

Women in Security: Increasing Leadership Opportunities at the UN
Preliminary Actionable Outcomes from Workshop
Monday, October 27, 2008

Objectives: This workshop provided an opportunity for members of UN entities, member states, and civil society to discuss the situation of women in mid-level and senior level positions in UN peace operations. The open and interactive discussion focused on thematic issues from the lack of career mobility, the need for better mentoring, problematic recruitment processes, and the need to improve conditions of service. A list of actionable outcomes and key themes have been compiled based on the detailed feedback.

Preliminary Actionable Outcomes

Mobility

- To encourage lateral movement, a system could be worked out whereby women could go to the field to fill a gap for 1-2 month periods, to get a taste for what its like in the field, know what they are facing, and feel more prepared for challenges.
- Women (and men) should be encouraged to move laterally, and there should be greater coordination between agencies and funds to facilitate this.
- Promote greater recognition of the value of serving in peacekeeping missions. Many felt that DKPO appreciates this, but that the rest of the Secretariat did not. Field experiences should be discussed more and assessed to see what value lessons learned there could have for headquarters.
- Implement trainings in management and decision-making, assertiveness and public speaking, coaching and mentoring, and cross functional areas, as well as skills building.

Mentoring

- Informal mentoring could be supplemented with formal training courses and workshops, so women hear the positive experiences of others who have worked in the field, and learn how to deal with specific issues that will arise in the field. Particular emphasis should be placed on assertiveness, public speaking, how to write a report, and team management.
- Reassess the message being sent by the UN to encourage women to apply. Is it being sent strongly enough? Can it be made more efficient? There should be monitoring and evaluation to see what has actually been done in the UN, and to see how many different ways the UN is currently pushing to increase women's leadership.

Recruitment

- Revamp the Galaxy system, especially with regards to the phrasing of vacancy announcements. They need to be made more attractive to women.
- Include a monitoring question to learn where people are hearing about vacancy announcements, to identify which outreach activities are being effective.
- Make courses available to explain to people on the outside how to maneuver through the PHP.
- Create filter questions to reduce the overall number of applications into the Galaxy system, but increase the quality of those that do get in. Despite the difficulty of the

system, a huge number of applicants get in, yet 80% are not qualified. There is a need to manage the quality of talent that is getting in, as well as working to make sure that quality candidates are getting in at all.

- Improve efforts to recruit people from backgrounds other than politics, such as engineers.
- Address manageable structural issues, for example by promoting sensitivity to the male versus the female CV. Women tend to have more breaks in their careers because of family issues. There needs to be flexibility to look at this and take this into consideration. Recruiters must be able to look at overall quality of service, not just quantity or an unbroken record.
- Create a centralized place where people can go to float names.

Conditions of service

- Inform member states regarding what is needed in peacekeeping operations, in terms of separate accommodations and facilities. Where these requirements are already being made known, enforcement should be improved.
- Create accountability mechanisms for managers, so that they will better identify how stress is affecting their employees, especially in the field. If they burn out too early, they will not come back into the system.
- For women with young children, recognize other career tracks, such as non-peacekeeping placements as special envoys, which tend to be shorter term assignments.
- Work with the Senior Leadership Appointments Section and other units to harmonize conditions of service.
- Provide counseling in the field; recognize stress/burnout in the field.

Communication with member states

- Address the tendency to preach to the converted by communicating and cooperating with the military side more, as opposed to just political people already familiar with and supportive of 1325. Target military and police advisors and attaches.
- Identify member states that are doing a good job recruiting women and extrapolate lessons learned and best practices that could be applied in other areas. For example, South Africa has 25 female generals. Learning how to increase the recruitment of women into the military in member states can improve recruitment of women to peacekeeping operations.
- Show member states how the recruitment of women can help them to attain operational goals, through education of how women in peacekeeping missions often have an advantage in terms of winning trust and reaching segments of the population that men often cannot.
- Coach member states on how to adapt internal structures and legal frameworks to 1325.
- Promote dialogue with military and police contributing countries, but make sure to research and see what has already been done in this regard, and have facts to present. Follow up on the Pearson military and police consultations.
- NGOs should spend less time lobbying DPKO, where their message has been heard, and devote more resources to building constituencies within member states to change problematic national level legal and institutional frameworks.