. Recent straw polls have shown that, despite an early strong showing of female candidates, women are the first to be voted out. This is in-line with the general hiring and promotion process across the UN, where few females are represented in high-level positions.

The world has changed profoundly since the UN was created in 1945 and since some of the earlier commitments to women's rights were agreed. True multilateralism has to include actors that do not fit traditional notions of the state or Member State of the UN, and to recognize the rights of civil society and indigenous nations to shape the discourse about peace and international collaboration. True multilateralism would also recognize the imbalance in powers and would provide an opportunity for the millions of indigenous peoples, and those oppressed by their governments, as well as the stateless, to engage in organized discourse with their governments and with the UN system itself.

There is a very real need for a shift in power away from Northern, and traditionally maledominated, Member States and voices toward a more feminist¹ United Nations. Since the Kofi Annan era of UN reform the three core mandates of the system – 1) human security; 2) human development; and 3) human rights – are recognized as interdependent and indivisible. All entities in the UN system are accountable for promoting the aims and goals of all three global agendas. Increasingly, there is a need for an intersectoral approach that goes beyond the current silos of development, peacekeeping, and rights, and breaks down the monopoly of particular agencies and Member States and of the Security Council, on actions and operations. With more stateless people now than after World War II, a meaningful improvement to the system would require not only moving beyond silos but moving beyond state-level representation and engagement—a la “we the peoples.”

¹ A note on definitions: By feminist we do not just mean women, or a pro-women agenda, but a pro-women agenda that seeks to transform power relations in a way that lifts up all people.

Without intentional reform, the entire UN system risks failing in its mission and reinforcing entrenched inequalities that will destabilize social and economic development, perpetuate ecological imbalance and continue the economic impoverishment of millions, undermining the fulfillment of universal human rights. The UN also risks its own irrelevance and complicity in further exacerbating power asymmetries.

The following recommendations, which are directed to various levels at which reform is urgently needed, would, if implemented, begin to correct this imbalance and to foster a more feminist United Nations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Level I: Secretary-General, UN Leadership and Staffing

The UN remains a mainly Northern- and male dominated and directed institution. The gross inequality throughout its agencies and across duty stations and levels of leadership —particularly at the top —is a result of institutional recruitment, hiring, and promotional practices that ensure people of all genders, races, geographies, etc., are not represented equally, and reinforces patriarchal structures.

Despite evidence of the value of, as well as ambitious goals for, equitable representation of women at all levels of the UN, the numbers remain disheartening. At the end of 2013, just under 42 percent of professional and higher categories in the UN system were women—which means it took a decade for an increase in the overall representation of women by a mere five percentage points. Digging deeper into those figures shows that female representation in field-based appointments, which are often critical stepping stones to long-term promotion, begin as disproportionately male, thus making any promotional opportunities disproportionately available and distributed to males.

Gender parity² in UN staff in and of itself is an issue, but unwritten and ubiquitous hiring practices undermine truly equitable representation and the implementation of the UN's own foundational documents. This is not just about jobs for women—it is about making the UN “fit for purpose” and both representative of and accountable to “we, the peoples.” Explicit hierarchies and observance of a chain of command also decreases transparency and impedes whistle-blowing as people are actively discouraged from going outside of the chain of command and reporting problems to the ombudsmen. The values reflected in the types of behaviors that are rewarded are based on assumptions about productive and reproductive roles and the gendered division of labor.

A series of traditions and unwritten rules dictate “ownership” of specific UN entities or roles by certain Member States. In the search for the new Secretary-General, much has been made of the unwritten rule that specific regions trade off holding the SG position—with the understanding that whomever is in that position would naturally favor or better represent their home region, thus necessitating such a rotation. As this rule is not codified but is seriously followed, one can see the rationale behind many feminists calling for a female SG—hoping that such a person would favor feminist ideas. In other areas, there is a sense that when a Member State contributes monetarily to a specific UN entity, they are then entitled to make staffing appointments. These practices benefit wealthier Member States, those who already typically hold positions of power within the UN, and lead to disproportionate representation throughout the system. In sum, the current UN system is grossly unequal. People of all genders, races, ages, classes, etc. are not recruited effectively, represented equally, and given equal opportunities for advancement³. Principles of transparency and accountability are not being upheld. To address this, we recommend the following actions by the actors outlined below:

To the current UN leadership, SG candidates and transition team:

- ◆ Compile existing UN policies on human rights,

equality, fairness, and nondiscrimination and deliver them to the next Secretary-General, emphasizing that these are the frameworks the UN has established and that Member States have committed to, and that, consequently, need to be upheld in UN policies and practices.

