

Women in United Nations Peace Operations: Increasing the Leadership Opportunities

With the Support of the Compton Foundation

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THE WOMEN IN PEACE OPERATIONS PROJECT was created in 2006 to improve the capacity of international and regional organizations to engage in peace operations by expanding the opportunities available to women worldwide. In February 2007, WIIS and the Stanley Foundation convened expert group meetings in New York and Washington, which identified barriers to women's advancement and sought concrete ways to improve recruitment and selection of women for peace operations. The findings and recommendations generated during these meetings were published in *United Nations Reform: Improving Peace Operations by Advancing the Role of Women*. This follow up study, supported by The Compton Foundation, aims to improve understanding of the qualities and skills required to lead UN peace operations, promote the development of more transparent procedures for the recruitment of senior managers for peacekeeping missions, and encourage reform to provide expanded opportunities for women's leadership.

WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (WIIS) is the premier global membership organization dedicated to advancing the leadership of women in international peace and security fields. With a growing base of 1,500 members, WIIS is committed to building a worldwide network of women and men who understand the importance of inclusive and diverse participation in peace and security, and support women's engagement in this field.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Nations (UN) peacekeeping is in high demand. With a 400 percent increase in the number of peacekeeping missions in the past two decades, the pressure to quickly launch, staff, and coordinate the military and civilian components of multi-dimensional peace operations has never been greater. Despite the urgent need, UN missions have failed to attract, retain, and advance the most qualified talent in leadership positions, threatening the implementation of demanding peace operations. Women, especially those from non-Western countries, are an untapped and potentially powerful resource to staff and lead these missions. Women remain underrepresented in management positions and are rarely appointed at the highest levels of leadership.

Since the historic adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), the recognition of the important and beneficial role that women play in building sustainable peace has steadily increased. Civil society arguments for women's inclusion in the formal processes of peacemaking and peacebuilding are bolstered by growing evidence of women's impact on the ground in unstable and conflict-affected countries. Numerous policymakers and practitioners within the UN and other multi-lateral organizations are publicly acknowledging the value of women in leadership roles.

Yet the lack of women in senior positions in the UN, particularly in peacekeeping missions, reflects the reality that significant cultural and institutional impediments remain to women's entry and advancement within the UN. As a result, there is frustration with the slow pace of progress both inside and outside the system. There are few mechanisms in place to facilitate regular information sharing between the UN and civil society on this issue. Civil society organizations lack understanding about the skills and requirements for high-level positions, the process for selecting candidates, and the best means to nominate qualified experts. Within the UN, there are traditionally few resources and little attention devoted to outreach and communication with organizations that can access qualified female candidates, or to marketing these positions in a way that will attract the best talent.

Few Women Lead UN Peacekeeping Missions

In 60 years of UN peacekeeping—from 1948 to 2008—only seven women have ever held the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). Why is it so difficult to identify and appoint women to leadership positions in peace operations? This study revealed multiple factors that impede the selection of women at the highest levels of leadership. First, a non-transparent process and the political considerations inherent in the recruitment of SRSG's and Deputy SRSG's (DSRSG) result in the appointment of candidates who tend to be well-known in the UN system, such as ambassadors and permanent representatives. Women, who are underrepresented in these circles, have a distinct disadvantage when inner-circle, high-level diplomats compose the primary selection pool. Candidates without political backing, familiarity with the UN actors, and fluency in the UN "lingo" are at a distinct disadvantage. For those potential leaders outside the UN system, this bias and the inability to tap into external networks presents enormous hurdles.

Second, the bias against candidates from the "outside" may have an impact on the interview process for the recruitment for posts in peace operations. This may have particular implications for women, and especially for women from under-represented regions of the world, who may approach and describe peace and security issues differently. The way the questions are asked, the way the process is conducted, and the way that female candidates answer the questions, may perpetuate this insider bias.

Third, key qualifications for SRSG and DSRSG positions, such as military experience, may eliminate many female candidates. Some policymakers and practitioners reportedly continue to believe that women may not have the necessary political skills and diplomatic gravitas to head large-scale civil-military missions. A widespread belief persists that women with development and humanitarian backgrounds are passed over for SRSG positions, despite the fact that there have been a number of DSRSG's with these qualifications. Even when women candidates for SRSG positions "make it on the short list" in the decision-making process, the pursuit of geographic balance, favoritism toward certain nationalities under-represented in the UN system, and the "silent imposition" of member states on behalf of their nominees often work against women in the appointment process.ⁱ When women *are* finally tapped for leadership, according to interviewees, decision-makers may choose them for particular positions deemed "safer," "less visible," or less "serious."

A distinct challenge to women's leadership in peace operations is self-elimination. Beginning with the application process, some women are reluctant to accept positions unless they are extremely confident that their qualifications and experience exactly match the needs of the position. Many point to the fact that their male counterparts do not exhibit the same reservations. Even when offered senior posts in peacekeeping, well qualified women often decline these opportunities. While some interviewees assert that women are dissuaded from field posts due to arduous conditions, women who have served in peacekeeping missions categorically reject such assumptions. In fact, a primary reason for self-elimination from senior level positions in the field is the non-family duty status of peacekeeping missions. This constraint was repeatedly cited in interviews as a disincentive for qualified women candidates. Many women are only willing to go to non-family duty stations once their children are grown. Others reported they did not extend their tours due to spousal or other family considerations.

Few Women Rise Through the Ranks

Many of the same impediments to recruiting women are common at the professional levels. The low numbers of professional female applicants—both internal and external—may directly relate to the layers of obstacles in the peacekeeping recruitment system for civilians. Applicants put little faith in the ability of the UN's online application system to distinguish and recognize talent. Furthermore, the actual vacancy announcements may be biased. While a commitment to the principles of gender equality was recently added to UN vacancy announcements, a military emphasis persists in the qualifications for peacekeeping posts. In addition, the online system utilizes generic language in many vacancy announcements in order to populate a database of civilian experts. At the other professional levels—just as with senior women—candidates tend to pursue jobs that are specifically matched to their qualifications. Thus, the way the position is described and marketed can determine whether or not a woman even applies.

Once women enter the UN system, they do not stay long. Women's numbers drop dramatically between entry-level and mid- and senior management. While women make up nearly 30 percent of international staff in peacekeeping operations, they are highly concentrated in the most junior positions. The UN experiences faster turnover of women than men, and it is reportedly difficult to keep even female managers in field positions for more than one year. Interviewees point to the lack of a career track and professional development in the UN system, noting that the organization is not structured to groom staff at the mid-level. Several interviewees said that women are regularly placed in positions where they are neither visible nor likely to reach decision-making positions.

Another major factor that negatively influences retention and morale are the relatively low compensation packages in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) than other UN agencies. Perhaps even more importantly for female staff, the vast majority of DPKO missions are designed as non-family duty posts, despite the fact that staff from other UN agencies are permitted to bring spouses and children to the very same locations. The General Assembly is considering recommendations of the Secretary-General with regard to human resources reform in the UN, including harmonization of service conditions so that DPKO staff will be treated equally with regard to families in the field. The approval of this reform package will be extremely important for future efforts to recruit and retain qualified personnel for these missions.

The UN lacks a support structure to facilitate mentoring and promote career development of women in junior and mid-level positions. Those women leaders who joined the UN later in their careers were often recruited individually by a colleague or influential mentor already in the UN system. For women who have advanced up the ranks, influential mentors and supporters—nearly always men—played a key role in their career development. Numerous interviewees described a system that is far from a meritocracy, and unable or unwilling to accommodate dual career spouses or family priorities. As summarized by one interviewee: "To be successful in the UN, one must be single, widowed, or divorced."

Gender Influences the System—Negatively and Positively

Gender-based discrimination is common in the UN system. Many types of biases, including double standards applied to women in senior level positions, are prevalent. Many interviewees point to the fact that the few women

who occupy leadership positions are under tremendous pressure to succeed. Failure can be perceived as a reflection on the capacity of *all* women to do these jobs, even in those cases where the failures were not their own.

Senior level women with years of experience in multicultural environments report that many UN staff remain entrenched in outdated mentalities, particularly with regard to gender and women. In missions, women encountered biases in daily interactions with colleagues and national officials. However, women demonstrated an ability to creatively work around these obstacles. Some cited the initial difficulties they encountered when dealing with military and intelligence officials, but acknowledged they could quickly win respect after demonstrating their expertise. Despite these challenges, women who have served in UN peace operations were extremely positive about their experiences in the field and have expressed a willingness to serve in the field again. In field missions, where women often assume a higher-grade position than at headquarters, they feel there is more flexibility, freedom, and the potential to make an impact.

Senior level women interviewed for this report frequently discussed their participatory approach and conflict resolution skills, but all were reluctant to attribute these qualities to gender. Women who have served in leadership positions in UN peace operations describe their styles with the words “consultative,” “open” and “inclusive”—attributes that are generally considered feminine. They describe different approaches to managing divergent interests in conflict situations. They tend to view these positions as making a positive contribution, rather than self-promotion or ego. Women in field missions demonstrate a willingness to tackle difficult issues, such as rape and sexual violence, in part, out of concern for the victims. This is particularly relevant in the wake of widespread reports of sexual violence and misconduct by peacekeepers in 2005.

Intentionally or otherwise, women in leadership positions in field missions are seen as role models for women within peace operations—both within the mission and to the host country. Many women managers in field missions hire other women, purposefully recruiting them, supporting those in junior positions, and demonstrating a commitment to mentor their careers. Furthermore, when women are visible in the mission, particularly in senior positions, an example is set for women’s post-war participation in the host country in political, economic, and even military roles.

While UN peacekeeping clearly remains male-dominated, particularly at the leadership levels, there has been significant forward movement in recent years at UN headquarters and in the field as a result of the ever-growing and dire need for talent in peacekeeping. A number of reforms are increasing women’s representation in senior peacekeeping positions. In 2007 alone, the number of women in senior posts increased by 37 percent. Several new components within DPKO—namely the Senior Appointments Section and the Department of Field Support’s (DFS) Recruitment and Outreach Unit, are incorporating gender sensitivity and prioritizing the identification of qualified women. Other planned mechanisms and activities could further improve recruitment for peacekeeping posts, such as greater collaboration in the recruitment of political and development/humanitarian DSRSG’s, the creation of a new Enterprise Resource Planning system that will replace the online peacekeeping application system, the development of a new talent search system, and better outreach to civil society. Some senior managers at headquarters and in the field—both men and women—have demonstrated a personal commitment to increasing women’s participation. In DFS, in just the past two years, women now occupy key senior level human resource and outreach positions. All have made vocal, public commitments to fulfilling the mandates of Security Council Resolution 1325 and are working on a daily basis to make this a practical reality.

What remains to be seen is whether the UN will implement the long-term and difficult institutional, procedural, and cultural changes necessary to create more opportunities for qualified female leaders in UN peace operations. If the recent reforms and efforts are to succeed, the UN will need to devote much more attention and resources to solving the persistent impediments to attracting, grooming, and promoting the best talent for leadership positions in peacekeeping.

KEY FINDINGS

Recruitment

1. Potential partnerships and creative strategies to identify and select the best talent for leadership positions are inhibited by a lack of **effective communication between the UN and civil society**, which contributes to inaccurate assumptions of the recruitment process, the qualifications for peacekeeping, and the incentives or disincentives for qualified women to apply.
2. A UN **bias toward well-known candidates inside the system combined with an inability to tap into external networks** presents enormous hurdles for those potential candidates outside the UN. Without a powerful champion within the system, it is less likely a qualified woman will obtain a senior leadership position.
3. While many interviewees point to **bias against SRSG candidates with a humanitarian and development background—as opposed to military experience**—approximately half of current SRSG's have a humanitarian or development background.
4. Even when women candidates for SRSG positions “make it on the short list” in the decision-making process, **the pursuit of geographic balance, favoritism toward certain nationalities underrepresented in the UN system, and the “silent imposition” of member states on behalf of their nominees can work against women** in the appointment process.
5. **In some cases, qualified senior level women may not promote themselves as effectively as men.** Women tend to self-eliminate from consideration for senior positions and leadership roles. Even at the most senior level, women may decline to pursue or accept positions unless they are extremely confident that they are the right match for the qualifications and the needs of the host country. In the field, the focus of women on the job at hand, rather than self-promotion, was cited as a benefit to the mission. However, this can be a disadvantage at headquarters, where visibility and powerful allies are key factors in selection for senior leadership positions.

