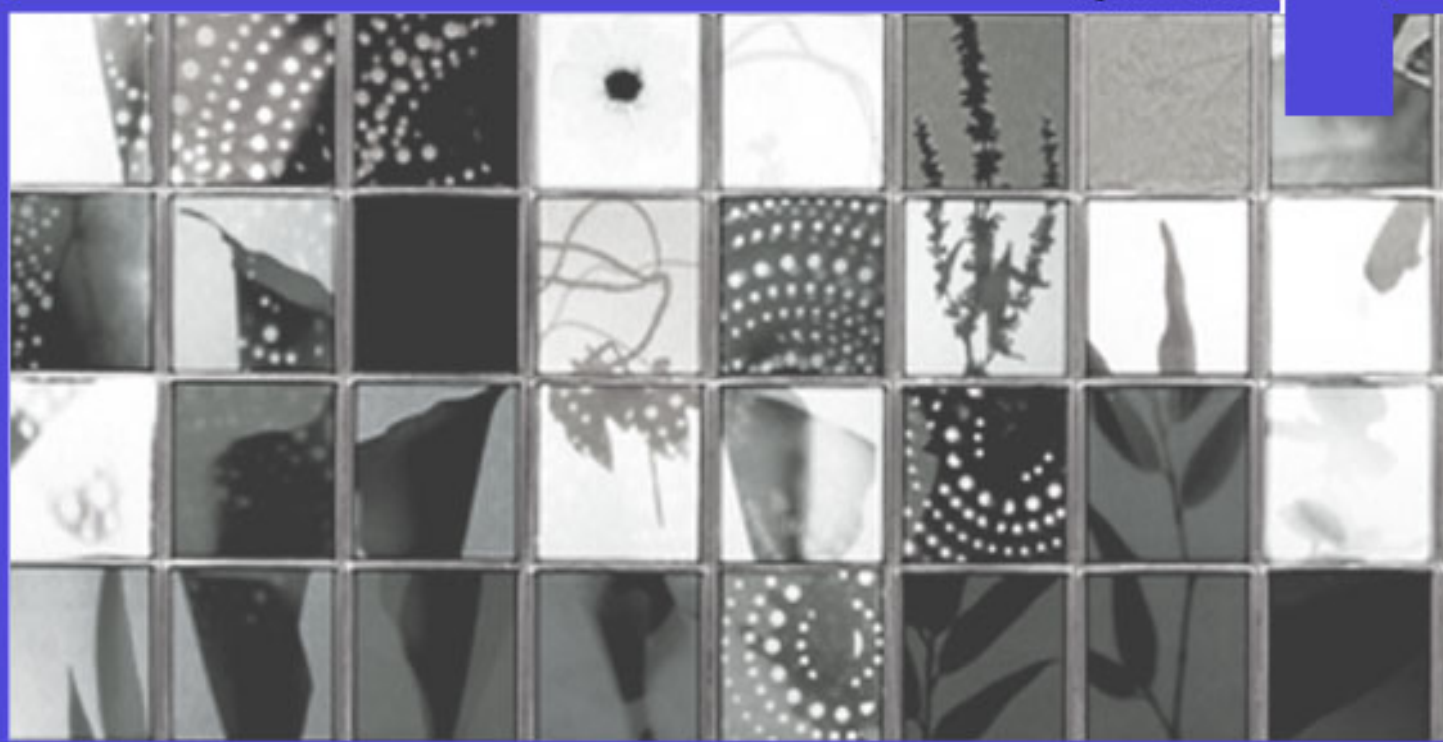


The Critical Route of Action Plans

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Women, Peace and Security
Perspectives of the Resolution 1325 in Latin America



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THE CRITICAL ROUTE OF ACTION PLANS IN LATIN AMERICA

1. Introduction

This paper aims at making a first approach to the debate on the enforcement of the United Nations Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security within the Latin-American context. Eight years have passed by since the creation of the Resolution and the existing problems for its enforcement bring about the debate of the gender equality issue within the Defense and Armed Forces sector, both at the international, regional and domestic level. In Latin America, the approach to this issue makes evident a series of setbacks that stem from the processes of recovery and consolidation of democracy and of how these were related with the creation of military institutions in accordance with democratic principles. It is sought to explain that only as far as the military institutions are part of the reform and modernization process, the proper scenarios can be found in order to incorporate the equity and inclusion issues regarding the excluded sectors, as it is the case of women.

