

## Gender, peace and disarmament

Noeleen HEYZER

Disarmament and gender equality are global public goods whose benefits are shared by all and monopolized by no one. In the UN system, both are cross-cutting issues, for what office or department of the United Nations does not stand to gain by progress in gender equality or disarmament? When women move forward, and when disarmament moves forward, the world moves forward. Unfortunately, the same applies in reverse: setbacks in these areas impose costs for all.

Jayantha Dhanapala, former Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs  
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Today's wars are no longer fought on the discrete battle zones of the First World War. The new battlefronts include homes and communities, in wars waged over resources, political power and in the name of religion and ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> And violence against women, once an unfortunate side-effect, is now a deliberate part of many of these armed conflicts. The United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in October 2000, has called attention to the fact that women and men are affected by war and armed conflict in different ways.<sup>2</sup> The debate on that resolution and its follow up have also brought into sharper focus the enormous potential contribution of women as stakeholders of peace, disarmament and conflict prevention. The result has been a greater awareness of the gender dimensions of conflict and post-conflict situations throughout the international community.

But why focus on gender at all in this context? Gender refers to the differential social roles that define women and men in a specific cultural context—and to the power relationships that perpetuate these roles. A focus on gender not only reveals information about women's experience, which otherwise can be hidden, it also sheds light on ingrained assumptions and stereotypes about men and women, the values and qualities associated with each and the ways power relationships can change. In this article I will look at women's experience of armed conflict, focusing particularly on their roles in conflict prevention and disarmament and the ways in which the United Nations is working to integrate a gender perspective into all of its conflict prevention and disarmament activities.

As Executive Director of UNIFEM I have witnessed the impact of conflict on women in many countries. I have been to Bosnia where women described abduction, rape camps and forced impregnation, and to Rwanda where women had been gang raped and purposely infected with HIV/AIDS. In the 'Valley of Widows' in Colombia, I met women who had lost their husbands and their

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Noeleen Heyzer is the Executive Director of UNIFEM. This article has benefited from the contributions of Felicity Hill, UNIFEM Programme Specialist in Governance, Peace and Security.

land; everyone and everything important to them had been destroyed by the violence of civil war and drug lords. Stories like these have been repeated again and again, in different languages, in different surroundings: East Timor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala. Only the horror and the pain were the same.

In his recent book, *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, British journalist Chris Hedges observes, 'The violence of war is random. It does not make sense. And many of those who struggle with loss also struggle with the knowledge that the loss was futile and unnecessary.'<sup>3</sup> The experience of violence and loss he describes is further compounded for women as they are rarely the primary architects or decision-makers in war making. To be sure, women have often embraced war as necessary for national or communal security, and some have been willing participants. But while women are sometimes

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complicit in war, they are almost completely absent in the decisions to go to war—or in the appropriation of funds that make weapons and war possible. And what I have seen over and over is that women overwhelmingly regard the conflicts they have lived through as futile, unnecessary and preventable.

The women's movement has consistently criticized the equation between national security and military security, noting the failure of military violence to achieve its stated aims, and arguing that the full complexity of its costs are often overlooked.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, in addition to the enormous economic implications, there are also powerful cultural and ideological processes that perpetuate militarism. The cultural and social status that accrues to male warriors, martyrs and protectors has no similar parallel for women, at least not until recently.<sup>5</sup> The back-breaking work that women take on to keep societies going when men go to war is typically trivialized as 'keeping the home fires burning'. Even women combatants are rarely accorded the same treatment as their male counterparts. In post-conflict training packages and reintegration services, for example, it is generally the mothers of martyrs and the wives of fallen warriors that, through their relationship to a male hero, are given social sympathy and occasionally some economic support.