Retention and Advancement

6. Although approximately 40 percent of entry-level professional posts are occupied by women, **these numbers drop dramatically in the mid- and senior level management posts.**
7. Especially at senior levels, **informal entry points into the system are the most common ways to join the UN.** Almost universally, senior women learned of their posts through colleagues and networks, not through formal ads or the UN online application system.
8. **Influential mentors and contacts inside the UN play a key role in supporting the advancement of women leaders.** Many experienced women from outside the UN are identified and recruited for senior roles after making extensive contacts within the system as consultants.
9. **Mentors for senior women tend to be senior male colleagues** who helped guide women's UN careers and recommend them for promotions.
10. **The majority of female managers in peacekeeping, and in the UN generally, are unmarried, divorced, and/or without children.** Senior women in peacekeeping who are married tend to have spouses who are also within the UN system or who they met on the job. Nearly all married women note that there is little support for dual-career couples in the UN, particularly with regard to field missions.

11. **Women actually feel they may have more flexibility, freedom, and the potential to make an impact in field missions,** where they often assume a higher-grade position than at headquarters. However, women and men also report difficulties leaving their New York jobs for a higher classification only to return to their previous jobs in the Secretariat at the lower level.

Biases and Behaviors

12. **Women in senior leadership positions, SRSG's in particular, are frequently held to higher standards than men,** who tend to circulate from mission to mission regardless of job performance. Failure on the part of one woman in a leadership role can have repercussions on the general perception of all women to successfully lead UN missions.
13. **Women in the UN—both in headquarters and in the field—experience implicit and explicit gender-based discrimination.** Although some women experience sexual harassment, biases and stereotypes were more common than blatant discrimination in field missions. Implicit discrimination is cited frequently by senior women at headquarters. Women find creative ways to overcome negative biases and behaviors and gain credibility, especially in dealing with military and intelligence officials in the host country.
14. **Women who have served in senior positions and those who have worked with them describe their leadership styles similarly—as “collaborative, consultative,” and “inclusive.”** Interviewees highlight the negotiation skills and solutions-based approaches of female leaders in peace operations. However, many of these women resist attributing these qualities to gender or a feminine approach.
15. **Women in senior management positions demonstrate a strong commitment to increasing women's participation.** Within the Department of Field Support, in just the past two years, key senior level human resources and outreach positions are now occupied by women who have taken intentional action to fulfill the mandates of Security Council Resolution 1325. Many women managers in field missions hire other women, purposefully bringing them onto their teams and supporting those in more junior positions. Women in these positions are seen as role models—both within the mission and to the host country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recruitment and Selection

For the UN Secretariat:

1. **Re-examine and re-formulate the assessment process for candidates for senior level positions.**
 - a) Evaluate the process and make recommendations to ensure fairness to all candidates, including those working outside the UN system, those from non-Western countries, and female applicants.
 - b) Examine and integrate successful strategies utilized by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to select female Resident Coordinators (RCs).
 - c) Select the highest quality applicants while working toward gender balance goals.
 - d) Emphasize the relevance of humanitarian and development competencies for peacekeeping missions.
2. **Improve gender balance on candidate lists for leadership positions.**
 - a) Ensure that one woman and one individual from a developing country are included on every short list of candidates sent to the Secretary-General and the appointments panel to consider for SRSG posts.
 - b) Make every effort to ensure women are on the appointment panels that make SRSG selections.
3. **Strengthen the Senior Leadership Appointments Section.**
 - a) The Secretary-General should capitalize on the work of the Section, openly promote its mission, and encourage member states not to bypass the process behind closed doors, but channel their recommendations through this office.
 - b) Immediately increase outreach by the Section to member states to advertise their mandate and existence. Similarly, the staff could benefit from greater collaboration with other UN agencies with rosters as well as regular contact with civil society.
 - c) Continue creating Terms of Reference (TOR) for SRSG's that are specific to each mission and assignment, and widely circulate these profiles to gather qualified candidates for a vetted roster. As the list develops, establish a target for at least 50 percent representation of women.
4. **Appoint and promote women to mid- and senior positions where they can gain the experience to become SRSG's.** The Secretary-General should immediately seek to increase the number of female Special Envoys, which are generally shorter assignments with fewer obstacles for women. As of 2007, not a single UN Special Envoy was a woman.
5. **Address the problem of self-elimination by women.**
 - a) Increase transparency regarding what senior leadership positions entail and the requisite qualifications.
 - b) Move decisively towards an "ensemble approach" to staff missions, rather than seeking one individual who embodies all desirable characteristics of an SRSG or DSRSG.
 - c) Correct the misperception that a military background is a prerequisite for senior leadership positions in peacekeeping operations. Widely advertise positions internally and externally—

beyond the usual circles—to ensure that women with development and humanitarian backgrounds are aware of opportunities in these missions.

- d) Call upon women who have served in senior leadership positions in peacekeeping to help raise awareness of opportunities and improve outreach and recruitment of women.
6. **“Re-brand” peacekeeping to improve job marketing.** Individuals who work at the UN are frequently value-driven, and jobs should be framed this way. The range of opportunities must be better advertised in order to attract qualified people, particularly in hard-to-fill positions. Above all, the perception that the Galaxy online application system for the UN is a “black hole” must change through faster turn-around times and more frequent communication with applicants. Improvement in marketing will also help attract those with relevant field experience from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to peacekeeping opportunities.
7. **Review and improve vacancy announcements.**
- a) Be more specific when describing job qualifications. Although generic postings are useful for the UN recruitment database, women may be more likely to apply for mission-specific and expertise-specific vacancy announcements.
 - b) Immediately add a field to Galaxy online applications to determine where candidates learned of the vacancy in order to target resources appropriately.
 - c) Do not over-emphasize military expertise in vacancy announcements.
 - d) Include more specificity about gender expertise and experience and how this is assessed when evaluating candidates.
8. **Dramatically expand outreach, both internally and externally, to identify and attract the best talent.** DPKO frequently laments the loss of personnel to other UN funds and agencies. In turn, peacekeeping staff must actively recruit from these same sources.
- a) Cast a wider net outside the UN system. DFS must be more creative and proactive to refresh and broaden networks where the UN recruits.
 - b) Ensure that personnel from other UN agencies and departments are aware of and recruited for civilian opportunities in peacekeeping missions.
 - c) Per UNDP’s example, conduct recruitment missions to key countries where women hold leadership posts and in stable post-conflict countries where women may be familiar with peace operations, have the requisite experience from their military service, or be advancing rapidly in the ranks of newly formed armed forces and police services.
 - d) Communicate needs to key national and international rosters to facilitate the identification of qualified candidates.
 - e) Establish a standing mechanism for communications between DFS and civil society groups with access to talent, such as a working group or task force. The forum should facilitate regular opportunities for dialogue and information sharing in order to bring forth qualified candidates, especially women, at the senior levels. Focus specifically on outreach and partnership with national women’s machineries and international networks with access to women.
9. **Gather data to determine what forms of outreach are most effective for women.**
- a) Conduct interviews with successful applicants to learn more about their recruitment, and develop a way to track how applicants to the Galaxy online application system discovered vacancy announcements.
 - b) Explore creative ways to track the effectiveness of outreach, particularly to women’s groups.
 - c) Utilize this data to support requests for additional funding to expand outreach and target recruitment efforts that will attract qualified women.

10. **Encourage member states to be more proactive in recommending women for senior leadership positions.**
 - a) The Secretary-General should provide incentives for member states to go beyond lip service to the idea of gender equality, and encourage them to regularly submit the names of well-qualified female candidates.
 - b) Inform under-represented member states that recommending women for these posts could help them achieve greater representation in the UN.
11. **Maintain a dedicated capacity to find and recruit women in traditionally male-dominated fields,** such as logistics. Extend the mandate of the temporary Gender Outreach Officer in the Logistics Support Division, and increase resources for advertising and outreach for positions where women are poorly represented.

Retention and Advancement

For the UN Secretariat:

12. **Prioritize DPKO's human resources.** Develop talent in the UN system by rewarding staff in dangerous posts, creating an enabling working environment at headquarters and in the field, and placing a premium on staff morale and job satisfaction. Invest in staff through increased compensation, improved benefits and entitlements, and the ability to travel and live with family as often as possible. Spending billions on peacekeeping without investing in people is counterproductive.
13. **Harmonize the conditions of service for peacekeeping staff.**
 - a) Raise awareness among member states of the importance of harmonizing service conditions. The Secretary-General should report on the failure to attract needed talent and the negative implications for missions without incentives for personnel to serve in peacekeeping positions.
 - b) Highlight ways that member state contributions could be used to alter dysfunctional human resource rules and the difference this would make in terms of recruitment and retention.
 - c) Create a forum for staff and managers to discuss and recommend intermediate steps that can be taken within current institutional constraints to improve morale and better accommodate family considerations.
14. **Enact human resource reforms tailored to women and families.**
 - a) Design career tracks that meet the needs of women, allowing them to enter and exit the system over a certain time period.
 - b) Establish focal points for women in human resource offices in peace missions to recognize and address their specific needs.
 - c) Implement alternative work arrangements at headquarters, such as job share programs and flex time.
15. **Become "dual-career" friendly.** The Secretariat must do more to accommodate spouses in field missions.
 - a) When there is no direct conflict or oversight, the mission should seek to employ the staff member and his/her spouse.
 - b) Relax family restrictions in every mission that other UN agencies deem secure enough for dependents.

- c) Enable personnel in peace missions to visit family regularly. Leave policies should account for travel time to visit family in other countries.
16. **Groom existing talent.** Targeted career and professional development can help attract and retain staff. The UN should recognize talent inside the system, and focus on providing potential leaders with opportunities to advance.
- a) Establish programs to groom young leaders to offer training, mentoring, and special assignments, emphasizing participation from women and the global South.
 - b) Management training should be standard and mandatory for UN senior staff.
 - c) Focus on grooming mid-level staff, at which point many women leave the system.
 - d) Create career tracks to allow personnel to rotate in and out of the system easily, complementing UN experience with opportunities in national governments, NGOs, and other relevant sectors.
 - e) Relax the Galaxy online application rules for former staff. No one should have to re-apply through Galaxy once they are in the system.
 - f) Given the cross-cutting nature and expertise of gender advisors in the field, consider personnel who demonstrate high competency in these posts for more senior positions in missions.
17. **Promote greater consistency between opportunities in the field and advancement in headquarters.**
- a) Consider promotions for staff returning from senior positions in the field when they return to headquarters.
 - b) Develop online courses and training lectures to promote skills development among all staff.
 - c) Establish career support centers in duty stations to help staff continue to enhance their skills.
18. **Recognize and reward UN personnel who serve in peace operations.**
- a) The Secretary-General should highlight the contributions of personnel who work in peacekeeping and demonstrate appreciation for those who have taken on leadership roles in difficult conditions.
 - b) Generously reward the staff for their commitment and willingness to re-locate to difficult missions under harsh conditions.
19. **Assess and address retention problems at headquarters.**
- a) Conduct research on gender sensitivity within DPKO and DFS. Explore specific institutional or cultural environments that may contribute to poor retention of women and staff with families. Develop and implement improvements based on the findings.
 - b) Conduct mandatory exit interviews to gather and apply lessons learned.
 - c) Develop systematic retention strategies based on the reasons staff leave the UN system.
20. **Hold senior managers accountable to the UN's commitment to gender balance.**
- a) As a first step, DPKO should enact a gender score card for managers similar to UNDP's mechanism, which is available to all agency staff.
 - b) In addition, assess SRSG's on their knowledge of gender issues in annual performance and end-of-mission evaluations.
 - c) Integrate gender perspectives in the orientation, training, and learning programs available for senior staff, including courses and resources offered by the UN System Staff College.