The paper starts by analyzing the objectives of the United Nations Resolution 1325 and the advances and hindrances come across during its enforcement. Subsequently, the context of the Defense and Armed Forces in Latin-America is analyzed, with a special emphasis on Latin America and its corresponding sub-regions: the Southern Cone and the Andean Region. Regarding this item, there is an attempt to explain the differences between both regions, in matters of socio-political scenarios and the advances in the reform and modernization of its military institutions. Later, a brief assessment of the advances in the enforcement of Resolution 1325 within the region is made, regarding the participation of women in the Armed Forces and peace operations.

Finally, some basics are proposed in order to design an Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in the different Latin-American countries, considering the urgent need for every country to have a public policy that promotes Resolution 1325, thus giving way to the realization of a coherent and sustainable Action Plan.

2. The United Nations and Resolution 1325

On October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council approved Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. One of its substantial sections reaffirmed the important role that women perform in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and emphasized the importance of their participation on an equal basis and full intervention in all initiatives aimed at keeping and fostering peace and security.¹ The Resolution accredited the urgent need to incorporate a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations and to adopt precise measures in order to protect women and girls from human rights violations all along the armed conflict process. For the sake of putting it into operation, the Secretary-General was asked to point out the progress made regarding that matter in his reports to the Security Council.

The United Nations Security Council received in 2006 the first report from the Secretary-General on the monitoring of the 2005-2007 Action Plan for the enforcement of Resolution 1325 within the whole of the United Nations system.² This report evidenced that despite the achieved advances, some institutional and

¹ United Nations Security Council, *Security Council Resolution 1325*, S/RES/1325, 31 October 2000.

² The Action Plan corresponding to the period 2005-2007 was requested by the Security Council through its Presidency on October 28th, 2004 (S/PRST/2004/40) and represented the first attempt from the United Nations system to design a United Nations holistic and coherent strategy to enforce Resolution 1325. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security*, S/2007/567, 12 September 2007, 1.

organizational obstacles still remained to be overcome. It was deemed right to create essential instruments to efficiently measure the progress accomplished as to the objectives, whereas the Secretary-General was assigned with the gathering and compiling of good practices and experiences, and identifying existing voids and problems in the deployment of the Action Plan.

The report presented by the Secretary-General on the issue, showed that important advances had been achieved in the creation of capacities in matters of prevention, resolution of conflicts and in peace-building processes; protection of women and girls human rights; prevention of gender-based violence in armed conflicts and participation of women in political, social and security sectors. Contrarily to the advances, problems had to be faced regarding the application of the Plan due to the lack of cohesion, insufficient financing of projects, fragmentation and insufficient institutional capacity of supervision and accountability. As a matter of fact, the lack of efforts agreed with governments and civil society made difficult the deployment of the Plan.

The conclusion of the report evidenced the existence of an enormous deficiency in the layout of the 2005-2007 Action Plan, as it was not formulated as an instrument of supervision, assessment or accountability, but as a compilation of activities from all the United Nations agencies, fragmented and not coordinated, in such a way that the true impact on women's lives could not be assessed.

As a response, the 2008-2009 Action Plan was designed, where all activities within the United Nations were consolidated in five thematic spheres: prevention, participation, protection, aid and recovery of regulatory aspects. The adoption of enforcement strategies was agreed for the sake of putting the Action Plan into practice; these were oriented towards the

formulation of policies, the promotion, the building of capacities, the construction of alliances and contact networks and the provision of goods and services. The Plan also has an administration framework based on concrete and quantifiable results at the national and international levels, so as to possibly measure the impact of results through the creation of gauges, data bases and an accountability process.

The general aim of this Action Plan is to develop the capacity of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, and its humanitarian and reconstruction operations, and to support the Member States efforts directed to achieve gender equality and the women empowerment in peace and security spheres. In order to accomplish that, all Member States - especially those going through a conflict or post-conflict situation - were advised to fashion their own national Action Plans in order to further the enforcement of Resolution 1325.

3. Tangible results

Undoubtedly, Resolution 1325 promoted a genuine campaign of inclusion and equality that was adopted by several institutions and feminine movements all around the world. Numerous countries also catered for the demands in different ways. Some of them preferred to integrate

the Resolution to the national acts and policies, as in the case of Colombia, Fiji and Israel.³ Some others decided on shaping their own national Action Plans, as in the case of Denmark, United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Canada,

The United Nations suggests the elaboration of a comprehensive Action Plan that specifies its content in a document.

