

Intro

- Thanks to the organizers...Honor and pleasure to share with you a few thoughts and dilemmas with respect to women, peace and security. This is a huge topic. I will only touch upon various dimensions and leave out or forget others...cannot be avoided and hope that you bear with me.
- My talk revolves from the work and thoughts developed by Cordaid (explain). We have been in business in conflicts since 1910 when one of our predecessors provided refuge for Belgian citizens that fled to the Netherlands during the First World War.
- As an international civil society donor, and advocate for changing unjust power structures and relations we have been working with and supporting civil society actors, networks and organizations around the world, including women organizations and women agents of change that are active in violent conflict and deal with effects of violence, violations of human rights, destruction of development, peace processes that are stalled and impunity that goes unanswered - which are all characteristic of conflict situations. In spite of terrible circumstances we see that women everywhere do immensely courageous work to attract attention to the conflict they have to live with, the responses that they have developed to deal with violence and to alternatives they propose for a good life and a good society.
- Let me follow through on a few issues of yesterday's speakers
- Sima Samar referred to the many international frameworks, implementation schemes, including M en E that are developed and being implemented by civil society and donor and recipient governments: MDGs on poverty reduction (domain of the development sector), the International Human Rights Declaration and Charter (and other conventions/treaties that were born out it = the domain of the HR community): SCR 1325 and 180 that promote the full participation of women in peace processes and the recognition that sexual violence is a security issue and a tactic of war the domain of the peace building community. The UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution on Armed Violence Prevention (2003?) that promotes development through prevention of armed conflict, which obliges national governments to curb armed violence and foster MDGs as an integrated approach, which ideally should be the domain of development and security.
- In conflict situations these frameworks make sense from a policy perspective and from a perspective of fostering change for the benefit of both women and men. Human rights are violated, development is stalled or frustrated and peace seems a far away horizon. The human security framework which was first internationally mentioned in UNDP's Human Development report in 1994 aims to bring together these frameworks by building at least conceptual bridges between: development, human rights

and security. Working for change through respecting human rights, development and security for individuals and communities are conditional to building peace. Human security is a relatively new notion. In short: while national security focuses on the defense of the state from external attack, human security is about protection individuals and communities from any form of political violence. It is about freedom from want and freedom from fear. It holds the promise to be an effective approach to dealing with the myriad of issues that are at play in conflict situations.

- The pillars of human security: development, human rights, peace building and security are not of the same material, strength and attractiveness (depending on your professional or personal taste). Peace building = rubber, it is flexible, it is about waving back and forth, diplomacy, two steps forward, three steps backwards, Security = steel, it is about military missions, intelligence, war, terrorism, civil military cooperation, Human Rights = glass, it is fragile, it is transparent, and Development = wood, strong but slow growing (thank you Louise Arbor for lending some of these insights). No need to say that the pillars are resourced differently – security gets most, human rights less....
- These pillars actually stand alone in the framework, and while the framework sees them as a harmonious family they still need to go through the phase of careful engagement.
- Coming back to what Sima said yesterday: But what is the significance of all these frameworks when we reflect on the impact that violent conflicts have on people that live them, the loss of civilian lives, the sexual abuse of women, girls and boys, the destruction of livelihoods, displacement of the most vulnerable in society and wounds that take perhaps forever to heal ?

Context

- It may seem like an open door to say the obvious that context matters. But it does matter. At the end of the day change needs to happen within a specific country, region, community and from within. It needs to happen in what we have to come call fragile states where government is absent (too a large part) as provider of basic services including security to its citizens, or where political authorities orchestrate atrocities, and are more than capable to suppress people and create a climate of fear.
- As was also mentioned yesterday these political authorities wield enormous power through force, custom (whether religiously, ethnically or tribally inspired) and patronage chiefly through resources and money. Force, custom and patronage buy loyalties in a given context. When these authorities are selling off the country's precious resources to states that play the global market differently than most of

the development cooperation actors (mention eg. China), then the playing field of unaccountable political authorities in the market of violence (for want of a better term) is difficult to challenge let alone change.