For Member States:

21. **Identify and promote women nationally for SRSG and DSRSG posts.** Gather the names of prominent women in national governments, military, and police to maintain at-the-ready when an appointment arises. Reach out to the Senior Leadership Appointments Section to ensure these candidates are included on the UN's internal roster.
22. **Dedicate resources to increasing the recruitment of women in the military, police, logistics, and other sectors where they are severely under-represented.** The major Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and Police Contributing Countries (PCCs) should dedicate a staff person in Permanent Missions with the specific responsibility to liaise with the national military and police in order to recruit women and feed them into the UN system.
23. **Continue sharing “best practices” on the recruitment of women for peace operations.** The recent conferences and exchange of ideas among TCCs, PCCs, UN agencies, and other stakeholders are notable. The findings from Pretoria and subsequent regional workshops on this topic should be disseminated to other member states.
24. **Provide gender training for all leadership positions in the national military, police, diplomatic, and development sectors of the government** to begin to overcome long-held stereotypes and biases.
25. **Re-energize the “Friends of 1325” group of member states.** The Friends of 1325 was formed to track progress and to press for implementation of Resolution 1325. The Friends of 1325 should encourage other governments to take action in increasing the representation of women in leadership roles in peacekeeping.
26. **Establish accountability measures in national agencies and departments** to gauge success in the implementation of Resolution 1325 at the country level.

For Civil Society:

27. **Connect the various networks and rosters to approach the UN with a unified strategy.** Establish coalitions and working partnerships to strengthen advocacy efforts. Build on existing programs and initiatives that identify and support female candidates for senior leadership positions.
28. **Develop a bona fide training academy for women leaders.** Draw on former SRSG's and UN leaders as guest trainers to coach senior women and help them prepare as candidates. Train them in the use of the Galaxy online application system, testing techniques, and interview skills. Raise the visibility of this issue and of the individual women participants.
29. **Re-evaluate the effectiveness of external rosters and develop other mechanisms and strategies to bring qualified women forward.**
 - a) Examine existing rosters at the professional level and identify and put forth female candidates rather than creating new, women-only rosters.
 - b) At the senior level, develop new ways to advocate for women leaders more effectively. Respond to requests for candidates from the Senior Leadership Appointments Section with the names of

qualified women from inside and outside the UN. Tap into informal networks to promote specific women candidates among decision-makers.

30. Develop a small, concrete list of women's groups with solid networks.

- a) Ensure the Recruitment and Outreach Unit can access this list to circulate vacancy announcements and other information.
- b) Conduct training-of-trainers and tutorials for women in these organizations to share with their constituents so that they are aware of the Galaxy online application process, can access and use the system, and are encouraged to apply for peacekeeping positions.

31. Reach out to current and former senior level women for support and strategy.

High-ranking women inside and outside the UN system have demonstrated a commitment to increasing women's leadership opportunities. Some women in senior level positions in peace operations have been at the forefront of advocacy on this issue. Civil society groups should convene current and former women leaders to discuss common challenges and to develop strategies for women's advancement in peacekeeping.

32. Conduct additional research. Focus on pragmatic elements to promote implementation.

- a) Conduct a full-scale gender analysis of vacancy announcements with practical recommendations to improve language.
- b) Explore incentives from other sectors that are specifically designed to recruit and retain women.
- c) Continue to build a broad body of evidence to examine and document women's leadership styles and women's approach and impact on peace operations, in civilian, military and policing capacities.
- d) Document career paths of men and women who have served in senior leadership positions to assess experiences and qualifications that lead to advancement.

33. Maintain a strong advocacy presence before the UN and national governments.

- a) Target ministers and director generals in charge of appointments.
- b) Demand accountability for the low number of women in high-level national and international posts.

INTRODUCTION

“The difficulty in getting women in peace operations is a microcosm of the difficulty in getting women engaged in peace and security.”

--Female senior manager in the United Nations

In November 2006, over 75 experts gathered in New York and Washington to discuss “United Nations Reform: Improving Peace Operations by Advancing the Role of Women.” Convened by the Stanley Foundation and Women in International Security, practitioners and policymakers from United Nations (UN) agencies, national governments and militaries, academia, and civil society groups identified barriers to women’s advancement and elaborated concrete ways to improve the recruitment and selection of women for peace operations—as heads of mission, military personnel, civilian police, and international and national staff.

Their discussions revealed several trends. Primarily, there is increased awareness of the mandates for gender balance in UN staffing. Similarly, there is growing recognition of the operational effectiveness of women, particularly in military and police roles in peace operations. However, the willingness to act among key policymakers and practitioners is off-set by questions surrounding *how* to act, given the need for rapid decision-making, the presence of competing priorities, and the hazardous environment of peacekeeping missions. The findings and recommendations of the consultations are summarized in the policy analysis brief, *United Nations Reform: Improving Peace Operations by Advancing the Role of Women*.¹

To further the WIIS mission to promote gender balance in peace and security—and implement one of the recommendations from the November 2006 consultations—WIIS has undertaken additional research on these issues. Supported by the Compton Foundation, the second phase of the WIIS Women in Peace Operations Project was launched to improve understanding of the qualities and skills required to lead UN peace operations, promote the development of more transparent procedures for the recruitment of senior managers for peacekeeping missions, and encourage reform to provide expanded opportunities for women’s leadership in senior, civilian positions in peace operations.

WIIS chose to focus this report specifically on women’s civilian leadership opportunities. While women’s numbers and role in the military and police are the subject of recent reports and action, less attention has been paid to civilian women in peace operations, particularly in leadership positions. Arguably, change among the ranks will not occur until women form a “critical mass” of senior managers in peace operations. While the pace of change on the military and policing side will depend largely on more women entering the ranks inside the contributing countries and subsequently deploying to the field, on the civilian side, there are immediate steps that the UN itself, member states, and NGO’s can take in identifying qualified women who are ready to lead peace operations. The pool of female candidates for such positions is wider and deeper than the military due to the larger number of women working on peace and security as civilians. In addition, more women in highly visible civilian roles may have a multiplying effect -- encouraging younger women to enter and advance in both civilian and military roles in their countries and in the UN system. Thus, although this report focuses specifically on senior level, civilian professional and leadership positions, it has implications for advancing women in the military and policing sides of peacekeeping, as well as those women, on both the civilian and military side, who are just entering the UN as young professionals. It is hoped that this report will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges that are obstructing the advancement of women in the UN, provide a critical assessment of past and current strategies to increase women’s leadership opportunities, and lead to positive and effective action by the UN, member states, and NGO’s.

¹ *United Nations Reform: Improving Peace Operations by Advancing the Role of Women*. Muscatine, IA, and Washington, DC: The Stanley Foundation and Women in International Security, 2007. Available at: http://wiis.georgetown.edu/documents/UN_Reform_Women1_07.pdf. With permission from the Stanley Foundation and WIIS, portions of the 2007 policy analysis brief were extracted and adapted as background information for this follow-up report.

Methodology

To build upon the 2007 policy analysis brief, WIIS Executive Director Jolynn Shoemaker and consultant Camille Pampell Conaway conducted over 50 interviews from October 2007 to January 2008 at UN headquarters and by phone. Interviewees included women formerly or currently in high-level positions, UN staff with various agencies in New York and in peacekeeping missions, representatives of key national governments—host countries and those dispatching police and military personnel to peace operations—as well as practitioners and experts in non-governmental organizations and women’s groups.²

Key research questions included:

1. How many women have served in senior level positions in UN peace operations? In which posts? What career paths led to these positions?
2. What are the qualities, experiences, and skills required to lead UN peace operations? What are the standard procedures for identifying and selecting the leadership of UN peace operations? Are women specifically recruited to fulfill UN goals of gender parity? How? By whom? Can rosters be effective in recruitment of qualified candidates, including women? Or should other mechanisms be created and tested?
3. Are Gender Advisors formally part of the senior leadership team of UN peace operations? Are they given an equally strong mandate, resources, access, and authority as other senior managers?
4. Are professional and senior level women satisfied with the work environment in UN peace operations? Are opportunities for women influenced by family-duty designation or other factors? Is gender-based discrimination a problem? Are women leaders on equal footing with male counterparts—in policy and practice?
5. Does women’s presence in leadership positions affect the management and overall operation of the mission? Of the outcomes and realization of the goals of the peace operation? In relations with the host country? In the recruitment of local staff? In the visibility of gender and women’s issues? If so, why and how?
6. What are the obstacles and entry points to women’s recruitment, retention, and promotion to management positions in peace operations? With regard to the role of national governments, what are the domestic procedures of key troop and police-contributing countries for identifying, recruiting, deploying, and supporting women as leaders in peace operations?
7. How can the UN, member states, and civil society encourage reform of bureaucratic and institutional structures to provide expanded opportunities for women? To increase the visibility of existing qualified female candidates and support their advancement? To promote transparency in the appointment, recruitment, and promotion process?

The Pressing Need to Increase Women’s Participation

Several converging trends make this an ideal time to gather information and advocate for women’s participation in UN peace operations. **First, the need for qualified peace operations personnel has never been more urgent.** Since the end of the Cold War, the number of UN peacekeeping missions has increased by more than 400 percent.ⁱⁱ From 2006 to 2007 alone, the number of deployed personnel increased by 18 percent.ⁱⁱⁱ As of November 2007, 100,554 personnel were serving in 17 peacekeeping operations at an estimated annual cost of \$7 billion.^{iv} Furthermore, the UN is preparing to embark on one of the largest peacekeeping missions in its history in Darfur in partnership with the African Union—a first for UN peacekeeping. The African Union/United Nations

² In order to encourage frank conversations and open discussions, many interviewees preferred to remain anonymous and are cited as such in the endnotes of this report.

Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) will enlist another 31,042 personnel, including 19,555 troops, 6,432 police, and 5,105 civilians.^v This represents a 30 percent increase from current deployment levels and contributes to an ever-growing demand for resources to fulfill the financial and personnel requirements of new missions. To respond appropriately to the growing need for stabilization operations, the UN and member states must draw upon a wide variety of personnel with diverse skills and expertise, including women—who can provide critical leadership in peace operations and post-conflict reconstruction.

Second, the need for qualified personnel is compounded by a chronic vacancy problem in UN peacekeeping missions. According to the Assistant Secretary-General of the newly formed Department of Field Support (DFS), about 40 percent of positions remain unfilled in field operations, and the turnover rate in peacekeeping missions is nearly one-third.^{vi} Approximately 25 percent of DPKO offers for field assignments were declined in 2006.^{vii} Meanwhile, the entire UN system is expected to turn over 30-40 percent in the next five years due to retirement, which will necessitate more diverse and extensive outreach.^{viii}

Third, a wide range of expertise and perspectives is needed in missions, as the nature of engagement has evolved to include peace-building and reconstruction assistance. As reported by the Secretary-General in 2006, peacekeeping has moved “from traditional peacekeeping observer operations to larger, multidimensional mandates incorporating responsibilities in the areas of civil affairs, rule of law, governance, human rights, child protection, disarmament, demobilization and integration of ex-combatants and security sector reform.”^{ix} Addressing the multiple challenges requires leaders who bring many skills, experiences, and perspectives to these missions. This is why it is so important to include women in leadership positions. Clearly, there is no single strategy for securing and sustaining peace in conflict zones. By failing to include women in key roles in peacekeeping missions, the UN is missing the diversity of thought that can bring new approaches and solutions to the table. In addition, women could play a crucial role in addressing specific issues such as gender based violence and helping to ensure that missions prevent and punish sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. Even though women bring their own distinct perspectives to the challenges of peacekeeping, they often share similar experiences as women.

Fourth, the Secretary-General is continuing efforts to reform the way the UN addresses peacekeeping challenges. The UN is undergoing an overarching reform effort to better address global security issues, including fragile and failed states, which provides a critical entry point for action in this area. The Office of the Secretary-General has commissioned a number of high level panels and released various reports in recent years attempting to address needed structural reforms regarding the new and emerging peace and security environment. These include the Report of the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, the Report of the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence, and other specialized reports on peacekeeping best practices, and human resources reform. In 2007, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was re-structured, the Department of Field Support was established, and integrated teams were created to improve coordination in field missions. The recognition and prioritization of reform within the system, and the specific focus on the need to “invest in people” presents a unique opportunity to implement new measures to increase the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in peacekeeping, and the UN system in general.