³ United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, *Securing Equality, engendering peace: A guide to policy and planning on Women, Peace and Security (RCS 1325)*, (New York: INSTRAW, 2006).

Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Finland, Philippines, Holland and Iceland, where each of them had different experiences as to the actors, structures, resources and accountabilities, though all were focused on promoting a higher participation of women in peace and security issues.

In order to better execute Resolution 1325, the United Nations suggests the elaboration of a comprehensive Action Plan that specifies its content in a document and includes the content of national policies related to the gender approach. For its design, it recommends the use of three methodologies: strategic planning, participative planning and gender and socioeconomic analysis.⁴ The unification of a steering committee, the participation of diverse actors and the administration of a precise diagnosis would be the main features required to design a sustainable and coherent Action Plan, which holds reasonable aims, specific responsibilities and participation and shared accountability from several sectors of society.

So far, the lack of political will, economic resources, capacity and coordination, and monitoring and assessment, have been the main hindrances to the successful implementation of Resolution 1325. There are many examples from which to draw on important experiences, taking into consideration that any Action Plan depends on both its formulation and the political-social and economic scenario where its implementation is required.

4. Latin America and the context of Defense and the Armed Forces

Latin America, especially South America, becomes a scenario with important characteristics in comparison with the rest of the countries in the world. The development of the Defense and Armed

Forces sectors in these countries emerges as a relevant assessing parameter regarding their state and democratic modernization. In general terms, the reforms of the Defense and Armed Forces sectors in Latin America have been characterized by the outcome of political transitions towards democracy. Reforms to security were not intended to be made during non-democratic regimes, as dictatorships' need to reform themselves was scarce. The arrival of democracy to the region initiated a period of institutional reforms, including to a greater or lesser extent the Armed Forces.

The first modernization or reform period in the Defense sector within South America (over de 1980s and half of the 1990s) prioritized the political-institutional spheres, with the aim of exercising control and leadership of the Armed Forces. This took place while considering the immediate past of dictatorial military administrations, what gave way to an insufficient though important theoretical output within the region that helped to a great extent ponder the Armed Forces as a democratic institution. In spite of the fact that this process is still present in some countries, it was the start of a period of reforms and modernization that considered Defense as a public good.

Democratic stability in the countries of the region (over the second half of the 1990s and the 2000s), gave way to a new period of institutional reforms in the Defense and Armed Forces sector. The normalization of the democratic regimes, the periodicity of elections and the ever more efficient civil control of the military, brought about new necessities in the agenda of the sector. Favoring subordinate military institutions did not suffice anymore, thus it was necessary to democratize the Armed Forces, what in turn implied substantial changes in various areas, such as: legal economy, military justice, military service, budget, human rights, and so on. Good examples of this process are the Chilean

⁴ INSTRAW, *Securing Equality: engendering peace: A guide to policy and planning on Women, Peace and Security*.

and Argentinean cases. In both countries, modernization projects arise along with the consolidation of democracy, which make possible the articulation of various actors in the implemented reforms. Participation of parliaments and civil society in the promotion and design of the reforms in the Defense sector marked a higher level of construction of public policies. The existence of political will, parliamentary initiative and active social participation would be, ideally, the suitable formula for the modernization of the sector. In some countries, reforms comprise the whole of the defense and security sector, while crucial importance is given to justice. In this case, the viewpoints are much more convergent, as there is a common work platform that articulates the modernization of the state and of each structure conforming it. In this scenario, issues like human rights, transparency, gender approach and indigenous peoples' participation are a compulsory subject for all sectors.

As of the 2000s, a process of political-institutional crisis arises in the region - especially in the Andean -, which conveys the transcendental change in the prevailing political ideology, and whose outcome is the start of state reforms, as it is the case of countries like Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador. Here, new modernization and institutional reform tendencies surge, where the Armed Forces are included too. Being a pretty particular process, this is worth studying, given that it poses, among other issues, the reform of the security and defense sector —, this reform turns quite often into the nationalization of security and defense policies, convergent with the natural resources nationalization policy.