- ◆ Compile a roster of senior female and feminist professionals from which appointments can be made to achieve parity at the senior levels of UN leadership.
- ◆ Conduct a review of the ICSC gender parity strategy⁴ to examine what actions may be taken to achieve parity in the professional ranks of the United Nations. More action may need to be taken at the regional group level, given that the international civil service does allow consideration of regional representation.
- ◆ Each of the current SG candidates should publicly commit to achieving gender parity and advancing feminist principles as part of their platforms, outlining an action plan by which they intend to do so.

To the new Secretary-General:

- ◆ The incoming Secretary-General must ensure that the global laws, policies and standards on gender equality adopted by UN member states are the basis on which the UN system also operates. The ethics, operations and practice of the UN should mirror its own stated commitments, ideals and goals.
- ◆ Upon assumption of office, the incoming Secretary-General must publicly denounce the patriarchal and unwritten rules that perpetuate a culture within the UN system of colonialism, racism, sexism, and ageism. He must articulate internal processes to uncover, document, and transform this culture, setting-out time-bound goals that will be implemented in every UN agency and body, and reported on publicly.
- ◆ At the SG transition, use the opportunity of the resignation of all ASGs/USGs to achieve equal representation, beginning with gender parity at those levels.

² While the primary focus of this paper concerns gender parity, as feminists we seek to transform all “isms” and power structures operating within the UN—sex and gender (including gender identity and sexual orientation), race, age, class, geography, etc.

- ◆ Establish gender parity in the Cabinet: the Senior Management Team, members of the Policy Committee, and in the members of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).
- ◆ Ensure that senior appointments are not only gender equal, but also feminist by documenting the “feminist credentials” in the Executive Office of the SG (in particular the Deputy Secretary-General, the Chief of Staff, the Spokesperson, the chief Speechwriter, the Political Advisor and the members of the Senior Appointments Unit).
- ◆ Set out an ambitious 100-day agenda, leading to a full-fledged women’s rights agenda for the SG, based on UN policies of human rights, equality, fairness and nondiscrimination, which must be reported on to the public on an annual basis.
- ◆ Publicly support agencies that create internal processes to uncover, articulate, and transform the culture that perpetuates colonialism, racism, sexism, and ageism.
- ◆ Direct the SG’s Senior Management Team to annually commission a rapid review of women’s rights by women’s rights advocates from inside and outside of the system. The Secretary-General must receive and respond to a verbal presentation of the annual results of that review.
- ◆ Actively work to break down internal silos by mandating and incentivizing increased collaboration across agencies, both by supervisors and also in HR processes (360 reviews, etc).
- ◆ Institute universal Gender SWAPs (UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women)⁵ for all UN agencies and bodies, including the 5th Committee, and make that data publicly available on a central platform.
- ◆ Request sex-disaggregated information on critical decisions such as hiring for senior positions, as well as gender budgeting throughout the UN system.
- ◆ Request that all Human Rights Rapporteurs address and report on issues of women’s rights within their missions. This includes not only utilizing sex-disaggregated data, but also ensuring a core focus on women’s human rights issues within their focus areas.
- ◆ Set out intentions and a timeline for a Fifth World Conference on Women.
- ◆ The new SG should mandate consistent definitions on topics such as unpaid care, child marriage, sex work, gender-based violence, and trafficking and these definitions should be consistently implemented in programming and across the agencies. Most of these issues are addressed in programming guidelines related to implementation of human rights treaties but there should be a technical review of definitions across agencies conducted by UN Women.