Finally, there is increasing recognition of the important role that women play in peacebuilding and commitments by the UN to include women in peace processes. The UN has committed itself to achieving 50/50 gender balance throughout the organization.^x Various international commitments and declarations have been adopted that recognize the importance of women’s participation in all aspects of peace processes. Chief among them is UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls upon member states and all parties to take action in four areas: 1) to promote the participation of women in decision-making and peace processes, 2) to integrate gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping, 3) to protect women in armed conflict, and 4) to mainstream gender issues in UN reporting systems and programs related to conflict and peacebuilding.^{xi}

In the six years since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, various advancements have been made by DPKO and other UN agencies to implement its mandates. In October 2004, a gender resource package was

created for all staff in peace operations—both men and women, including military personnel and police.^{xii} Within DPKO, a gender advisor was appointed at headquarters in 2003, and the number of gender advisors and gender units in field missions has also increased. As of November 2007 there were gender components in 9 peacekeeping operations, and gender focal points in the 7 traditional missions. These numbers have continued to rise, and as of May 2008, 13 peacekeeping operations included gender components.^{xiii}

In 2006, DPKO began convening meetings of Troop Contributing (TCCs) and Police Contributing Countries (PCCs) to discuss the issue of gender and peacekeeping.^{xiv} This led to fruitful discussions and concrete recommendations, including some that have already been implemented. For example, note verbales calling for troops were revised to define actual requirements, including explicit references when combat experience is not required—a step designed to encourage countries to deploy women.^{xv} In 2007, TCCs and PCCs gathered specifically to meet with national women’s machineries to discuss and make recommendations on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.^{xvi} Governments in attendance specifically committed to the development of “a national policy” on the recruitment and deployment of women as well as the “nomination of women for senior civilian peacekeeping positions, for example as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG)...”^{xvii} This was followed by regional meetings in four countries where high-level representatives reportedly engaged in strong presentations of lessons learned and successful strategies.^{xviii}

In late 2006, DPKO disseminated a Policy Directive on Gender Equality in UN Peacekeeping Operations that reiterates the necessity of increasing women’s civilian and military roles in field missions; these guidelines led to a standard approach for gender mainstreaming at headquarters and in field operations.^{xix} DPKO also released a Global Action Plan on 1325 that includes the increased participation of women in peacekeeping as a priority for the agency.^{xx} At the same time, UN member states are developing national action plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325, which include increased recruitment of women for peace operations.^{xxi}

Indeed, there is growing understanding of the added value of women’s knowledge and experiences within the UN system and beyond, yet critics point out the slow and ad hoc nature of these efforts. While the UN system overall has approached gender parity in lower-level positions—women make up 60.6 percent of General Service posts^{xxii}—the numbers decrease at higher levels. Women make up 38.3 percent of professional posts (49.7 percent of P-2 positions but only 30.8 percent of P-5s), 27.7 percent of management roles, and only 17.7 percent of Assistant Secretary-Generals and Under Secretary-Generals.^{xxiii} Despite repeated mandates and policy commitments, little progress has been made to actually increase the numbers of women, particularly in peace operations. Statistics illustrate the severe implementation gap in field missions.

Overview of Women's Representation in UN Peace Operations

As of April 2008:^{xxiv}

- There is one female head of mission (Liberia) and four women deputies (Burundi, Chad, Liberia, and Sudan).^{xxv}
- Only 1.9 percent of military personnel are women (1,408 of 73,348 total troops, military observers, and staff officers), and no forces are led by a woman.^{xxvi}
- Women constitute 7.3% of UN police (865 of 11,182 total police), including two female Senior Police Advisers. In professional posts, 6 women are in the Standing Police Capacity, 5 women are in the Police Division, and 5 women are in field missions.^{xxvii}
- Approximately 29.8 percent of international civilian staff is composed of women (of 4,857 total)^{xxviii}—a number that decreases to ten percent in management positions at the D-1 level or above.
- Women make up 19.6 percent of nationally recruited civilian staff (of 11,501 total), of which many are relegated to service and clerical posts at the lowest grades.^{xxix}

The UN and Civil Society: Misperceptions and Missed Opportunities

The slow pace in increasing women's numbers at senior levels has led to frustration among supporters of Resolution 1325 inside and outside the UN system. Various non-governmental networks have memberships and access to talented women leaders around the world and point out the UN's apparent inability to tap into their candidate pools. UN agencies, on the other hand, regularly cite the difficulty in identifying female candidates with the requisite experience to take on senior positions in multi-dimensional peace operations with military and civilian components, a multitude of languages and cultures, and frequently volatile security situations.

At the same time, it is clear that a variety of perceptions play into how actors both inside and outside the UN system approach this issue. Unfortunately, in many cases these perceptions are overly simplistic and obstruct creative steps that could be taken to bring more women into these positions and ultimately achieve gender balance. Some examples of assumptions that were frequently heard in interviews include the following:

- It is difficult to find women with the appropriate qualifications for these positions.
- Qualified women don't want to go to these missions.
- It is a bad idea to risk putting the wrong woman in one of these jobs.
- Candidates with development and humanitarian backgrounds are not strong candidates for senior peacekeeping positions.

Advocates contend that these perceptions lead to women not being approached for these positions, inhibit recruitment strategies that would appeal to women, and create strong disincentives to identifying leaders who have not been "tried and tested." The result, they say, is the selection of men who are "known" within the old boys' network and have served in these positions before (regardless of whether they have done a good job).

Overall, the lack of transparency about the process for selecting senior leadership positions, lack of outreach to civil society partners about the specific qualifications that the UN is looking for, and lack of channels for NGO's to effectively communicate recommended candidates to decision-makers at the UN, have inhibited the search for the best talent available to fill leadership positions.

Report Structure

This report begins by outlining the recruitment process for senior positions and the ongoing obstacles to women's recruitment and advancement. This section also includes data and analysis on the number of women who have served in senior level positions in UN peace operations and a snapshot of the qualifications of current Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in peacekeeping missions.

Part Two describes the experience of women leaders in peace operations: their career paths, working conditions, and the potential impact of women's presence at senior levels on the operations and outcomes of peace operations for the UN and the host country.

Part Three highlights recent UN institutional reforms to assist in identifying qualified leaders, reaching out to female candidates, and increasing women's representation in components of peacekeeping missions where they are underrepresented. The section also describes personal commitments and actions on the part of senior managers to implement the mandate of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

PART ONE: THE RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN LEADERS FOR PEACE OPERATIONS

“If the job is well done, it doesn’t matter if it’s a man or a woman. But a woman in this job is the ideal manifestation of the UN.”

--Assistant Secretary-General in the United Nations

There are two distinct processes involved in identifying and selecting personnel to lead and serve in UN peace operations. Both have something in common – the way that recruitment is structured has largely failed to attract and select qualified women. At the senior leadership level (which includes the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General), the recruitment process is opaque, highly political, and has proven virtually impossible for “outsiders” to understand or influence. At the professional levels, recruitment occurs through a mechanism that both those within and outside the UN criticize as confusing, inefficient, and unable to accommodate the flexibility and speed that is necessary to identify and attract the talent that is needed in field operations. At both the professional and senior leadership levels, those who have successfully entered the system have overwhelmingly been supported by managers and higher level decision makers on the inside.

Special Representatives of the Secretary-General

The Closed Door, Closed Circle Process

In the case of UN peace operations, the heads of mission are Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and their deputies (DSRSG’s). SRSG’s are appointed positions—decided within the UN Secretariat in a closed selection process. In some cases, DPKO will ask member states for recommendations for a specific position, or the Secretary-General’s office may reach out directly to national governments. Because of the difficulty in finding appropriate candidates, internal appointments by the Secretary-General are common. “Inside” heads of mission candidates may have been in other UN leadership positions, such as DSRSG, or have the support of a particular political base. Without exception, successful nominees for SRSG positions have demonstrated two very important characteristics: established relationships with powerful individuals within the UN system and support of their national governments.

An appointments panel works with the Secretary-General to hone the list of candidates. This group includes the Secretary-General’s Chef de Cabinet and representatives from the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), DPKO, and DFS. The host country is also consulted before a final decision is made.

Criteria for SRSG Positions

Many SRSG’s are appointed without a Terms of Reference (TOR) and demonstrate both quantifiable characteristics, such as linguistic abilities, and non-quantifiable characteristics, such as personal gravitas. The new Senior Appointments Section (described below) has begun to draft TOR’s for SRSG and DSRSG positions to assist in recruiting the best qualified candidates. A TOR was developed for the Deputy SRSG position for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and required the candidate to “have strong diplomatic and mediation skills and proven management experience, preferably including experience in the management of complex organizations and operations. He/she will have more than 15 years of progressively responsible experience in political affairs, rule of law or human rights at the national and international level.”^{xxx} Many successful candidates are former ambassadors with diplomatic skills as well as some knowledge and experience within the UN system. Former SRSG’s, representatives from the Secretary-General’s appointments panel, and third-party experts who were interviewed cited the

***When seeking SRSG’s,
“the UN asks: ‘Who is
comfortable taking the
guns away from the men?’
Instead, they should be
asking: ‘Who knows long-
term development?
Who can address the
refugee crisis? Who can
get people back to their
homes?’”***

--Ambassador Donald
Steinberg, Vice President for
Multilateral Affairs, Crisis
Group^{xxx}

following features most important for SRSG's:^{xxxii}

- A substantive background in peace and security, humanitarian work, or development along with credible knowledge of the mission's components;
- Significant management experience and an ability to lead a large functioning team;
- Political smarts and sensibility—a “nose for politics”;^{xxxiii}
- Strong negotiating skills and an ability to hear both sides and bring parties to compromise;
- Leadership qualities and a sense of comfort interacting with high-level individuals, including the Secretary-General and heads of state;
- Credibility with the military;
- Linguistic skills;
- Excellent inter-personal skills and good judgment of character in order to put together a solid team;
- Patience and a high tolerance for frustration;
- Good physical health and high energy levels; and
- Ambitious and value-driven.

There is growing recognition that all of these qualities cannot possibly be found in a single candidate. For this reason, DPKO is moving toward an “ensemble approach” to recruitment, seeking out candidates that complement each other on a mission team.^{xxxiv} This “core” senior leadership team includes the SRSG, DSRSG(s), chief of staff, head of administration, force commander, and police commissioner. The UN has also begun an orientation program for SRSG's known as the Senior Leadership Induction Program (SLIP) to be conducted by all staff at the D-2 level or above for four days within the first six months of an appointment.

Development/Humanitarian Deputy SRSG Selection Process

There are usually two DSRSG's in a peacekeeping mission—one for the political side and one for the development/humanitarian side. The process for selecting the DSRSG for the development/humanitarian component was recently revised. The selection process involves UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, UNDP, OCHA, DPKO, and DPA.

1. First, all of these departments are advised of the vacancy. The departments jointly look at the profile and give input on the terms of reference, considerations, and specific criteria.
2. The announcement is circulated within the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel (IAAP) for nominations. IAAP agencies generally offer nominations from the pre-approved list of DSRSG candidates—taken from the top Resident Coordinator candidates list or the agencies can nominate another candidate who has passed the UNDP Resident Coordinator competency test.
3. Six critical agencies (those focused on development and humanitarian issues that are most active in the country) are consulted for comments. These comments are presented in a matrix, showing the level of inter-agency support for each candidate.
4. The matrix is then sent to OCHA and UNDP for input. The candidates with high levels of support are interviewed, then OCHA and UNDP present DPA/DPKO with recommendations and finalists. The candidates are interviewed again by DPKO and DPA, then the candidates undergo security checks.
5. The Heads of DPA/DPKO, UN Development Group (UNDG) and OCHA discuss further and agree on final recommendations.
6. The top finalist and two alternate names are recommended to the Secretary-General.^{xxxv}

There are currently two women serving as DSRSG's in peacekeeping missions, one in the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the other in the UN mission in Sudan (UNMIS). In addition, a woman was recently designated as the DSRSG for the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), and is due to deploy in May 2008, and a woman serves as the Deputy Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG) in the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB).