It is important to mention at this point, that the countries in the Andean region (Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela)⁵ have gone through political-institutional

events that have hampered the modernization processes. On the one hand are the continual political-social crises that these countries have undergone - from different dimensions - over the last years, which have conditioned to a great extent the institutional behavior. On the other hand, many of the Armed Forces in these countries tend to play a part in domestic security issues like drug-trafficking, public order and even citizen security, what has hampered the development of reform and modernization processes, given that the political scenario compelled the military institution to participate as an important operator in governmental stability. In some countries the reform of the Defense sector has not been a State policy, on the contrary, the continual political crises have given rise to policies quite fragmented and tending mostly to protect political, institutional and sometimes foreign interests, leaving aside social and collective interests and frequently, the State security itself.

In a worst case scenario, some countries have not implemented any reform process, and have been part of uncertain and informal adaptation processes, which harmoniously matched with political interests that have left doggedly aside any modernization process. In these cases, issues like civil control, legislative initiative and social participation are incipient and are applied out of habit, which constitutes a real gap in the progress of much more advanced issues such as, for instance, gender equality and multiculturalism.

If we also take into consideration the different paces in the incorporation to democratic life of society in general terms and of defense institutions, it can be observed that civil society is much more proactive, dynamic and participative, what in many countries promotes institutional modernization processes. This is an interesting alternative in countries where democratic transition has not born great changes in the defense and Armed Forces

⁵ With the exception of Colombia, owing to the special characteristics of its defense and security system, given the current domestic armed conflict.

sector, and where the definition of the defense and security policy has not got much to do with the State and social necessities, as it is the case of the Andean region.

5. Latin America: Advances in gender equality within the Armed Forces and peace operations

There have been no clear policies in Latin America that set the posed aims into motion.

The search for full, egalitarian women's participation in all peace and security initiatives, the mainstreaming of gender questions and the systematic and

increasing presence of women in peace operations, are the main mandates that derive from the enforcement of Resolution 1325. However, despite the fact that the Resolution has been in force for eight years now, there have been no clear policies in Latin America that set the posed aims into motion, at least in a sustainable way.

Until 2008, the presence of Latin America in peace operations increased by approximately 700% since 2000; however, the presence of women from the region represented 17% of the total amount of women involved in operations⁶, out of this, a great deal was assigned to health and administrative areas. No doubt the important issue is about other than increasing quantitatively the female presence in peace operations in particular, or in all peace and security spheres. What is truly important here is to be aware of what the contribution of professional female personnel is to the peace and security spheres, considering in turn the new necessities of the sector. On the other hand, this must help to think how these new spheres of female participation

⁶ Uruguay has the highest participation of women, then come Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Paraguay. Marcela Donadio, *A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America*, (Buenos Aires: RESDAL, 3rd Edition, August 2008).

contribute to deepen the gender equality approach within the region. While both issues are not clearly seen, it will be difficult for the involved sectors to boost any policy in this regard, and shape their particular Action Plans.

Conversely, it must be considered that in countries where no reform and modernization processes have been implemented as regards the Defense and Armed Forces sector, it is more difficult to debate the gender equality issue and the enforcement of Resolution 1325, than in countries that have been implementing important advances in the democratization and modernization of their defense institutions. It should also be kept in mind that this is still a complex matter in all regional countries.

Within the Latin-American Armed Forces, there is a poor female presence, with the possible exception of Venezuela – which is the only country in the region that has women holding the rank of General and a high female participation in their Armed Forces (approximately 10%). As for the rest of the Andean Region countries, female presence barely reaches 7%⁷; besides, there are no women holding the rank of General yet, largely due to the fact that the military institutes for the formation of professional military women have been opened for just a few years now, what renders the process even more incipient.

Concerning peace operations, the shape of things is much the same, given that in many countries the percentages of women deployed have rather decreased over the years. Participation of women in peace operations in Peru reaches 0.83% in 2008; 321 military participated in peace operations in Ecuador from 2007 to 2008, out of which only two were women; only 17% of the totals of Military Observers in Bolivia were women in 2008 and the

⁷ Research in preparation “Women in the Armed Forces: A gender approach to peace operations”, RESDAL, 2009.

female personnel in the Contingent barely reached 3%.⁸ Irrespective of these percentages, the true problem lies in the tasks performed by women when they are deployed in the field. A great deal devotes to nursing and administrative tasks, what in no way reasserts the gender equality but reproduces the inequity of roles.