- What instruments does the international community have, does the UN have to interfere in fragile states, in authoritarian or repressive states – resolutions, sanctions that need approval by the Security Council. We know the SC is a politicized body and in view of the new world order becoming outdated in terms of membership and organizational set up We are aware the General Assembly is a political arena where seldom one reaches a solution that really changes the lives of people on the ground (mention: however the UN is the only global governing body we have...) We need to reflect on the effectiveness of the UN though (merits a different debate including upcoming region entities that deal with the nexus between security, peace building and development, e.g. Unasur). The stalwarts of the SC and powerful nations in the world, e.g. the US, have lost their moral authority – we live in world where power relations and structures are definitively changing, what the outcome will be is uncertain, but the changes do have ripple effects at the UN and our own work and positioning in the global arena.
- We have peace enforcing and peace keeping missions as a militarized instrument for intervening in conflict areas (a lot can be said about them but UN peace keeping missions have limited mandate and are under resourced...) And after harm has been done, we have the ICC. We have as said very little instruments for prevention of violent conflict, which when you come to think of peace and conflict and how costly violent conflict is, should be given the highest priority.
- As promised I am only touching upon the many dimensions of women, peace and security. Each merits more discussion and debate. Let me end by sharing with you a number of dilemmas and an example where these dilemmas come to life.

Dilemmas

- I think that if we want to make an impact as women on security and peace issues, we need to play the market where the rules so far have been designed by more powerful players.
- I feel we need to appreciate the differences that do exist between the peace building, human rights, development and security frameworks and communities that shoulder these, but that we must look for connections between them. The Human Security Framework can provide pointers for these connections. We also ought to look for bridging the realities of women and men in each of these communities. No need to say that violations against women human rights defenders are not yet fully

recognized by their male companions. Or that all diplomacy tracks need the active participation of women or that military peace keeping missions need to be trained in gender awareness...still efforts at achieving these are up for a lot of improvement.

- Would like to stress that engagement between the pillars is really paramount. We need a strategy whereby we can elegantly jump over our own shadows. Shadows that at times prevent us from reflecting about our own ideologies, the need to find creative ways forward.....
- In concrete terms: how to deal with the justice (human rights, law of rule) and peace (reconciliation) tension? How to work on the development and security nexus? Do we want peace at all costs, when we are confronted with perpetrators in government, when violations go unaccounted for and impunity unanswered. Do we want justice at all cost, when war continues and human rights continue to be violated and people are killed while working on a political agreement may seem reasonable? Makes it sense to invest in development in conflict zones while we know that violence can destroy it. If we invest in improving security, how can we assure that this is done with from a human security perspective.
- I , Cordaid doesn't have a clear cut answer. The issue is simply too complicated. We are aware though that we need others to begin changing the market of violence. That we need to work within our comfort zones, but more importantly get out of these and seek for engagement with others that may not act and think like us
- I much appreciate to know your thoughts on this...
- Let me end with an example from Colombia:
- We have been working with a network of women that are in their communities actively have been seeking to find more peaceful ways to end violence. Their prime motivation is that their children, husbands, fathers and brothers are killed, kidnapped, affected by the violence. That their efforts to provide for their families are becoming almost impossible and that their integrity as a human being, as a woman is violated. They advocate in the open, in public, they engage with security forces, they speak out against crimes of paramilitary and guerrilla, they criticized the effects of Uribe's war on terror and war on drugs. They are extremely courageous. And they work on a very important issue: public accountability of security forces and naming and shaming of crimes committed by rebel groups.
- To make their work more known to the Colombian public and to honor them we supported a project which shows these women in pictures, their face, body and life stories. The pictures were with their permission put up in public places. The women explicitly wanted this, though they are all aware of the possible risk they run with going public.

- All of the women are now threatened by both paramilitary and guerrilla and some of them need to leave their community for a while. The son of one of them was murdered because his mother criticized in her narrative the devastating influence of paramilitary gangs on young men and women.
- To speak out and act against violence is dangerous, to work for peace is dangerous, to claim your rights as a woman is dangerous, to want development that is sustainable does not have priority for powerholders....As Mahnaz Afkhami yesterday said: never give up, this is what we as donors also need to do never give up. What we should do is to find donor collaboration so that the pooling of funds for an integrated approach that gives full priority to preventing violence against women, and people on the ground.

THANK YOU