Women SRSG's: Few and Far Between

In 60 years of UN peacekeeping—from 1948 to 2008—only seven women have ever held the post of SRSG (See Box: Snapshot of Current Special Representatives of the Secretary-General). Recent months have seen slight progress in female appointments to these positions. In 2006, no peace operation was led by a woman, and only one woman served as a DSRSG (Afghanistan). In October 2007, Ellen Margrethe Løj of Denmark was appointed SRSG of the UN Mission in Liberia, and soon thereafter, three women agreed to serve as Deputy SRSG's (Burundi, Darfur, Liberia, and Sudan). According to one former SRSG, Ambassador Løj is a “fantastic choice.”^{xxxvi} She assumed her new post in January 2008. She meets the standard criteria of similar appointees; namely, she has significant diplomatic experience and relationships at the UN. Løj served as Denmark's former Permanent Representative to the UN.

The Insider/Outsider Dilemma

SRSG's are frequently a product of “political bargaining”,^{xxxvii} and there is a “tendency to pick politicians or ministers... [It's] difficult to show the value of other skill sets.”^{xxxviii} Ambassadors, permanent representatives, and those who have served in other high-ranking roles for the UN are commonly chosen for these positions. The backgrounds of current SRSG's bear this out. Out of 15 appointed SRSG's, 11 are former ambassadors, former permanent representatives to the UN, or former elected officials. In addition, 9 of the 15 have past experience as special envoys or mediators. Women, who are underrepresented in these circles, have a distinct disadvantage when this is the primary selection pool. The vast majority of Permanent Representatives and ambassadors are men. Of the 192 member states, for example, less than two dozen have female Permanent Representatives to the United Nations as of November 2007.^{xxxix}

Potential SRSG's are often identified based on personal relationships with senior level officials on the inside of the UN. According to one interviewee, candidates are selected from a “good old men's club” comprised of “people who are or have been insiders.” For those potential candidates on the outside, this bias towards those who are well-known in the system and the inability to tap into existing networks on the outside, presents enormous hurdles. Without a powerful champion within the system, it is virtually impossible to be selected.

In addition, this bias may also inform the way that candidates from the “outside” are evaluated during the recruitment process and in the interviews for these positions. This may have particular implications for women, and especially for women from underrepresented regions of the world, who may approach and describe peace and security issues differently. Some interviewees pointed to cases where female candidates from Africa, for example, were not successful in the interview process due to the way they presented themselves and answered the questions. Thus, the way the questions are asked, the way the process is conducted, and the way that female candidates answer the questions, may perpetuate this insider bias. These factors require more study but point to a perhaps overlooked reason for women not being selected for these positions.

The Hard versus Soft Security Bias

Many interviewees emphasized that the male-dominated Secretariat maintains inherent biases against appointing women to “serious” missions.^{xl} Some men still believe that women will not be taken seriously in negotiations. Even in 2007, there is “underlying resistance” to women's leadership in military and diplomatic circles.^{xli} They are still seen as not having the political skills and the diplomatic gravitas to head large-scale civil-military missions. And when women are tapped for leadership, there is a perception that decision-makers choose them for particular positions that are judged “safer,” “less visible”, or less “serious.” Some DPKO leaders and member states retain a pervasive skepticism of bringing in SRSG's with humanitarian and development backgrounds, where women's experiences are common. One woman manager notes this is “the least best common denominator” across member states, as women's contributions to the mission remain under-recognized.^{xlii} Some inside the system note that there is a “divide of 1st Avenue” between the Secretariat and UN agencies. Although there are more women working at senior levels in these agencies, especially in development and humanitarian capacities, they are not being tapped for peacekeeping missions. Interestingly, of the currently serving SRSG's, approximately half of them have

development and/or humanitarian experience. As such, the skill set that that type of experience brings to leading peace operations is clearly relevant.

Among those interviewed for this study, there was a common perception that substantial weight is placed on military and political experience as a key qualification. Because there is a lack of gender balance in those areas, there are not as many female candidates who are considered or chosen. In fact, one female candidate was told that her lack of experience managing a military campaign was a reason she was not selected for an SRSG position. However, the current list of SRSG's indicates that only 3 out of 15 have military backgrounds. This leads to the question, are female candidates being held to a different standard than men when it comes to military experience?

Snapshot of Current Special Representatives of the Secretary-General

According to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, SRSG's are "responsible for coordinating a holistic response to provide the 'time and space' for the necessary political process, establish or re-establish the rule of law and good governance and undertake the post-conflict reconstruction and development activities critical to building a sustainable peace."^{xliv} The following provides a snapshot of the background and qualifications of the SRSG's leading the Department of Peacekeeping Operations's 17 peacekeeping missions as of November 2007:

*Former ambassadors/Former permanent representatives: 5

*Former elected officials: 3

*Former military: 3

*Humanitarian or development background: 8

*Former professors: 3

*At least three university degrees: 6

*Multi-lingual (4 or more languages): 4

*Married: 10

*Children: 10

*Note that only those 15 missions with permanent heads were assessed; the 2 missions with acting heads at the time of publication were not included.^{xliv}

The National Factor

"Politics is always going to play a role, but the more established and serious and transparent the process is, the better women will do."

--Former senior manager in the United Nations Secretariat

Even when women candidates for SRSG positions "make it on the short list" in the decision-making process, the pursuit of geographic balance, favoritism toward certain nationalities that are less represented in the UN system, and the "silent imposition" of member states on behalf of their nominees often work against women in the appointment process.^{xliv} Member states continue to recommend men for vacancies, and cultural and institutional impediments persist despite mandates for gender balance. Even those countries that are vocally supporting the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 at home and within the system may not be "putting their money where their mouth is" in this regard.^{xlvi} DPKO continues to state that member states are not putting forward women for these positions. Some member states point to the difficulty of finding qualified women in the first place, which others criticize as a common excuse. Some member states, especially those that are developing or transitioning countries, point out that qualified women at the senior political level are often needed in national positions or tend to have a variety of competing opportunities.

While some point to the difficulty in identifying women who are qualified for leadership roles in peacekeeping as a problem, others within and outside the system say that it is just a matter of being more proactive in recruiting.

Advocates for women's inclusion inside and outside the UN say that despite lists of highly qualified women candidates and the mandate for gender balance in leadership, there is still lack of political will in the Secretariat to appoint women. Officials in the Secretariat note the lack of time and incentives to engage in lengthy searches for suitable female candidates given pressures of work and rigid personnel rules and procedures, along with the need for the Secretary-General to balance both gender and geographical diversity. Those inside the system also say that although women have been offered these positions, many of them are turning them down. At the very top level of management positions, such as DSRS and SRS, there is no available information on how many women have turned down positions.

Some interviewees inside and outside the UN have suggested that some form of affirmative action be implemented. However, these types of mechanisms are not without controversy. "Reserving" certain senior positions for female candidates is one option, but not without perils. When it is perceived that high level positions are "held" for women, some male colleagues become infuriated. Staff reportedly spent six months to one year to find a qualified woman for SRS and DSRS posts in African missions in 2007. The danger with reserving posts for women is that they can appear as tokens and face additional layers of scrutiny that men do not encounter.

Women Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Peace Operations		
Name & Nationality	Mission	Dates
Ellen Margrethe LØJ Denmark	Liberia (UNMIL)	2008-present
Carolyn MCASKIE Canada	Burundi (ONUB)	2004-2006
Heidi TAGLIAVINI Switzerland	Georgia (UNOMIG)	2002-2006
Ann HERCUS New Zealand	Cyprus (UNFICYP)	1998-1999
Elisabeth REHN Finland	Bosnia (UNMIBH)	1995-2001
Angela KING Jamaica	South Africa (UNOMSA)	1992-1994
Margaret Joan ANSTEE United Kingdom	Angola (UNAVEM II)	1992-1993

Qualified Women: A Problem of Self-Elimination?

Almost all interviewers agreed that qualified women may not be in a position (personally or professionally) to accept SRS or other senior level positions when they are offered. This has been the case in East Timor, where five women were offered and passed up senior level positions; and in Sudan, where numerous senior level positions have been declined by women. Although this has led some to believe that women are dissuaded from taking such positions due the arduous conditions on the ground, women who have served in peacekeeping missions categorically reject such assumptions. They acknowledge that work in the field is not easy, but they do not believe that these realities are a major disincentive to qualified women, especially those at the very senior level who have years of experience in the field and understand the nature of the work.

However, the problems that working in a non-family duty station can create for families was cited repeatedly as a major factor for women rejecting positions in peacekeeping. Several women at DSRS levels said that they were only willing to go on missions after their children were grown and had rejected offers when their children were younger. Even some senior women who had served in the field at later points in their careers noted that they did not extend their tours due to spousal or other family considerations.

“Attracting women to these jobs has everything to do with the way the jobs are described.”

—Assistant Secretary-General Margareta Wahlstrom, OCHA^{xlvi}

Many women actually remove themselves from consideration for leadership positions for another reason. Women seem hesitant to accept positions unless they are extremely confident that they are the right match for the position and the country needs. One senior woman questioned whether she was the right candidate for an SRSR role in a mission because she did not have experience working in the country where the position was located. One other female SRSR said that the only reason she accepted the position was because she had prior experience dealing with the country at hand. At least one former SRSR stated openly that women can be “their own worst enemy,” citing this as one reason she felt compelled to accept the SRSR post when offered: “If I didn’t go, they would say I didn’t act according to my principles. They could say they offered the SRSR position to a woman, but she didn’t have the guts to take it.”^{xlvi} Some women who achieved these positions had to put themselves forward in a very proactive way for the job – they did this when they felt they were uniquely qualified. On other occasions, someone inside the system at a powerful level, including in some cases, the Secretary-General himself, convinced the candidate to take the position despite her initial reservations. Do women need to aggressively lobby for these positions?

The Pipeline: International Civilian Staff

SRSR’s oversee the thousands of international civilian staff who serve in UN missions. Professional posts in the UN range from P-1 (entry level) through P-5 (senior level), and beyond that, director posts include D-1 and D-2. More senior positions, such as SRSR’s, are appointed through the Secretariat’s closed process discussed above.

Professional staff is largely recruited through one-month publicized vacancy announcements and apply to an online system called Galaxy.^{xlvi} There are an outstanding number of applicants for peacekeeping positions. In one year, DPKO receives approximately 350,000 applications for civilian peace operations staff.¹ Despite this plethora of candidates, only 4,857 international staff (1,448 women) were deployed to peacekeeping missions as of October 2007.^{li}

Every applicant to peacekeeping positions in Galaxy is automatically sent to a database known as Nucleus. At this point, DFS human resource staff conducts an initial, administrative clearance for eligibility. Relevant candidates are forwarded to substantive staff in thematic areas, and they follow up with a technical clearance. For example, the DPKO Gender Affairs Officer is responsible for reviewing the applications for gender advisers and gender affairs officers in field missions.

DPKO has begun using Nucleus as a roster of civilian experts, encompassing 24 occupational groups with 400 job titles, because the candidates can be contacted directly when a specific need arises without necessarily advertising a new vacancy.^{lii} Generic vacancy announcements are increasingly used as a means to populate Nucleus with qualified, at-the-ready candidates. This is due, in part, to the enormous, lengthy task of candidate screening. In 2006, the Secretary-General acknowledged the problems with Galaxy and UN recruitment as “reactive and slow. On average, 174 days elapse from the time a vacancy announcement is issued to the time a head of office selects a candidate.”^{liii} Nucleus is an attempt by DPKO to speed up this process.

Gender Specific Barriers?

The overall lack of a critical mass of professional female applicants—both internal and external—may directly relate to the layers of obstacles in current peacekeeping recruitment system for civilians. The first barrier is Galaxy itself, ironically designed to be the door into peacekeeping. Some have noted problems with the Galaxy online system and the lack of access to this mechanism for potential candidates from rural areas or developing countries. The system

has a reputation internationally as a “black hole,” and many qualified women—even those with experience in regional peace operations—still believe “you have to know somebody to get UN jobs.”^{lv} The latter statement was, in fact, confirmed by some interviews with senior women managers, several who entered the system at the specific request or urging of a male mentor or colleague already in the UN system.^{lv} Only one woman interviewed was recruited into the UN through Galaxy without a contact inside the UN to support her application.

