

Shifting Attitudes? DPKO Comments During Debates

DPKO, as the department responsible for all UN peacekeeping operations, has a key role in the implementation of 1325. DPKO has actively developed internal policy and guidance for its missions in the implementation of 1325. It was the first peace and security agency to establish the position of gender adviser in headquarters and in missions. When addressing the Security Council at the annual debates on women, peace and security, the heads of DPKO have acknowledged that internal attitudes and resistance within DPKO have been a challenge to implementing resolution 1325. Following are excerpts of their statements:

■ Jean-Marie Guéhenno in 2002 (from S/PV.4589)

‘Before addressing the areas in which the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has made concrete progress in implementing that resolution, I would like to say something on a personal note. When I arrived at the head of the DPKO, almost two years ago, I sensed from various quarters some scepticism about the dialogue about gender mainstreaming. Many appeared to misperceive it as a superficial exercise in political correctness. I should confess that I was not always immune from this misperception.

It is now plainly obvious, though, that such an attitude is not only misguided; it is also a drastic misunderstanding of what gender mainstreaming is all about. Gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping is about recognising 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. In some case, women’s groups comprise individuals who were not engaged in combat, and thus might be more open to dialogue. In other cases, the women’s group concerns can be more radicalised, because they consist of those whose husbands, fathers and sons were killed during the fighting. Furthermore, we should not assume that all combatants are men. There are women combatants, and, sadly, child soldiers as well.

The need for heightened gender perspective applies to all areas of work in a peacekeeping mission, including in areas one might otherwise overlook. Take, for example, a very small but illustrative case. In East Timor, the United Nations was given the unprecedented role of administering the territory. This included running the prisons and building correctional facilities. It may not immediately occur to many that not all prisoners are men. There are women who commit crimes, and they are in quite separate prison facilities. As a result, there is a requirement to hire women

corrections officers, often through proactive recruitment. In order to properly budget for these distinct requirements, among others, one needs to be able to forecast crime rates among women. The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), facing urgent demands, did not think about this until its work was considerably advanced. It thus had to address this issue post facto, once the recruitment process for prison guards was almost complete.

Taking all of these factors into account is not political correctness. It is just part of the job. The example that I have just given is a very small one among hundreds. There can be a gender dimension to virtually every aspect of what peacekeepers do, whether it would be dealing with the perpetrators of crime, the victims of violence, or the political actors and civic leaders with whom the real prospects of sustainable peace reside. Recognizing these facts and taking action accordingly is what gender mainstreaming is all about.

Put simply, the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) has precipitated a change in perceptions and it is natural that this process of change can sometimes be slow, face setbacks and scepticism. Inevitably, however, misguided cynicism will be overtaken by the facts. It is only a matter of time.’

■ Jean-Marie Guéhenno in 2005 (from S/PV.5294)

‘I should not have to clarify that, but it must be noted that a significant proportion of peacekeeping personnel still do not have a conceptual understanding of what gender

mainstreaming entails, nor have they grasped that it is about more than just hiring more women. That may explain in part why we have yet to institutionalise many of our gender mainstreaming strategies. Too often, it is individual commitment, rather than institutionalized mechanisms, that drives our work. We have also made limited progress in increasing the number of female personnel in peacekeeping, particularly in uniformed functions and in senior leadership positions. The perspectives of women are still not adequately harnessed to inform our planning and operational activities. Thus, whilst gender advisors hold regular consultations with women leaders and civil society organizations in peacekeeping missions, such consultations are not established practice for all mission components.

In recognition of those shortcomings, in March of this year I issued a policy statement on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping that provides an operational framework at the field and Headquarters levels to implement resolution 1325 (2000). As part of that policy, and in line with the recommendation of the Council last year, my Department is currently finalizing a comprehensive action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) that builds on the system-wide action plan that is before the Council today.

In renewing my Department's commitment to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), I intend to vigorously address these challenges in the coming years.

First, I will emphasize, more than I have done in the past, that the responsibility for implementing the resolution does not fall on the shoulders of our gender advisers alone, or solely on our female staff. All men and women, particularly at senior levels, at Headquarters and in the field, have responsibilities to implement the resolution.'

■ **Jean-Marie Guéhenno in 2006 (from S/PV.5556)**

'Notwithstanding those necessary and important foundation blocks, real gaps remain in our implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In seeking to transform our working culture, there are undoubtedly pockets of resistance. We have made progress, but some of our personnel have yet to understand their own responsibility for implementation of resolution 1325 (2000)—that it is not the sole responsibility of gender advisers, nor can it be just outsourced to our United Nations partners. I also recognize the need to build a critical mass of male champions to advocate and support the translation of our commitments to gender equality into practice. In that regard, I believe that my department needs a senior male envoy to support our political advocacy efforts.'

■ **Jean-Marie Guéhenno in 2007 (from S/PV.5766)**

'The theme of today's debate is "Towards coherent and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2005)". In the past seven years our strategy has been to focus on the implementation of the individual parts of the resolution. To that end, we have indeed made

progress in the implementation of our responsibilities. I would suggest, however, that it is time to review that fragmented and disparate approach to the implementation of the resolution. We know that resolving conflict requires a multifaceted and inter-linked approach. If we are therefore to empower women in that process, our efforts will also have to be integrated. Coherent and effective implementation first requires that we more fully understand the relationship between protection and empowerment in all their aspects, as set forth in the resolution, and that we understand how that affects the role and contribution of women to the maintenance of peace and security. Strategies must thereafter be developed that incorporate a range of mutually reinforcing and coordinated activities aimed at the full implementation of the resolution.'

■ **Alain Le Roy in 2008 (from S/PV.6005)**

'Finally, I would like to reiterate the full commitment of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to cooperating with the Council as it oversees the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) during the coming year. I strongly urge the Council to take women's participation and contributions to peace processes into account when it decides upon the mandates of peacekeeping missions, undertakes field visits, requests briefings from the leadership of peacekeeping missions, and reviews periodic reports from our missions. The commitment of Members will allow for enhanced opportunities for the exchange of views beyond this single annual gathering.'