Despite the leadership they exercise at the community level, women are not prominent in the political parties that emerge when armed groups lay down their weapons, just as they are rarely represented in the leadership of existing parties, or in the security apparatus of states throughout the world.<sup>6</sup> If women are not participating at the national level, there are fewer possibilities at the international level because international representatives are chosen from the national pool. Only two women have served on the Security Council since 1992, out of a total of eighty-eight ambassadors serving in that capacity. And only 5.4% of ambassadors sent to represent countries at United Nations Headquarters since 1992 have been women.<sup>7</sup> From 1945, when the United Nations was established, to 2000, when Security Council resolution 1325 was passed, only four women served as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG)—in-theatre heads of mission—in peacekeeping operations. At the time of this watershed resolution, affirming the essential role that women have in peace and security matters, there were no women holding the position. Almost three years later, only one woman serves as a SRSG, and four women serve as Deputy SRSGs.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the lack of women represented in the global peace and security apparatuses, the United Nations has recognized the importance of addressing the gender dimension of conflict and peace-building and the need to involve women fully in this process. The theme for each of the four United Nations World Conferences on Women has been 'equality, development and peace', providing an opportunity for women activists to organize and advocate around the issues of disarmament, peace and security. The final document of the Third World Conference on Women, held in 1985 at the height of the Cold War, is particularly rich on these subjects. The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, contains a whole chapter on women and armed conflict, including the issues of landmines, military spending and the urgency of halting all nuclear test

explosions. The Beijing Declaration recognized 'the leading role that women have played in the peace movement, work[ing] actively towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, and support[ing] negotiations on the conclusion, without delay, of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which contributes to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects'<sup>9</sup>—a role reaffirmed in 1998 by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The method by which Member States have chosen to implement gender considerations in peace and development activities is known as 'gender mainstreaming', which is defined as '... the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.'<sup>10</sup>

The goal of gender mainstreaming is to avoid making gender an 'add-on' by insisting that every aspect of a given activity, such as peace or disarmament negotiations or post-conflict operations, be assessed for its gender implications. The process requires persistent effort, including regular monitoring, reporting, follow-up training, and evaluation of progress made and obstacles encountered, as well as systems for holding the operation/organization accountable for achieving its goals. All of this requires resources and, above all, political will at all levels. Despite occasional success stories, too often gender equality is considered a 'soft issue', with the result that attention and resources are inadequate.

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### *The gender and disarmament nexus*

In 2001 the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) and the Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women produced a particularly useful set of six short yet comprehensive briefing notes on how gender perspectives are relevant to disarmament issues.<sup>11</sup> These illustrate the links between gender and landmines, small arms and light weapons, weapons of mass destruction, and the post-conflict process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating former combatants. The following discussion will look more closely at each of these issues, highlighting examples of the gender and disarmament nexus.

#### LANDMINES

People in some eighty countries live daily with the threat of landmines. Because women comprise the majority of the world's farmers and gatherers of food, water and firewood, they are frequently exposed to these dangers. Thus a gender-inclusive approach to mine action would include ensuring that those conducting demining operations consult with women, who often identify areas, such as transportation routes to fields or markets, that may be ignored by military or political authorities. Similarly, because women share vital information with their families and communities, particularly about signs of danger and preventing injury, landmine awareness training may be made more effective by including women and disseminating information where women work or gather. However, in some

countries, women landmine victims are receiving less assistance than men, possibly due to the assumption that men are the primary supporters of a family and therefore require prostheses and rehabilitation before women—this despite the fact that in most post-conflict situations women have become the primary providers in the family.

#### SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Today small arms and light weapons are the main instruments of violence in conflict. While far more men than women die at the point of a gun,<sup>12</sup> women have intimate knowledge of how power is mediated through the possession, threat or use of weapons, in the hands of individuals as well as states. When weapons remain in circulation, they combine with trauma, poverty and lawlessness to turn neighbourhoods and homes into war zones, heightening the lethality of crime and of domestic and political violence, both of which often escalate in the post-conflict era.

Almost every form of violence perpetrated against women in conflict zones is facilitated by the widespread presence of firearms, both legal and illicit.<sup>13</sup> In most countries, it is women who bear the major burden of caring for those injured or disabled by small arms. Because they are relatively cheap, highly lethal, easy to transport and hide, and ready to use without much training, these weapons also play a role in the use of women and children in combat.