The “UN-speak” of Galaxy can be a barrier to women candidates. While recent criteria requiring applicants to commit to the principles of gender equality has been added to vacancy announcements, these advertisements continue to have a military emphasis. This inherently male bias exists despite the fact that socio-economic factors—where women’s experience is more common—can be equally important to the success of a multi-dimensional peace operation. The generic language of many vacancy announcements, which is a deliberate strategy to populate the Nucleus database of civilian experts, may also challenge women applicants. At the other professional levels, women appear to have the same tendency as at the very senior level women to pursue only jobs that are specifically matched to their qualifications. Thus, the way the position is described and marketed has an impact on the likelihood that women will apply. According to one qualified candidate: “Women often want to see every line of a job description and read through it to see if they can do it. Women worry about not being able to fulfill expectations. Many men wouldn’t be concerned about this. Generic posts tend to intimidate women who don’t know what they’re facing really and may be a disincentive. The better informed we can make these descriptions, the more likely people, especially women, would be to sign up.”^{lvi}

The In(Effectiveness) of Rosters

There are several types of rosters that have been developed both inside and outside the UN to identify qualified candidates for positions.

UN Rosters

Within the UN, DPKO has begun to use the Nucleus system as a roster of pre-cleared, civilian professionals (described previously). UNDP has developed a roster, mainly for D-1 and D-2 level positions, that incorporates gender, diversity, and representation across UN agencies. More recently, the UNDP Surge Project has been created in order to manage recruitment and deployment specifically for crisis and disaster response. It includes a 100-person roster organized under 12 profiles. Any applicant can submit their names electronically; short listing is done on an electronic system, which is regularly updated. Approximately 40 percent of the candidates on this roster are women.^{lvii} There are also a number of UN rosters that focus on personnel with specific types of qualifications. For example, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights maintains a roster to provide candidates for its 240 human rights officer positions in peacekeeping missions. In addition to internal UN personnel, roster candidates are drawn from national rosters, civil society, and the nationality of the host government.^{lviii} The Senior Appointments Section is developing a roster of qualified candidates for SRSG, DSRSG and other senior leadership positions in peace operations.

External Rosters

Several external rosters, including the successful CANADEM roster, have been funded by national governments to serve UN personnel needs. CANADEM has expanded to include experts from a variety of countries available to serve in various professional and management positions. Thirty five percent of the CANADEM roster is composed of women. Most of them are concentrated in areas such as human rights and rule of law, with fewer in security positions, such as policing and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration specializations. CANADEM primarily focuses on P-3 to P-5 professional posts for UN operations, although it has also placed candidates in D-1 level positions. The success of the CANADEM roster and others that are working successfully is in part due to the fact that candidates on the roster are pre-cleared through an advanced screening process. Almost all interviewees cited the problem of keeping rosters current as a major impediment to making them useful. CANADEM has addressed this potential problem in two ways. First, position searches for UN and other organizations go out on a daily basis which means they regularly receive updates from people on the roster. The CANADEM database is also

designed to search for resumes that are 3 to 4 months old and then automatically notify candidates if resumes need to be updated.^{lix}

Women-Only Rosters

In reaction to the paucity of women selected for senior positions, women-only rosters have been generated by UN departments responsible for gender issues, and by civil society organizations with access to women's networks. Advocates for women's inclusion have turned to this mechanism in reaction to the frequently cited problem of not being able to find qualified women for senior positions. Although providing lists of women may serve to remind decision-makers that there are indeed qualified women, these types of rosters have a poor track record. The majority of interviewees were convinced that rosters of female candidates do not work as a mechanism to increase the numbers of women in senior leadership positions. Indeed, rosters of high level female candidates have never been successfully embraced within the system as a source for candidates.

A few high level women said that they would not want their names on one of these lists, as they would not want to advertise the fact that they were looking for possible positions.^{lx} Those who have been selected for SRSG's and other top positions were approached and offered the positions through much more informal networks and processes. There are many reasons why lists of female candidates at high levels provided by civil society have usually failed to influence the decision making process, including the fact that the candidates on these lists are usually not "known" within the system, that they are not pre-cleared, and that they often do not match the mission and position needs.

It appears that the most successful rosters have been those that focus on specific types of expertise, such as rule of law, humanitarian relief, etc., not those based on gender. Both external and internal rosters, such as CANADEM and UNDP, demonstrate that rosters can be developed to reflect diversity and gender balance goals. Overall, rosters have been much more utilized at the professional levels, while those that focus on the very senior levels, in which selection occurs based on a more political process, have not been utilized. The new roster that is being developed by the Senior Appointments Section will be a test case of whether such a roster, comprised of male and female candidates, for the highest positions in peace operations, can in fact be effective in improving the recruitment of talented leaders.

Improving the current system is difficult, as there is no tracking mechanism to understand what outreach is effective. Interviews are not conducted of successful candidates to evaluate their recruitment and experience, and there is no indicator on Galaxy applications of how an individual learned of a particular vacancy announcement. For those offices tasked with improving recruitment and increasing women's numbers, the lack of data proves to be a real inhibitor to requests for additional funding. In turn, without a budgetary allocation for advertising or travel for outreach, overworked staff members are laboring to fulfill an unfunded or under-funded mandate.

Retention and Advancement Problems: The Truncated Career Ladder for Women

"To develop senior managers, we need to start now with younger people and groom them for these roles."

--UN Member State Representative

The women who overcome these obstacles and join the UN peacekeeping system do not tend to stay. Women's numbers drop dramatically between entry-level professionals and mid- and senior management. While women make up nearly 30 percent of international staff in peacekeeping operations, they are highly concentrated in the most junior positions.^{lxi} For example, at the P-2 level, which is generally administrative, the system is approaching gender parity as women make up 42.8 percent of staff.^{lxii} However, women fill only 24.4 percent of P-5 positions and only 7.7 percent of D-2 positions in peacekeeping missions.^{lxiii} Junior professional women may be leaving the system before they have the opportunity to advance to more senior management positions.

The UN experiences faster turnover of women than men, and it is reportedly difficult to keep even women managers in field positions for more than one year.^{lxiv} Some point to poor management in missions, arduous working conditions, and fatigue. Others note a desire for work-life balance or the variety of available professional opportunities. There are also structural problems that contribute to women's departure. Interviewees point to the lack of a career track and professional development in the UN system, noting that the organization is not structured to groom staff at the mid-level. One woman who entered the UN later in her career and has served in several peacekeeping missions said that if she had entered the UN when she was younger, she would have found the system challenging and disheartening. "In the UN, if you are a woman and can get your foot in the door, great. But then you are on your own."^{lxv} Several women, even senior managers, feel as if they are "stuck" in certain classifications, particularly in "soft" sectors such as human resources.^{lxvi} One woman who had served in many senior leadership capacities for the UN pointed to the fact that women in the system are not given the positions and roles that will give them the visibility and the skills for future leadership positions. "Women end up in front offices, as special assistants – they run the shop," while men get the assignments that lead to powerful positions.^{lxvii}

"It's extraordinarily challenging to staff missions. The conditions of service must change, and job security must improve, and we need to develop staff."

--Donna Maxfield, Chief,
Personnel Management and
Support Services, DFS

Conditions of Service: The Giant Roadblock in the Road

According to the Secretary-General, "some 51 percent of the professional staff serving in United Nations peace operations have two years experience or less with the organization..." in part because of the conditions of service in field missions.^{lxviii} DPKO staff reportedly receive lower compensation packages than other UN agencies—up to 40 percent lower for senior field positions.^{lxix} Perhaps even more importantly for female staff, the vast majority of DPKO missions are designed as non-family duty posts even in locations where the staff of other UN agencies and funds are permitted to bring spouses and children. DFS human resources staff report that problems are becoming exacerbated by the fact that men under 40 increasingly refuse to spend months or years away from their family either.^{lxx}

The Secretary-General sums up the peacekeeping conditions of service problems as follows: "If the United Nations is to become an employer of choice in today's highly competitive global market and maintain a workforce capable of meeting the challenges of increasingly complex work in the field, it needs to offer conditions of service which will attract and retain high-quality personnel. At present, the conditions of service offered by the Secretariat are not conducive to this vision..."^{lxxi} Even for staff accustomed to rotating between headquarters and the field, a variety of challenges inhibit their mobility. Release agreements can be difficult to obtain and are not always honored. Upon return to headquarters, demotions are frequent.

According to Assistant Secretary-General Jane Lute, "peacekeeping relies on the peak-contributing professional years" of men and women, and the agency must be able to attract these individuals. Overall, the rigidity of UN rules for human resources in peacekeeping is a challenge to reform. DPKO's budget is based on member state contributions, leaving little room for flexibility or response to mission needs, including personnel. Dysfunctional human resource rules that inhibit recruitment, such as unequal service conditions and low compensation, can only be altered with direction from member states.

Lute described ongoing efforts by the peacekeeping agency to elevate women's role in field missions and at headquarters, noting that "a bureaucratic approach is by no means trivial."^{lxxiii} At the time of publication, for example, the General Assembly was preparing to address the recommendations of the Secretary-General with regard to human resources reform in the UN, including harmonization of service conditions. At a cost of at least \$200 million, it may take time for member states to recognize the critical importance of this issue, despite the persistent recommendations of the Secretary-General and DPKO leadership. Aside from the cost, part of the problem with moving this forward is the disagreement among member states about specific recommendations on harmonization.

"Strong, qualified women who are willing to go to the field are in high demand and have choices. DPKO is not a competitor."^{lxxii}

It is precisely this human resources framework that proves nearly impossible to change, and the enormity of it seems to have created a sense of disempowerment to make other, smaller, but still significant changes in recruitment and retention approaches. In fact, throughout the interview process for this report, it was apparent that the size and significance of these obstacles are used as a crutch, a distraction, and even an excuse not to move forward at all. Several senior managers noted: “If harmonization doesn’t happen, then we can’t do anything at all” or “[this is] the political environment [and] how the SG operates; [it’s] just how it is.”^{lxxiv} Leaders tend to defer to the structure with a “we are not in control; the system controls us” approach. There seems to be little willingness to go beyond the rhetorical commitments and recommendations and be creative in practice. Although the unequal conditions of service for peacekeeping personnel is a major challenge to attracting talent – perhaps one of the most fundamental challenges – some action can certainly be taken while awaiting fundamental changes and paradigm shifts in the UN system.

The UNDP Resident Coordinator (RC) Recruitment Process

The Resident Coordinator system brings together various UN agencies working in a country to improve the efficiency and positive impact of operational activities in a country. An RC is in charge of leading UN country teams, and is designated representatives of the Secretary-General for development operations. They work closely with national governments, civil society, and the international community, and work to build partnerships between a variety of actors within the business community, intergovernmental agencies, academia, and other groups in society.^{lxxv}

Although UNDP has had difficulty recruiting and retaining women, it is improving the selection of women for RC positions. Those involved in selecting and hiring RC's acknowledge the difficulty in increasing the numbers of female candidates. However, UNDP has set a target of 40 percent women at this level, and currently, approximately 29 percent of Resident Coordinators are women (compared to 26 percent one year ago).^{lxxvi}

Two segments of the UNDP process may serve as a process model for bringing in more women into high level civilian positions. First, candidates for RC positions undergo an elaborate competency testing system and assessment process. There is a commitment that 7 out of 10 of the candidates who go through the assessment process are women. Second, UNDP uses an extensive system to match vacancies with candidates.^{lxxvii}

The UNDP process for selecting RC's can take as long as 6 months to complete. The timeline is as follows:

- The vacancy announcement goes to all 16 field agencies. The agencies put forward names of candidates.
- Names and CVs then go back to all 16 agencies for references. This is real-time data, including performance appraisal results.
- The inter-agency panel then reviews the names. They can either a) support the person, b) support with verbal reservation, c) support with written reservation, d) group consensus, or e) doesn't support.
- The names then go to the UNDP head. In his capacity as chair of the UN Development Group (UNDG), he examines the recommendations, considering gender, geography, and agency balance.
- The names go to the Secretary-General who sees the nomination and all the finalists. The Secretary-General accepts the UNDG chair's recommendations or if appropriate, requests additional candidates.
- The UNDG chair sends out a letter to all Chief Executive Board (CEB) members with a list of the successful candidates. CEB members are invited to respond with additional input.
- The host government of the mission is consulted, and must agree to the nomination. The approval process can be lengthy if the government requires cabinet or parliamentary confirmation.
- The UN Development Group keeps three rosters: Pool A (unassigned and available); Pool B (not available); and Pool C (assigned).^{lxxviii}

PART TWO: THE VIEW FROM WITHIN – WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

Interviews with women who have taken senior level positions in the UN portray a system that is male-dominated and unaccommodating to those with spouses and families. It is a system that is largely based on personal relationships for advancement. Not surprisingly, women encountered discrimination – both blatant and implicit – and in some cases were targets of sexual harassment. However, the double standards and negative attitudes that women inside the UN encountered did not appear to dissuade them from taking on challenging positions in peace operations. Women were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences contributing to field operations. And it is clear that women in senior positions in these missions also have a positive impact on the missions themselves – both in terms of mentoring and supporting younger professional women – and in highlighting the opportunities for women to make contributions to peace and security among the local populations in which these missions operate.