To UN agencies:

- ◆ Pledge to be accountable to the aspirations for genuine equality manifested in conventions such as CEDAW, CERD, CESC and ICPPR. State parties are legally bound by these treaties and UN agencies are mandated to support them in taking actions to protect and fulfill the specific obligations outlined within them. The executive boards of the UN funds, programs and agencies must take concrete steps to encourage such efforts and promote accountability for member states.
- ◆ Hold system-wide, televised meetings and open them to civil society participation, in person as well as via skype or other technological mechanisms. Civil society can submit ideas and questions in advance of meetings and tune in to board meetings on UN TV. Funds, Programs and Agencies should also have one board meeting per year that allows in-person and full civil society participation.
- ◆ Meetings between governments and UN country teams should be made publicly available, including

¹ In early 2012, the United Nations agreed on the landmark UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN-SWAP, to implement the gender equality policy of its highest executive body, the UN Chief Executives Board, chaired by the Secretary-General. Spearheaded by UN Women, the UN-SWAP for the first time assigns common performance standards for the gender-related work of all UN entities, ensuring greater coherence and accountability. See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-wework/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability#sthash.Rd75S5O6.dpuf>

the workshops and conferences where country programmes are negotiated. Currently the country programs and cooperation agreements are public record and the process leading up to these programs and agreements should be as well.

- ◆ For instance, leadership at UNDP has publicly stated that it is the most transparent UN agency, and that developing countries have a right to know how development funding is being used in their countries (although there is still much work to be done). As the largest development agency of the UN, UNDP does have the potential to model and support system-wide transparency by:
 - ◆ Agreeing to open key meetings to civil society through in-person participation, television and/or livestream, and to allow opportunity for civil society comment/participation.
 - ◆ Publishing who is funding which senior staff positions (P5 and above) and how much of its budget is being spent on gender programming, and by encouraging other UN agencies should follow suit.
 - ◆ Publicly reporting on how much UNDP money actually helps women, and stating by what criteria.
- ◆ Require UN budgets and hiring reports to contain sex disaggregated data.
- ◆ Institute a system-wide Freedom of Information Policy that would allow civil society to request access to that sex disaggregated hiring data as well as SWAP reports and archived recordings of open meetings.
- ◆ Encourage equitable hiring practices by publishing how many candidates were considered for P5 positions and above, including a breakdown by gender and other.
- ◆ Institute temporary special measures to achieve parity at the levels where it has been most elusive (P5 and above).
- ◆ Implement feminist HR and staffing reforms, to include: gender-equitable hiring practices, flexible working hours, realistic expectations of work hours and work-life balance, paid family leave for people of all genders, and zero tolerance for sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence at work, among others.

- ◆ Institute policies to protect whistleblowers who denounce unequal hiring and promotion practices, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination broadly, as well as member state holding of staff positions.
- ◆ Implement 360 degree reviews of all staff in all agencies and allow staff to sue for unfair dismissal as it relates to the above practices, which reinforce patriarchal and colonialist norms.
- ◆ Create employment pathways that do not reinforce the unwritten rules that frequently rely on working at non-family duty stations, which disproportionately preference men. This could include providing for short-term rotations in hardship areas with full compensation for childcare at home in order to accommodate those with children who wish to perform short-term assignments but need support for children who will remain at home.

LEVEL II: FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Insufficient funds are committed to gender equality in both programming by UN agencies, as well as within internal system operations and processes. UN Women never received the full \$1 billion budget that activists initially campaigned for.⁶ It should, however, be noted that this is to imply that all gender equality efforts should be siloed at UN Women—to the contrary, these efforts are best managed when mainstreamed and given direct attention. Other agencies can and should also play a role: They have larger budgets, but do not invest at the levels needed to achieve gender equality and uphold the rights of women and girls everywhere, nor do they empower the gender advisors they do have to participate in key decisions and processes. What funds do exist for gender equality are too often compromised by their origins or structure. We are concerned by the over-earmarking of funds and by the growing influence of private (both corporate and private foundation) funds in the UN system, yet also recognize that these represent possible funding sources for gender equality and cannot be dismissed out-of-hand in the current system. We therefore recommend that the UN:

- ◆ Commit to full transparency by publishing funding sources for all agencies, positions and programs, and, furthermore, commit to system-wide gender budgeting.
- ◆ The Secretary-General, in collaboration with UN Women, should convene a High Level Panel on Financing Gender Equality that, annually, analyzes and presents the state of financing for women's rights and gender equality within the UN system, in countries worldwide and across philanthropic sectors. The Panel should include feminist economists, experts in gender-responsive budgeting, Ministers of Finance and Gender Equality, and representatives of civil society organizations (especially those from the most excluded groups). This Panel could report to the CSW and the CSW could develop resolutions – based on evidence – to strengthen the amounts and nature of financing available in different sectors, countries and communities.
- ◆ Ensure that at least 30 percent of current spending is dedicated to women's rights programming and gender mainstreaming throughout the system. For agencies participating in the Gender SWAP, existing targets should be published and agencies should publicly report back on whether they have met them. For bodies and agencies that have avoided gender marker use, such as DPKO and DPA, new targets must be set, published and reported against.
- ◆ Increase funding for UN Women to US\$ 1 billion, both by encouraging member state contributions and by pulling from the core general fund, to ensure that it is able to fulfill its mandate. UN Women should also activate its national committees in private fundraising efforts, being careful not to cannibalize donations to feminist and women's rights organizations in civil society.
- ◆ Increase funding for gender equality efforts of all other agencies, both by encouraging member state contributions and by pulling from the core general fund.
- ◆ Promote greater transparency in spending by publishing how much the UN spends on key activities such as peacekeeping, with clear references to those amounts dedicated to gender equality, gender mainstreaming, economic policy, and to address the particular challenges faced by women in war, for example.
- ◆ Once published, reorient spending to ensure that a substantial amount of what was spent on peacekeeping and peace operations is designated to support women's participation and justice for women, as well as economic recovery to ensure women's economic activities and livelihoods are sustained and that women engage in peace-building and reconstruction, thereby wresting meaningful political power in post-conflict and fragile states.
- ◆ The General Assembly should pass a resolution committing Member States to separate their funding decisions from hiring practices and committing them to hold the UN accountable for modelling gender equality in hiring and promotions. A peer review or independent audit should be published annually to ensure compliance.
- ◆ The General Assembly should mandate a gender analysis of the 5th Committee, to include both membership and funding priorities.
- ◆ Combat the de facto "ownership" of certain agencies and positions by certain Member States or private donors by making those contributions public. While some organizations, such as the World Food Program, do publish contributions by donor governments, but all private donations are grouped together and should be disaggregated by type of funding source UN where agency leadership is correlated to Member State contributions must be decoupled.
 - ◆ Encourage more member states to contribute to the general fund rather than earmarking their contributions to address this ownership issue.
 - ◆ Publish contributions by private (corporate and foundation) funders, and/or provide agencies a mechanism to "scrub" those funds by channeling them through national committees or other funding mechanisms that could pool contributions and diminish donor control.
- ◆ Develop a pool of Member States willing to drop quid-pro-quo hiring practices in return for funding and stand by agencies that agree to make reforms.

- ◆ As an interim step, UN entities should publicly list on their websites and in reports which countries provided funding but required the hiring of their country nationals in return.
- ◆ Secondments must be made public in order to separate attempts to influence direct UN hires and secondments, which are temporary and may actually be an indirect way of increasing funds funnelled into agencies, even if there is a concern that these may be linked to influence as well.
- ◆ Create binding regulations around constructive engagement of the private sector (corporate as well as philanthropic) at the UN
 - ◆ Publish how much private sector organizations are funding UN agencies and activities, and report on the impacts of that funding, including as a percentage of total funds going to that activity.
 - ◆ Develop guidelines such as those that require that, for every donation a private foundation gives for women's rights at the UN, a similar sum should be directed towards direct support for feminist and women's rights organizations in civil society (see AWID report series, *Where is the Money for Women's Rights?*).
 - ◆ Convene a donor conversation for foundations interested in funding a more feminist UN to discuss these and other recommendations.

LEVEL III: UN WOMEN, THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND UN WOMEN'S ROLE IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING THROUGHOUT THE UN SYSTEM

Since its founding in 2010, UN Women has been consistently underfunded (see above) and thwarted in its mandate. We must recognize that supporting gender equality is a political endeavor that requires structural change and the redress of entrenched inequalities. This goes against the status quo and challenges existing powers. Without sufficient support, UN Women has been gravely limited in its ability to seek and require

greater gender equality from within the system and in fulfilling its normative, programmatic and coordination roles. While we recognize that it is inherently unfair to single out UN Women as the only entity responsible for modeling feminist leadership, equality and transparency, we encourage the following steps to improve UN Women's operations and impact, with the goal that it can and will be a model for other agencies and bodies to follow suit:

- ◆ UN Women should ensure that human rights — including worker rights — are central to its mandate, programming and modes of operation. Rights should feature more visibly in UN Women's website and institutional messaging. As it currently stands in UN Women's own definition, rights are noticeably absent: "UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide."⁷ This will complement, not replace, women's rights efforts that have traditionally been—and should remain—housed under the OHCHR (CEDAW, etc).
- ◆ In order to reduce the role of the private sector in driving UN Women's programming, UN women should establish and convene a plural advisory council that allows for rotating representatives of civil society, unions, and the private sector to engage directly with UN Women and each other in support of UN Women's mandate.
- ◆ UN Women should make gender expertise an employment requirement for all technical positions. All agencies should require a gender training, much like the mandatory security training, via a certificate program such as the ICSC or UN Women e-learning platforms.
- ◆ UN Women should model requests for transparency and a feminist approach to leadership by televising town hall meetings and other important plenaries where its mission and mandate are discussed.
- ◆ UN Women should support a critical, feminist analysis of some key issues that remain obscured and sidelined in the system. Among these is the

⁷ See <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us>. Accessed August 28, 2016

need to consider a broad array of worker rights for all types of work and their link to women's empowerment, agency, and voice, as well as to concrete advancement in women's status and material conditions.

- ◆ CSW should be a platform to make high-level recommendations that could actually secure change. It should be used as a forum to hold states accountable to their commitments to gender equality. One way to increase the likelihood that CSW meets these aspirations is to hold a plenary that enables representatives of civil society to engage directly with their member states. CSW should also publicize its complaints procedures more and have interactive hearings with civil society on the implementation of past resolutions.
- ◆ CSW should be held in rotating locations starting in the Global South, with countries or regions taking turns hosting.
 - ◆ This will help to address, to some extent, the problem of the privileging of elite voices, and oft-funded voices, whether elite or not. Holding CSW in different countries will produce greater interest in the negotiations, and possibly greater exposure of the tactics of conservative groups in seeking to impede the fulfillment of commitments to upholding women's rights and gender equality. This could trigger stronger engagement at regional levels by women's organizations seeking to defend women's rights. In making this change, however, some thought should be given to how we preserve the visibility of women's rights and the CSW at the GA power center in New York.
 - ◆ Regional bodies: Every regional organization (AU, OAS, ASEAN, etc.) has a commission or body on the status of women. The UN Regional Economic Commissions also review the status of women. The capacity of these regional commissions on women/gender should be strengthened so that they can more forcefully forge consensus at the regional level and reflect

LEVEL IV: GENDER EQUALITY AND THE SDGS

The SDGs represent the single largest opportunity to both focus concerted effort on achieving gender equality and to mainstream a focus on gender across global, sustainable development efforts. However, the Goals currently lack a meaningful accountability framework and are in danger of losing or watering down their focus on gender. As such the UN must:

- ◆ Support grassroots, rights-based movements and protect civil society spaces in member states through explicitly engaging with them.
- ◆ Link the SDGs and their targets to CEDAW to enable a feminist accountability framework where member states must report on their progress and can be challenged by civil society.
 - ◆ Support more effective shadow reporting by CSOs to ensure full citizen oversight of SDG claims.
 - ◆ Protect the stand-alone gender goal (5) and ensure gender mainstreaming throughout all other goals, including throughout the measurement framework.
- ◆ Ensure that gender equality and women's human rights is a cross-cutting theme in all related forums and discussions for follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, including the High Level Political Forum, which should include shadow reporting.
- ◆ Provide guidelines and support to countries to ensure that women's civil society and feminist organizations can play an active role in implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels.
- ◆ Link the SDGs with the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and ensure that the CSW has a clear mandate to oversee implementation of the Agenda.