The social and cultural ways in which guns have become a marker of masculinity can be clearly identified in the advertising and entertainment industries, and in the reluctance of men to relinquish weapons as it may be symbolic of surrendering power and male identity.<sup>14</sup> This markedly different experience of small arms could help explain the current surge of interest in research and analysis of the gender aspects of small arms and light weapons. Preliminary research results highlight the need to collect gender disaggregated data concerning the victims of small arms violence and the importance of women as strategic partners in weapons collection projects, as women have essential information about the presence of guns in their homes and communities.

#### WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The very nature of weapons of mass destruction connotes an indiscriminate impact on both men and women. Yet the reality is otherwise. In the case of nuclear weapons, for example, there are important gender differences in the health consequences of radiation, including foetal abnormalities and potential sterility.

Women have spearheaded efforts to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, and particularly nuclear weapons. Women's organizations have campaigned for cessation of nuclear testing by collecting baby teeth and testing them for levels of Strontium 90, which is dispersed and ingested through milk. They have successfully closed nuclear bases, such as Greenham Common in the United Kingdom, and engaged in similar efforts that forced governments to change policies or create nuclear-weapon-free zones at the municipal level throughout the world. However, women are almost completely marginalized in the political, scientific and military decision-making of governments that have invented or inherited these weapons. For example, only thirty-three women have headed delegations to the six review conferences of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, compared to 660 men in that role.<sup>15</sup>

## DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR)

Paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 'encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents.' Each of the DDR processes involves and has implications for women, whether they participated in combat, have family members who did, or are members of a community trying to integrate former combatants. Yet women are typically overlooked in all three processes.

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Three trends can be seen regarding gender in DDR processes. First, most DDR programmes are designed for male soldiers; female combatants are not recognized and therefore do not benefit from the resettlement allowances and other forms of support such as training programmes. Second, DDR programmes often do not recognize women who have performed non-combat roles and services (such as cooking or nursing) for combatants. While some women freely join armed groups, large numbers are abducted into combat and/or forced to become sexual and domestic slaves. Third, the special needs of the dependents of armed groups are not understood or adequately resourced.<sup>16</sup>

While child soldiers have received a great deal of attention in the last five years, girls who are abducted, trafficked, forced into marriage or made victims of gender-based violence receive far less assistance. Both boys and girls may be sent to the front lines of combat. While boys serve in rebel forces as soldiers and porters, girls serve as sexual slaves, cooks and servants. Nevertheless, when peace is negotiated and reconstruction assistance monies are allocated, most DDR programmes target only boys.<sup>17</sup>

An example of the lack of a gender perspective in DDR is that demobilization camps are not currently designed to meet the specific needs of female ex-combatants and women accompanying male ex-fighters, such as providing for security against sexual violence, sanitary supplies, bathing facilities, health care (including reproductive health care), childcare and psycho-social support with special attention to post-traumatic stress disorder. Awareness of the different needs of women and men at the planning stage would contribute to more effective DDR programmes. Simple tools, such as checklists, are available to help with gender-aware planning.

## DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Disarmament and development are linked in obvious and not so obvious ways, from the level of resource allocation in national budgets, to community-level projects in post-conflict situations. Meeting people's needs reduces the risk of conflict and the feelings of insecurity that foster demand for weapons of all kinds.

The United Nations and all its agencies and funds spend about US\$ 10 billion each year, around US\$ 1.70 for each of the world's inhabitants.<sup>18</sup> This is a very small sum compared to most government budgets and it is just a tiny fraction of the world's military spending, which was estimated at US\$ 840 billion in 2001 and will soon reach one trillion dollars according to United Nations estimates.<sup>19</sup> Compare this to the 1998 United Nations Development Programme estimate that US\$ 9 billion would provide water and sanitation for all, US\$ 12 billion would cover reproductive health for all women, US\$ 13 billion would offer every person on Earth basic health and nutrition, and US\$ 6 billion

would provide basic education for all. As the World Bank has pointed out, excessive levels of military spending divert scarce resources and impede good governance. The World Bank cites the potential benefits of reducing global military spending for balancing economic disparities, which are the root of many conflicts, and for improving environmental conditions. The founders of the United Nations sought to prevent this drain on the world's human and economic resources that are so desperately needed for development when it tasked the Security Council with generating a plan 'for the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources' in Article 26 of the UN Charter.