The Career Paths of Senior Level Women

Overwhelmingly, female managers in peacekeeping at headquarters and in the field are career UN staff members who rose through the ranks. Many female leaders in peacekeeping spent time in field missions early in their careers, and returned to headquarters with this knowledge and experience. Many felt they had “earned their spot” with regional or substantive knowledge or strong connections after years of service. “Being male or female didn’t matter” in their selection; what mattered “was whether or not [she] met the qualifications.”^{lxxxix} However, nearly all senior women interviewed for this report described experiences of being passed over for jobs they felt qualified for; in most cases, men were granted the posts due to political considerations or geographical background of the individual. Some women reported that advancement in the system is based more on who you know than merit: “You have to learn to make the right friends and position yourself.”

Mentors and contacts with influential positions within the system play a key role in supporting women’s advancement. Often, women managers had a male mentor in the UN system who offered both informal advice as well as formal training. Some women described receiving a “hand up” from a particular male mentor who was “open minded and willing to invest.”^{lxxx}

Those women leaders who joined the UN later in their careers were often recruited individually by a colleague or influential mentor already in the UN system. These often more senior male colleagues helped guide women’s UN careers and recommended them for promotions. Many experienced women who came in from the outside were identified and recruited for senior roles after making extensive contacts within the system as consultants. Almost universally, senior women learned of their posts through their colleagues and networks, not through formal ads or the Galaxy application system. This reflects the reality that, especially at the senior levels, informal entry points into the system are the most common.

The Demographics

Senior women are disproportionately Western. The majority of female managers are unmarried, divorced, and/or without children. This is borne out in statistics. According to a UNDP official, approximately 80 percent of women at the D-2 level in UNDP are single compared with only 40 percent of men at the D-2 level.^{lxxxi} Several women explicitly tied their divorce to their dedication to their career, and others even cited stress-related miscarriages. According to one male senior manager in the UN system: “To be successful in the UN, one must be single, widowed, or divorced... [which is] an indictment on the system.”^{lxxxii} However, most women simply noted: “This is the price women pay... We must be very aware of our choices.”^{lxxxiii}

Senior women in peacekeeping who are married tend to have spouses who are also within the UN system or who they met on the job. These women universally described their husbands as “supportive” and themselves as “lucky” or “fortunate.” One woman concludes: “A supportive spouse has been key to my success.”^{lxxxv} Still, these women must make trade-offs. Some agree not to return to field missions even though, for example, “it was the best time in their lives.”^{lxxxvi} Others agree to go to the field only if “re-entry” to a position in New York was guaranteed after the tour.^{lxxxvii} Nearly all married women note that there is little support for dual career couples in the UN, particularly with regard to field missions. This is a system that was built for professional men with stay-at-home wives.

Working Conditions for Senior Level Women: Attitudes, Biases, and Behaviors

The low numbers of women in senior level positions is not unique to peacekeeping within the UN system. Many women at headquarters find that the Secretariat, in particular, is still a tight network dominated by men, that many obstacles exist to women’s promotion, and that the processes for advancement remain opaque. Despite assistance by male mentors, some senior women have “never felt really accepted” and believe they are still somewhat seen as “outsiders.”^{lxxxviii} Senior women pointed to insidious discrimination within the system, whereby women who do attain senior management positions are marginalized from the important meetings and decisions. When the women interviewed for this report had *not* experienced blatant discrimination or sexism within the UN system, they were quick to note this is “a rarefied experience.”^{lxxxix}

“Unequal treatment between staff from the Secretariat and staff of the funds and programmes working in the field generates a sense of unfairness and creates obstacles for the Secretariat to attract and retain staff members to perform essential functions in the field... This failure to offer job security and conditions of service that enable the organization to sustain and develop the stable and expert workforce required to work in the uptempo, complex operational environment of United Nations field missions places our organization at financial and managerial risk.”

—Secretary-General Kofi Annan, 2006^{lxxxiv}

The Double Standard for Women

When women do assume high-level positions in peace operations, various interviewees discussed the higher standard they are judged by: “If a woman in one of these positions is not doing a great job, she is judged more harshly than a man in her position.”^{xc} Another senior manager summarizes the situation as follows: “Men are given the benefit of the doubt to transfer from one job to another. There have been some disasters with male SRSG’s, but it doesn’t seem to dissuade anyone from selecting other men. Women are held to a different standard.”^{xc} Outside experts concur that male SRSG’s are frequently recycled to other missions without real regard to their performance: “The UN accepts mediocrity because it is safe... He is a nice, safe choice.”^{xcii} None of the seven women SRSG’s in UN history has led more than one mission.

“An ineffective woman in a post does more damage than an ineffective man. If a woman fails, then ‘gender’ fails. Failing men don’t seem to hurt [their advancement].”^{xciii}

The spotlight shines brightly on women in leadership positions. Several interviewees observed that when a high-profile woman fails, the agenda for women’s participation and leadership experiences an overall setback. According to the Secretary-General’s Senior Adviser on Gender Issues and Women’s Empowerment, “Regrettably, if one woman is not the right one, then it is thought that women cannot do the job.”^{xciv} In all positions in a peace operation, “Women must prove their worth. Mistakes are very visible. They become ostracized on the team as a result—even though men make mistakes that go less noticed.”^{xcv} The pressure is very high for women to succeed, as subsequent appointments may depend on it.

Unfortunately, the first peacekeeping mission headed by woman was set up for failure, which had negative implications on the way women’s abilities to lead peacekeeping missions was viewed. Angola was not a political mission, but a military mission with inherent problems from the outset. Several sources reported that Dame Margaret Anstee, who served as the first female

SRSG, was perceived as “soft,” and wasn’t taken seriously by the military men in the mission. When the mission failed, it led to the perception that a woman had failed.^{xcvi}

Several senior managers expressed concern regarding the high expectations for the combination of a woman president, woman SRSG, and woman DSRSG in Liberia: “[There is] the potential for disaster for the women’s argument if they fail.”^{xcvii} Only when women reach leadership positions in higher numbers will this spotlight dim.

Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Several women interviewed experienced open gender-based discrimination during their time in the field. In most instances, the events had occurred in peace operations in the early or mid-1990s. Dame Margaret Joan Anstee, details her experience in *Never Learn to Type: A Woman at the United Nations*. She describes vocal attacks by the public and the media in Angola as “laden with sexual innuendo...UNITA’s Vorgan radio launched another vicious tirade, not only repeating all the old allegations but calling me a prostitute and threatening that a stray bullet would find me if I stayed in Angola.”^{xcix} Thus, not only were female heads of mission subject to the usual threats of warring parties, but these attacks were frequently tinged with a sexual component.

Dame Margaret Joan Anstee, the first female SRSG, described vocal attacks by the public and the media in Angola as “laden with sexual innuendo...UNITA’s Vorgan radio launched another vicious tirade, not only repeating all the old allegations but calling me a prostitute and threatening that a stray bullet would find me if I stayed in Angola.”^{xcviii}

A few women interviewed for this report were the targets of sexual discrimination by their own colleagues. Some filed formal complaints as a result and reported that the system responded well. For others, when they complained or resisted the attention and flirtations, they were labeled a “feminist” and further harassed.^c There were also reports of blatant discrimination, such as deliberately firing women in a peace mission who became pregnant. “Women must be constantly aware of themselves and their situations” while on peace operations.^{ci} For some women, this felt like “reality...I was on their turf,” only becoming angry after leaving the mission.^{cii}

Others reported that they were viewed as a sexual object by their colleagues, which led to difficult relationships and hindered their job performance. They attempted to work within these constraints and even respond to flirtation when it was the only way possible to get the job done. Women in the lower ranks continue to note implicit discrimination based on cultural and traditional assumptions of male-dominated missions and the local population—biases and stereotypes more common than blatant discrimination. Many interviewees noted that the SRSG sets the tone. When he/she promotes a working environment friendly toward women, then others in the mission tend to follow suit.

Negative Attitudes and Creative Responses

Implicit negative attitudes and biases are common. Such attitudes, particularly in the military and diplomatic communities, continue to surprise senior women. If the world of diplomacy is male-dominated, peacekeeping is even more so.^{ciii} Senior women who had worked for many years in multicultural environments reported that many people in the UN are entrenched in outdated mentalities, especially concerning gender and women. Some senior women note that, even today, they are occasionally thought to be secretaries or administrative assistants when they enter a room, especially in military situations.

Often this is compounded by misunderstandings about the meaning of gender considerations. Eyes still “glaze over” when senior women raise gender issues, creating a sense that they must carefully “calibrate their words” and measure how and when to say things to have the most effect.^{civ} One interviewee noted that when gender “is only referred to with regard to women, it creates a backlash, but if gender is shown to relate to women and men, there is more receptiveness to the specific challenges that each faces.”^{cv}

Women who regularly work with all-male military units have found creative ways to address this issue, such as immediately introducing themselves and even giving their “military rank equivalent,” which has effectively

dispelled any potential problems for her.^{cv} Other women concur, noting they needed to “earn the trust and respect” of male colleagues inside and outside of the UN system in the peace and security field.^{cvi} For example, some women cited the initial difficulties they encountered when dealing with military and intelligence officials in the field but acknowledged that they were able to win respect almost immediately. “Once you prove yourself, they get over” any biases they may have had.^{cvi}

Positive Experiences, Bureaucratic Challenges

It appears that women feel they may have more flexibility, freedom, and potential to make an impact in field missions, where they often assume higher-grade positions than at UN headquarters. However, the non-family duty status of DPKO missions has prevented some women from taking advantage of this opportunity as often as they would have liked. Others have gone to the field with their families, assuming responsibility on their own. Women and men also report difficulties leaving their headquarters jobs for higher classifications and having to return to their previous jobs in the Secretariat at lower classifications. In other cases, despite a release agreement, women and men are replaced. One female manager notes: While in the field, “you are forgotten in headquarters where the politics is happening.”^{cix}

Women in high-level positions within the UN system tend to stick together, which is important because they often report being far too overworked to go outside the system for support.^{cx} Many senior women point to changes in the system and culture in just the past two years as a result of the heightened awareness of women’s role and a more concerted effort to recruit women for senior posts in peace missions.

For many women, their experiences in peace operations were “very positive.”^{cx} Other senior managers said they “really enjoyed it and would do it again.”^{cxii} Although various peacekeeping leaders continue to suggest that women do not want to go to the field, this assumption was disputed by the majority of female interviewees. One female manager said: “Don’t assume that women’s won’t come [to the field]. It can be done if the framework allows you to do it. It is possible.”^{cxiii}

The Impact of Senior Level Women

According to the evidence obtained in interviews, the presence of senior women influences the process and outcomes of peace operations in four key ways.

Approach and Style as Leaders

Senior level women interviewed for this report frequently discussed their participatory approach and their conflict resolution skills, but all were reluctant to attribute that to their gender. They described the source of their style as personality, temperament, or how they were trained. “Leadership style is more about personal style than about being male or female.”^{cxv} Still, most women defined their approach in terms that are often considered feminine: “people-centered”,^{cxvi} “collaborative”,^{cxvii} “consultative, open, and inclusive.”^{cxviii} Regardless of nationality, women interviewed for this study repeatedly used the same words to describe their leadership styles.

**“Soft-spoken women
SRSG’s can put men
off. Soft-spoken men
SRSG’s do not put
men off.”^{cxiv}**

Specific differences were cited by interviewees in the way women view leadership and power. One interviewee described that many women in these positions view leadership as a contribution-based, rather than a power-based role. In fact, many women who entered the UN at senior levels said that one of the reasons for accepting positions in the field was that they were attracted to the opportunity to make a difference.