LEVEL V: WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Increasingly more of the UN budget is being dedicated to peace and security concerns⁸, and peacekeeping has become increasingly militarized.⁹ The system does not incentivize peace; it incentivizes conflict and privileges those nations that produce and sell weaponry.¹⁰ Gender equality has yet to be mainstreamed effectively in peace-keeping and transitional justice missions¹¹ and gender expertise is not valued throughout humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel and processes. To ensure sustainable peace, women must be recognized as more than victims of conflict and be recognized as agents of change, whose voice at the negotiating table should be actively sought and funded as part of all commitments to peace and security processes. Therefore:

- ◆ UN Women should be required, and funded, to be part of all political affairs and peacekeeping mandates and operations.
 - ◆ The Global Study on 1325, undertaken during 2015, generated important findings. Yet one recommendation, also reflected in resolution 2242 (for greater integration of UN Women in supporting peace operations missions) has been effectively ignored. Moreover, unlike the other two studies (High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the SG Report on the Future of UN Peace Operations), which were provided with dedicated staffing and resources for their review processes, no institutional staffing or resources were provided for UN Women to lead the secretariat for the study, delaying the process for many months while resources were mobilized. The lack of funding for their meaningful participation underscores the unequal terrain on which UN Women must engage with other agencies, and must be immediately addressed.

- ◆ There are currently very few women on the rosters of proposed peace process personnel and peace-keeping missions. Member states should be required to nominate 50 percent women for positions in peace negotiations and peace-keeping missions.
- ◆ GBV, sexual harassment, and other human rights abuses by UN Peacekeepers¹² and high-level UN leaders must be brought to light and prosecuted in situ (see below).¹

LEVEL VI: ENDING VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN THE U.N. SYSTEM

Violence, exploitation and abuse go well beyond the realm of peace and security in the UN system. Gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse have been poorly addressed throughout the system, including when perpetrated by and against UN staff, as well as in its programmatic and operational activities. There has been public outcry about the abuse by UN personnel of women and girls in host countries, which is met with impunity. Similarly, there is little confidence in the current internal justice systems of the United Nations, as the wheels of justice move very slowly and favor perpetrators. In the absence of a robust, efficient, credible and fair justice process, UN staff members – particularly women who are junior and administrative staff and gender non-conforming staff members – are left in the same kinds of vulnerable situations that the UN is supposed to help countries change.

To address this, the UN must urgently:

- ◆ Immediately institute/update and enforce a zero tolerance policy for all acts of violence, not only sexual exploitation and abuse,¹³ committed by any UN staff, peacekeepers, etc.

⁸ <http://wilpf.org/how-to-move-the-money-from-war-to-peace-reflections-on-women-peace-and-security-financing-workshop-and-side-event/>

⁹ <https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2015/08/03/the-future-of-african-peacekeeping-missions-a-shift-from-a-militarized-approach/>

¹⁰ <https://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/content/myth-democratic-peacekeeper>

¹¹ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/714

¹² <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/cdu>

¹³ <https://cdu.unlb.org/Statistics/AllegationsbyCategoryofPersonnelSexualExploitationandAbuse/AllegationsforAllCategoriesofPersonnelPerYearSexualExploitationandAbuse.aspx>

- ◆ The new SG should hold a town-hall meeting with UN staff to publicize the policy and articulate enforcement and accountability measures (e.g., there should be specialized courts in each country where those acts of violence are investigated, tried and held to account).
- ◆ Ensure senior leadership is fully on board with the zero tolerance policy so that they both enforce it and model good behavior. Senior leaders who fail to take action on or who cover up GBV in their organizations or teams should be sanctioned.
- ◆ Introduce performance monitoring for officers that is linked to the zero tolerance policy and show swift action in the face of any allegations.
- ◆ Immediately institute a global commission of inquiry, rooted in the view of, and answerable to the people who have been abused. The primary investment of a new strategy has to be on protection and reparations for those abused. Reporting arrangements for victims on the ground have to be made easy and safe. Personnel contributing countries must provide reparations. Any allegations of abuse need to be investigated immediately and tried in the country where the abuse happened. The TCC can manage the court martial process, but it has to be in the country of abuse so that witnesses can testify and seek protection from their own judicial system.
- ◆ Institute, immediately, an audit of UN justice systems and processes from a gender perspective. Use this to reform the system, strengthen protection and ensure confidentiality for staff members who experience sexual harassment or any form of gender-based discrimination.
- ◆ Ensure that the UN Secretariat and every UN organization and country team has a policy and plan to support staff who are at risk of or experience domestic violence.
- ◆ Institute system-wide trainings on preventing and responding to gender-based violence.
- ◆ Develop and implement a more accessible reporting system for cases of violence and abuse, not one that is fully controlled by the UN, which is a conflict of interest.





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