Since 2000, women's organizations have been calling on the Security Council to fulfil its Article 26 obligations. In 1997, the Women's Peace Petition, signed by 99,000 women was presented to the General Assembly.<sup>20</sup> This called for at least 5% of national military expenditures to be redirected to health, education and employment programmes over the next five years, which signatories claimed would free half a billion dollars *a day* to improve living standards.

Gender perspectives are essential as disarmament/development projects are designed and implemented at the community level. 'Weapons for development' programmes, in which communities turn in weapons in exchange for a development project, offer a clear illustration. An understanding of gender roles within a specific community will help to ensure that the project meets the needs of both women and men. If, for example, the community identifies that its priority is to construct a school, will both girls and boys be enrolled? A gender perspective would prompt the same sort of reflection concerning a new road, a health clinic or a well.

### *Disarmament and gender efforts in United Nations*

Within the United Nations, a number of departments, funds and programmes are responsible for different aspects of disarmament and weapons collection, including gender issues.

#### UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS (DDA)

At the 2001 launch of *Gender Perspectives on Disarmament—Briefing Notes*, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, emphasized the logic of including women and a gender perspective in the UN's mission to prevent conflict and promote disarmament. His remarks reflect the need to link struggles for peace with those for gender equality:

Amid all the troubles we face today both with respect to disarmament and the advancement of gender equality, it is easy to yield to cynicism and despair. Our effort today, however, takes a completely different approach, one that looks upon hard times as a call to action—a reminder of our solemn responsibility to keep tilling the rough terrain that others have worked so hard before us, a job that can only be made easier by widening the community of tillers. This is an occasion for hope, for re-commitment to the ideals of the Charter, and for warm anticipation of the cooperation and success that lies ahead.

To create a context for such cooperation within the department, Mr. Dhanapala led his staff through a process of self-examination that identified entry points for gender issues in each branch of

DDA, leading to the articulation of a departmental Gender Action Plan.<sup>21</sup> The DDA model is now being replicated in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. DDA's example has generated a process and results that demonstrate the utility of taking time and funds to gender mainstream, to reflect and create appropriate programmatic frameworks and standards of practice that relate to women and men.

#### UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

According to the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, 'Where guns, and gunmen—or women, or children—dominate, development suffers. Schools and shops close, commerce stops, and the local economy grinds to a halt. Buildings are destroyed, bridges are blown up, fields are abandoned. Private investment dries up and development organizations can't operate. Even after the shooting stops, there is no security. People cannot return to their homes or a normal life.' To address this issue UNDP has set up numerous programmes on disarmament and weapons collection, and has included gender perspectives in its reports and evaluation.

Working with UNIFEM, UNDP undertook a successful 'weapons for development' programme in Albania. Through a series of workshops and gatherings to discuss strategies to reduce the number of weapons in communities, a campaign was launched calling on women to support the idea of handing over weapons in exchange for communally shared benefits such as reliable water supply, road repairs and telecommunications improvements. While women's involvement was observed to have increased the number of weapons collected, the benefits of their involvement were even more far-reaching. Of crucial importance is the personal empowerment reported by Albanian women who attended the workshops. The following changes were remarked:

1. Increased participation in family decision-making processes because their training gave them an authoritative opinion on family and community security decisions.
2. A growth in women's awareness and knowledge of security issues, which helped them deal more effectively with local authorities, including the police. This in turn led to greater community cooperation in other areas.
3. Their training assisted some of the women in finding paid employment.
4. The beginnings of a new culture of resistance to arms proliferation were reported, with women providing a previously unappreciated capacity to support a comprehensive disarmament and peace-building process.