A quick diagnosis of the situation of military women in the region shows that much remains to be done yet. Military institutions have opened access for some years now, though it is still undefined if this has been the outcome of the democratizing and participating tendency of all institutions, or just part of the necessity to change the defense and security perspective in the face of an ever changing world. Both arguments are easy to explain, though in countries where the civil-military relations, the civil control and the military reform are still pending matters, the described processes are very hard to apply, at least thoroughly.

Here is precisely where the problem about the enforcement of Resolution 1325 and the design of Action Plans lies. Regarding this, it is worth mentioning the advances made by Chile and Argentina, where multisectorial efforts are made in order to devise Action Plans that may be ready by 2009. Possibly, this enormous progress owes to the sustained boost given by President Michelle Bachelet - who held the office of Ministry of Defense some years ago - in Chile, and the current Minister Nilda Garré in Argentina. However, we should not overlook that both countries have been working out – with different levels of priority, though – reform processes for the defense and Armed Forces sector that situate them a step further as to the reflection on the institutional opening up and modernization.

Yet, whichever the context may be in Latin America and the sub-regions, Action Plans

should tend to reproduce the typical necessities of each place, the promotion of female participation in peace and security issues, considering that the capacities and immediate contexts are quite different to those of the European countries, and therefore, the task involves rethinking the problem of each country. Within this perspective, the elaboration of Action Plans becomes an important encouragement to ponder the gender equality issue in the Defense and Armed Forces sector, what requires the joint participation of political and military authorities that promote the process, of military women themselves, who should give impetus and content to the debate, and of an organized civil society that reflects upon, understands and supports that Action Plan.

6. Action Plans in Latin America: some basic lessons

The development of working lines on women, peace and security implies an institutional construction process within the Defense and Armed Forces sector that includes a gender approach. This should be backed up by a public policy that ponders as a main objective the accomplishment of full and egalitarian participation of women in all peace and security initiatives, the mainstreaming of gender questions and the systematic and increasing presence of women in peace operations.

The main question here is: how to achieve this in a context where the institutional opening up and reform processes of the Defense and Armed Forces sector are still insufficient? Without a doubt, it implies a hard though significant transformation, as long as it helps to rethink institutional and State roles and priorities. An Action Plan can only be the product of a defined

⁸ Research in preparation, RESDAL.

policy; if there is no policy, there will be no Action Plan. Therefore, the first step that countries and their institutions should take is to develop a gender equality policy that is related to peace and security, and oriented to fulfilling the United Nations Resolution 1325.

The strategies to devise an Action Plan may vary among countries according to the different contexts and realities; this implies that the actors are not always the same or called the same, and that those steps do not follow a regular sequence. What is paramount here is defining, according to the country, three important elements: who, how and when; who will propose, design and deploy the Action Plan; how they will do it and what the schedule will be like in order to fulfill the projected objectives.

The precision of objectives will determine the elements abovementioned; the fewer the objectives, the larger possibility to fulfill them, providing the objectives are possible to operationalize. In general terms, the main objectives in any national policy referring to women, peace and security should consider:

- Training of capacities on women, peace and security issues, in the Executive Branch, Parliament, Public Force Institutions (Armed Forces and Police), and organized society (NGOs, scholars, social groups, etc).
- Incorporation of women in political and institutional decision-making structures such as Ministries of Defense and Government, Parliamentary Commissions, and Public Force institutions (Armed Forces and Police).
- Systematic participation and increase of women in spheres related to security and defense, such as Ministry of Defense and Government, Armed Forces and Police – advisory, planning, budget, control and fiscalization areas -; and professionalization, training and formation institutes for Commissioned

and Non-commissioned officers; peace operations, in the shape of Contingents and Military Observers.

- Protection of women and girls' human rights as to issues related to armed and non-armed violence.

Those accountable for applying politics through the Action Plan should all be summoned to cooperate in one way or another in the application of the Plan, this involves those who hold the necessary political, institutional and economic resources to attain the objectives, be it the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Government, Ministry of Women, and other related, along with the Parliament and respective commissions. Following this, institutions directly related such as the Armed Forces and the Police must be incorporated, along with all the corresponding command chain. Finally, all civil society organizations that, owing to their objectives, are directly or indirectly related to the issue must be incorporated.

The way countries apply the Action Plan depends on the regulation of each country; however, the existence of a Presidential Directive that promotes the policy along with Parliamentary and Military-Police Directives is essential; this would cover all participation levels and guarantee the development of planned actions. Once the directives are outlined, the development of activities must count on the full participation of all interested agents and of those showing a genuine will to cooperate; this will help accomplish the objectives, but, above all, spread the policy over all levels of society, what presupposes the development of citizenship and security within a gender approach.