The durability of these changes in the volatile post-conflict era needs to be evaluated, so that lessons learned from Albania can be incorporated into future disarmament work, and ongoing initiatives can be observed and further supported.

#### UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)

In addition to the 'weapons for development' programme described above, UNIFEM has undertaken a range of activities around gender, peace and security. An independent expert assessment

of the impact of war and armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building was launched in October 2002. Entitled *Women, War and Peace*, the assessment contains a detailed chapter on prevention, including recommendations on DDR and security sector reform as well women's role in early warning activities. As a follow-up to these recommendations, the Fund has developed a programme on early warning indicators, described elsewhere in this issue.<sup>22</sup>

UNIFEM is currently surveying the DDR activities of United Nations departments and missions to map DDR processes of the past, those currently underway and those planned for the near future. This will be followed by in-depth analysis of three case studies to determine the extent to which gender is mainstreamed throughout planning and execution of United Nations-led or supported DDR programmes in Albania, the Solomon Islands and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The outcome of this exercise will include a comprehensive account of lessons learned as well as a range of tools, including checklists, for aid agencies and practitioners to better identify and address the gender dimensions of the DDR process. Following my visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May 2003, UNIFEM helped UNDP to organize and conduct a training course on the gender aspects of DDR in that country, designed as part of a regional strategy to ensure that the needs of female ex-combatants and dependents are addressed through women's participation in all stages of the DDR process.

#### DEPARTMENT OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (DPKO)

In 2000 DPKO stated: 'Women's presence [in peacekeeping missions] improves access and support for local women; it makes male peacekeepers more reflective and responsible; and it broadens the repertoire of skills and styles available within the mission, often with the effect of reducing conflict and confrontation. Gender mainstreaming is not just fair, it is beneficial.'<sup>23</sup> Two years later, speaking to the Security Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno, commented that while initially sceptical about gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping, he now recognized that he had misunderstood what the notion was about:

Gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping is about recognizing that all segments of society are affected by conflict, sometimes in different ways, and that all segments of society also have a role to play in helping to end the violence and lay the foundation for sustainable peace. Traditionally we have underestimated this point, because we wrongly assumed that conflict and peace are gender-blind. They are not. Certain crimes, whose incidents can increase in a conflict setting, are specifically targeted at women and girls. Certain efforts at reconciliation have a totally different dynamic when women are included in the peace process.

As a result, he concluded, 'the need for heightened gender perspective applies to all areas of work in a peacekeeping mission.'<sup>24</sup> The DPKO has addressed the need for gender perspectives through several operational activities. A 'gender and peacekeeping' training module has been developed for use by military personnel and civilian police. Five peacekeeping missions have staff dedicated to gender mainstreaming.<sup>25</sup> For example, in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the Office of Gender Affairs promotes gender mainstreaming, training, research and disaggregated data collection to achieve gender awareness in MONUC and the increased participation of women in peace-building and DDR processes.<sup>26</sup>



## OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)

OCHA has the responsibility in its humanitarian coordinator role to promote, coordinate and facilitate gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action. This involves the undertaking of generic work, as well as coordinating specific actions. In 1999, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted a Policy Statement on the 'Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance'.<sup>27</sup> In the Policy Statement, IASC committed to: formulate specific strategies for ensuring that gender issues are brought into the mainstream of activities within the IASC areas of responsibility; develop capacity for systematic gender mainstreaming in programmes, policies, actions and training; and ensure reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming. Since then, within the context of humanitarian assistance, gender dimensions have been discussed in forums ranging from the Security Council, the General Assembly and IASC to grassroots organizations in conflict-affected regions.

Hence gender-sensitive assistance became a priority for OCHA, as a means to mitigate the negative effects of emergencies on men and women. In particular, OCHA is stepping up its competences and capacities to enhance the protection of women and girls in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons. Too often their security is particularly threatened by the uncontrolled use and circulation of small arms and light weapons.

OCHA also recognizes the need of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the post-conflict, reconstruction and recovery phase of an emergency, which is often delayed by the plague of small arms. This is why OCHA is promoting the change of the traditional perception of women and girls only as victims, towards a wide recognition of the role they can potentially play in pacification and reconstruction efforts, which has often proven to be crucial.

## UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

Because armed conflicts violate the rights of girls and boys (including the right to life, to health, to education, to an adequate standard of living, and to protection from exploitation, abuse, neglect and discrimination), UNICEF is involved in efforts to eradicate small arms and light weapons. The use of small arms and light weapons make gender biases more dangerous to women and girls, greatly increasing the threat of physical and sexual violence in refugee camps, homes and communities. At the end of 2001, UNICEF launched a pilot project to 'disarm the minds' of children and youth by raising awareness and addressing the impact of small arms. The project addresses small arms at two levels: changing the attitudes of families and communities, and also increasing attention among decision-makers in global, regional and national forums.

UNICEF is currently playing a lead role in the demobilization of child soldiers in a number of post-conflict situations. It is crucial that the needs of girls are met by demobilization programmes. For example, in Sierra Leone, although the handing in of a weapon was not required for entry into the DDR programme (a condition that often excludes girl soldiers), UNICEF and its partners found that very few girls came forward to participate. As a result, UNICEF and its partners are implementing a programme targeting the specific needs of 1,000 girls who were abducted during the conflict but did not participate in the DDR process.

## COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES AND NGOs

Article 71 of the United Nations Charter provides a mechanism whereby representatives of civil society can contribute to the work of the Organization. Women's organizations have been consistent advocates for the total disarmament of biological, chemical and particularly nuclear weapons, as well as landmines and small arms. They have also monitored and lobbied international meetings focused on disarmament, such as the General Assembly's three Special Sessions on Disarmament, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Mine Ban Convention, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the First Committee of the General Assembly on Disarmament and International Security. Bringing women organizing around peace, security and disarmament to such meetings provides an opportunity for disarmament specialists, diplomats and representatives of concerned NGOs to share information and knowledge.

Since 1984, women have used the annual statement on International Women's Day in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to present gender perspectives on nuclear disarmament, weapons in space, small arms, conversion and the links between disarmament and development. Their 2003 statement speaks to the challenge of maintaining the real strides forward in understanding the gender components of disarmament, which is, of course, the need for sustained momentum:

While NGOs try to make the best use possible of the symbolic importance of International Women's Day and October 31st, none of us are satisfied with flowery congratulations for two days of the year. We would rather the Conference on Disarmament and the Security Council demonstrate an understanding of gender issues through the kind of routine consideration of women's experiences that they have promised us, rather than the surface level annual gesture which they currently assume to suffice. Gender issues are relevant every day. A gender perspective on disarmament puts the question of weapons and their relation to security into a human context without which the development of a human security paradigm is impossible. Their decisions and experiences in relation to weapons involve human beings operating in their social and political environment, and therefore have clear gender dimensions.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

From the first resolution of the General Assembly, which called for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations has upheld disarmament as the most logical and practical step towards preventing violent conflict and has advocated building confidence between nations through the rule of law and not force.<sup>29</sup> Each Secretary-General has called for the complete disarmament of

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the nuclear stockpile, now estimated at 31,000 weapons.<sup>30</sup> Secretaries-General Lie, Hammarskjold, U-Thant, Waldheim, de Cuellar, Boutros-Ghali and Annan have all consistently expressed alarm about military expenditure, and the dwindling pool of resources remaining for human development and human security—which includes environmental security, economic security, the freedom to express individual identity and to exercise collective social rights and responsibilities.

In 2000 the first resolution of the Security Council concerning women, peace and security affirmed the need to increase women's 'role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution', and recognized the utility of their 'full participation in the peace process [which] can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.' UNIFEM played a key role in the adoption of this resolution, providing technical advice and bringing women from various conflict zones to testify before the Security Council. Resolution 1325 is a powerful mechanism for advancing the goals of international peace and security. And while the developments in the field of disarmament outlined above are positive first steps, we have only just begun to realize the potential of resolution 1325 and the contribution that gender perspectives can make towards reaching these goals.

## Notes

1. Over the course of the twentieth century civilian fatalities in war climbed dramatically from 5% at the turn of the century, to 15% during the First World War, to 65% by the end of the Second World War, to more than 75% in the wars of the 1990s. See *Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict*, Security Council document S/2001/331 of 30 March 2001, available on the page < <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/reports/2001/sgrep01.htm> > .
2. Security Council resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000, available at < [http://www.un.org/events/res\\_1325e.pdf](http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf) > .
3. Chris Hedges, 2003, *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning*, New York, Anchor Books.
4. See full discussion in Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick, forthcoming, *A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction*.
5. The recent examples of Palestinian women deciding to become suicide bombers may mark a change in this regard.
6. UNIFEM's *Progress of the Worlds Women*, volume II (available at < [http://www.unifem.org/index.php?f\\_page\\_pid=10](http://www.unifem.org/index.php?f_page_pid=10) >) tracks the progress made on the commitment to a 30% minimum of women's political participation, agreed by the world's governments in the Beijing Platform for Action.
7. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, United Nations Office, 2002, *You do the Math: Counting the Participation of Women in Leadership Roles at the United Nations since 1992*.
8. Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General, version cited updated 29 July 2003, available at < <http://www.un.org/News/ocsg/srsg/table.htm> > .
9. See the complete text of the declaration at < <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instate/e5dplw.htm#three> > .
10. United Nations, Economic and Social Council, *Coordination of policies and activities of specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the theme: Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations System*, document E/1997/L.30 of 14 July 1997, available at < <http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/docs/1997/e1997-l30.htm> > .
11. See the *Briefing Notes* at < <http://disarmament.un.org/gender.htm> > .
12. Wendy Cukier, 2001, *Gender and Small Arms*, a paper presented to Gender Perspectives on Disarmament seminar, United Nations, New York, 14 March 2001.
13. Vanessa Farr, 2003, Gender Awareness and Research and Policy Making, *African Security Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, available at < <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ASR/12No1/Com4.pdf> > .
14. See contribution by H. Myrntinen on page 37.
15. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, United Nations Office, 2002, *op. cit.*
16. These trends are confirmed by two independent experts commissioned by UNIFEM to carry out an assessment of the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building; see Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 2002, *Women War and Peace*, New York, UNIFEM. Also see contribution by V. Farr on page 25.
17. Mary Diaz, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, UNIFEM on-line working group on empowering the girl child, 6 December 1999.
18. See Global Policy Forum, *United Nations Financial Crisis*, available at < <http://www.globalpolicy.org/finance/> > .
19. Thalif Deen, *There's no business like war business*, United Nations Inter-Press Service, available at < <http://www.worldcitizens.org/warbusiness.html> > .
20. For the text of the Women's Petition and details about its delivery to the United Nations Secretary-General, see < <http://www.isis.aust.com/iwd/peace/petition.htm> > .
21. See contribution by A. Marcaillou on page 47.
22. UNIFEM's research on gender early warning indicators is described in the article by Felicity Hill on page 17.

23. United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Lessons Learned Unit, 2000, *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations*, para. 6, available at < <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/Gender%20Mainstreaming.pdf>> .
24. Statement before the 4589th meeting of the Security Council, 25 July 2002, New York, Security Council document S/PV.4589.
25. See < [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/gm\\_facts/Dpko.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/gm_facts/Dpko.pdf)> .
26. For more on the activities of the Office of Gender Affairs, see < <http://www.monuc.org/gender/>> .
27. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 1999, *Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance*, available at < <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/IASConGender.doc>> .
28. Text of the statement is available on the page < <http://www.wilpf.int.ch/statements/sindex.htm>> .
29. The first resolution of the newly formed United Nations unanimously called for 'the elimination of national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.'
30. See Nuclear Files, available at < <http://www.nuclearfiles.org/kinuclearweapons/stockpile.htm>> and Nuclear Notebook of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, available at < <http://www.thebulletin.org/issues/nukenotes/nukenote.html>> .