The development of control and fiscalization capacities, and the availability of the economic resources required for its implementation are two important issues in the deployment of the Action Plan. As to the first, it is necessary to build the gathering, systematization and

information analysis capacities; these will contribute to having precise information about the issue and consequently, about the monitoring and assessment capacity - basic elements for controlling the development of the Action Plan and the implementation of the policy. As regards the economic resources, we must be clear on that the necessity of an extra budget will only cover the first phase of Plan implementation - which is the formation of extraordinary capacities within institutions – what in subsequent phases should be incorporated to the professional formation needed to have access to certain decision-making and hierarchic positions.

Finally, the scheduling of policy implementation is paramount. In spite of being a State policy of permanent application, it is necessary to settle calendar times during the first phase of implementation, for the sake of fulfilling the objectives. Without this element, there is a risk of blurring the actions in routine actions that end up hampering the operationalization of the policy. It is important, for instance, to settle female participation percentages in political and institutional decision-making and formation spheres, as well as female participation percentages in peace operations.

To sum it up, once the objectives, the actors that will operationalize and control the development of the Action Plan, the control and financing mechanisms and, the implementation times are clearly defined, it will be easier to have a policy whose Action Plan can be feasible.

7. Conclusions

The United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security emphasizes the importance of women participation on equal terms, and their full intervention in all initiatives leading to keeping and fostering peace and security. After a little over eight years of enforcement of the Resolution, it can be observed the

existence of important advances in the issue, though much remains to be done yet. From the beginning, the Action Plans implemented by the United Nations were not enough to consolidate coordination and control mechanisms that ensure the sustainability of implemented measures. As a result, rules of behavior were modified through the 2008-2009 Action Plan, which seeks to develop more appropriate measures in order to achieve two important objectives: the search of full and egalitarian women's participation in all peace and security initiatives and, the mainstreaming of the gender questions. Several European countries have implemented their own Action Plans regarding this issue, what becomes a substantial advance on the question. However, the process is still budding in Latin America, and denotes many difficulties for its execution.

The development of the Defense and Armed Forces sectors in Latin America shows large differences among sub-regions. The Southern Cone, the Andean Region and Central America and the Caribbean are difficult to understand under the same analytical scheme, though it is undeniable that there are important parallelisms among certain sub-regions and countries regarding their institutional development.

The recovery of democracy opened several reform and institutional modernization channels within the Defense and Armed Forces sector, particularly in South America. Issues like civil control and civil-military relations were part of the political-intellectual debate agenda over the 1980s and 1990s. Right after the consolidation of democracy, new reform cores emerged – which already took account of the inclusion of institutional democratization and modernization processes, and incorporated such issues as the reforms to military justice, the compulsory military service, human rights, Ministries of Defense, and so on. These processes were more distinct in

those countries that enjoy certain political and social stability in the region, such as the case of the Southern Cone countries.⁹ Contrasting this group of countries are the Andean Region countries, whose steady political and social unrest required the delay of any reform and modernization process of the Defense and Armed Forces sector. This scenario has given way to the surge of new “progressist” governments since the 2000s, which incorporated a new approach to administration and have been developing a whole strategy heading to the recovery of sovereignty and nationalization of their respective security and defense policies, as in the case of Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela.

Regarding women, peace and security, it is important to admit the advances achieved in countries like Argentina and Chile, where their particular Action Plans are underway. This occurs despite the fact that a previous diagnosis in almost all the countries of the region reports that female participation is still too weak, and nonexistent in some others. Given this reality, it is very hard to work on the issues included in Resolution 1325, especially in the Andean Region, what is not inappropriate but challenging, and compels to rethink the gender equality issue as part of a set of institutional reforms that involve a substantial leap towards the modernization and democratization of the Armed Forces.

From this perspective, the development of Action Plans in the regional countries presupposes the incorporation of several actors, both from the Executive Branch, the legislative power, the military institution and society as a whole. The definition of concrete objectives, specific directives, social participation, control and assessment mechanisms, and precise scheduling of application would be the necessary prerequisites to make Resolution 1325 transform into a public policy in each country that be part of a wider process of reform and

modernization of the Defense and Armed Forces sector, as this is the only way to render it applicable and sustainable in time.

⁹ With the exception of Argentina and its 2001 crisis.

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