In the field, in particular, “it wasn’t about dictating” to the host population.^{cxix} One female manager noted that “women show leadership in a quiet way.”^{cxx} Another noted that “human directed leadership” was more effective in these situations, while recognizing that this style is not exclusively utilized by women. Many pointed to the fact that women bring contacts, communications, and trust building to the community. There is a sense that women leaders

can bring creative approaches to difficult conflict situations. A female former SRSB believes that she “did many things differently in terms of managing, even within DPKO standard operating procedures.”^{cxxi} This same woman described her approach as neither confrontational nor did she back down or run away from a problem. Within the political environment, she worked with the parties to prove that she was acting in their interest, while allowing them the public space to claim progress. Some interviewees believe that women SRSB’s actually negotiate differently, not wanting to impose a solution but create a system that works for everyone, that brings “the greatest good to the greatest number.”^{cxxii}

Cultural awareness is key, and interviewees noted that women tend to be more careful in this regard, and are often viewed as bridge builders both inside and outside the mission. In some local and cultural contexts, a feminine leadership style may be more acceptable than other approaches. At the outset of operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there were numerous female section chiefs, including a woman DSRSB, which reportedly “made an impact at the working level.”^{cxxiii} A former female SRSB even noted on the effect women can have on working relationships in New York: “it would make such a difference even between DPA and DPKO at headquarters if women were there. They discuss real issues and see how they can solve them.”^{cxxiv} Women who have worked in situations where there has been a critical mass of woman note that there is a difference in the conversation and the way decisions are made. Some noted that when there is not a critical mass, women in leadership tend to behave like men, but when there are more women, the dynamic moves to a more multidimensional decision-making process.

Interviewees believe this is related to the tendency for women managers to be “less self-involved and self-concerned” than some men.^{cxxv} Women typically spend less time on self-promotion, which can actually be beneficial to the action-oriented setting of a peace mission. The fact that many women “still have to wash and iron shirts” despite their high-level UN positions leads some interviewees to believe that women have a stronger sense of modesty and an ability to connect with staff and the host community.^{cxxvi} However, this same tendency can be detrimental in terms of women gaining visibility in leadership roles. One female manager notes that “women don’t push themselves forward enough,” and are more comfortable in less visible roles, including herself among them.^{cxxvii} She described her tendency to defer to others to lead inter-departmental meetings as an example of a daily leadership act that men would likely seize.

DFS human resource managers note that it takes both a traditional and a collaborative approach to be an effective leader. Some women admit they have been accused of being consultative to the point of not making a decision. The Chief of Personnel Management and Support Services deliberately tries to strike a balance between a male and female approach: “We need to be consultative and discuss things, but there is also a time to make a decision. The Division is becoming healthier in this way... We must pull the best from both approaches.”^{cxxviii}

Operational Impact

Many of those interviewed for this study pointed out that the participation of women in peace operations improves the effectiveness of the missions.^{cxxix} DPKO missions operate in fragile communities. The ability of women to reach half of the local population—women and girls—that male peacekeepers may not be able to reach has led TCCs and PCCs to declare women’s participation in missions as an “operational imperative.”^{cxxx} Research and anecdotal evidence increasingly highlights women’s ability in peace operations to obtain information that might otherwise not be shared, reduce tensions with the local population, improve crowd control, increase trust and confidence of the host community, and improve women’s participation in traditionally male-dominated fields.^{cxxxi} Other research has shown how including women in negotiating peace agreements and in post-conflict governance can decrease the likelihood of returning to conflict.^{cxxxii} Various cases also demonstrate that women are perceived as less threatening to parties in conflict situations, which allow them to more easily access information and negotiate with combatants or political factions.

Women in high-level positions in field missions tend to demonstrate a willingness to tackle difficult issues, such as rape and sexual violence, in part, out of concern for the victims and identification with other women. This is particularly relevant in the wake of reports of sexual violence and misconduct by peacekeepers in 2005. In fact, Assistant Secretary-General Lute acknowledges: “My operating assumption is that this is either a problem or a potential problem in every single one of our missions,”^{cxxxiii} leading the UN to create conduct and discipline teams at headquarters and in 10 missions.^{cxxxiv} Women in senior positions at the UN expressed particular concern about this

problem,^{cxv} and although both men and women in the UN and in the mission need to address these issues, it is expected that women in leadership roles will take action.

Recognition of the Importance of Women's Participation

Who the decision-makers are—men or women—affect the decisions that are made. One senior level woman manager said that a key motivation for taking a role in the process was to “make a small dent” on this issue from the inside—to bring women in.^{cxvi}

Even those women managers who are not in human resource positions frequently make the search for women candidates a personal mission. In fact, they are often approached for names of other women when an opening becomes available for an appointment. Some senior level women have taken a more proactive role: One female Assistant Secretary-General identifies senior level women and examines them in action. If she is impressed, she asks for their CVs. She then approaches DPKO and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General with specific candidates who she thinks would be a good fit for senior jobs in peace operations.^{cxvii}

Many women managers in field missions tend to hire other women, purposefully bringing them on to their teams and supporting those in more junior positions. Women often demonstrate a commitment to mentor other women and support their careers. Senior level women who were interviewed expressed deep respect for the work ethic and abilities of women who had served on their staffs or as colleagues.

Building the Leadership Pipeline: Women Supporting Women in the Humanitarian Field

Several former and current senior level women at the UN mentioned their participation in a new initiative called The Women's Humanitarian Network (WHN). WHN was created in 2007 by a group of female graduate students at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) as a forum to foster knowledge sharing, support, and career growth for women in humanitarian affairs. WHN defines “humanitarian affairs” broadly to encompass inter alia peacekeeping, relief, development, human rights, and other work that involves spending substantial time in the field.

The students who founded WHN recognized that many young women aspire to work in the field and then transition to senior level decision-making positions in international and non-governmental organizations. WHN is identifying women role models who have negotiated these challenges successfully. Students are able to tap into the knowledge of these women by participating in the network. A significant component of WHN is the mentorship program, which pairs a recent Columbia graduate student with a senior level woman in the humanitarian field, and has successfully involved accomplished women from the UN and other organizations.^{cxviii}

This influence extends beyond their colleagues. In Chile, when Michele Bachelet became the defense minister, the door was opened for women's participation in military schools. A recruitment campaign was targeted to women, which generated 2,000 applications from women for 200 student openings at the naval academy.^{cxix} Women's numbers have improved as a result of now President Bachelet's efforts, including in Chile's contingents for peace operations. In Burundi, then SRSG Carolyn McAskie openly advocated for women's participation during both the 1999 peace talks and in the elections. In her words, “during the elections in 2005, we were trying to get the parties to include women candidates to meet the constitutional requirement that parliament have 30% women. Now they have achieved 30% of women in the parliament and there are key women ministers in the cabinet.”^{cxl} While female leaders do not always represent women's concerns or advocate for women, this trend surfaced throughout the interviews for this report.

Senior level officials, both men and women, are beginning to advocate more vocally for expanding the ranks of women in international peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts. For example, the Oslo Forum of Mediators initiated an effort to promote more women to senior international mediation and special envoy positions. Following the June

2007 Forum, former SRSG Dame Margaret Anstee, independent expert Elizabeth Rehn, and Ambassador Carey Cavanaugh sent a letter to the leadership of the UN, European Union, and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which called for action on this issue. In November 2007, Anstee, Rehn, and Cavanaugh met with top UN officials to discuss how to increase female appointments. This will be a central theme at the June 2008 Oslo Mediators Forum.^{cxli}

Role Models

In many countries, peacekeeping missions are the most visible reflection of the UN and its values. When women are visible in the mission, particularly in senior roles, an example is set for women's post-war participation post-conflict in political, economic, and even military roles. A former female police officer in a regional peace operation found this to be especially important in her work: "Women within the mission are key if you're going to send a message to the local population. It's critical that contributing countries are representative."^{cxliii} While that statement was a reflection on her experience in a specific mission, the sentiment is increasingly being echoed in other places. The 2006 meeting of TCCs and PCCs also noted explicitly that "women in the host community value the presence of female peacekeepers as role models."^{cxliv} Role modeling of women in security positions proved effective in post-war South Africa when the first female deputy defense minister Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge reportedly "broke stereotypes and helped in terms of changing people's perspectives of women in this role."^{cxlv}

"Women within the mission are key if you're going to send a message to the local population. It's critical that contributing countries are representative."

—Former female police officer in a regional peace operation^{cxlii}

Intentionally or otherwise, women in leadership positions in field missions are seen as role models for women within peace operations—both within the mission and to the host country. One woman manager notes: "There's a symbolic role model aspect to having women in these positions."^{cxlvi} Junior women find that it is helpful to have a woman above them in a leadership role, in part, simply because it sends a message that "things have changed" and that this mission is "different" than others.^{cxlvii} Often, women do not realize that they were such powerful role models to younger women in the system. Several women managers in field missions noted their surprise when national and international female staff approached them to express appreciation for their leadership. Women who served in these positions acknowledge how important it was to provide reassurance, and confidence-building for women in more junior stages of their careers. All of the women who were interviewed discussed the positive effects that they could have on younger female staff. Some women managers in peace operations are self-described caretakers.^{cxlviii} Female senior managers mentioned their desire to "protect" women on their staff and in the host country; "it was second nature for me."^{cxlix} One former SRSG said, "It was important for women to know that I was fighting for them." Senior women who were perceived to have juggled the dual roles of career and family, reported that they were approached often by younger women who were struggling with these choices in their own lives.

Women in Senior Leadership in Military and Police

Peace operations are managed by a team of senior leaders that goes beyond SRSG's and their deputies. Force commanders and police commissioners lead the military and police operations of the mission. At the time of this report, zero women held senior appointments in military units—force commanders, deputy force commanders, or force chiefs of staff^{cl}—and three women held senior positions in police components of peacekeeping missions (Senior Police Advisor in Burundi, Senior Police Advisor in Cyprus, and Deputy Police Commissioner in Darfur).^{cli} The dearth of senior women in these areas is primarily attributed to the fact that very few member states have women in colonel-level posts or above. Thus, increasing the gender balance at the senior levels of military and policing forces in peacekeeping will be long process, as women will need to rise up the ranks at the national level in many of these countries first. In countries where women are in senior military positions—the US has three women three-star generals, for example, and 22 percent of the US Senior Executive Service posts are filled by women^{clii}—then they are needed in their current posts, are not available for peacekeeping missions, or have their choice of overseas deployment locations.^{cliii}

Nevertheless, DPKO and DFS actively encourage member states to put women's names forward for these positions. Force commanding directives now cite UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and obligate Force Commanders to consider this mandate when assigning duties and making operational plans. Force Commanders are explicitly required to maintain equal conditions for men and women under his/her command and are asked to include the issue of gender equality and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in quarterly and final reports, including sex-disaggregated data and information on relevant quick-impact projects. DFS/DPKO is considering the development of performance evaluation criteria to track the progress of Force Commanders on the directive's requirements.^{cliv}

PART THREE: RECENT PROGRESS AND THE WAY FORWARD

From the statistics in the previous sections, it is clear that UN peacekeeping remains male-dominated, particularly at the leadership levels. Even in New York, there is only one woman Assistant Secretary-General in peacekeeping and two women at the D-2 level in DPKO and DFS combined. In addition, a woman was recently appointed as Under Secretary-General for DFS. There has been significant forward movement at headquarters and in the field over the past two years as a result of the growing recognition of the need for talent in peacekeeping. High vacancy and turnover rates have created an incentive for institutional and cultural changes in order to find qualified candidates, which in turn, have opened opportunities for women's participation. At the same time, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of women's participation in peace and security at the highest levels. Sources inside the UN say that the current Secretary-General is committed to this issue.

Recent reforms and pro-active initiatives within DFS and DPKO have led to almost immediate progress. In 2007 alone, women's numbers in senior peacekeeping positions in the field increased from 27 to 37—a 37 percent increase in a matter of months.^{clv}

Senior Leadership Appointments

The first of these major initiatives was the creation of a **Senior Leadership Appointments Section** inside the Office of the DFS Under Secretary-General in October 2006. This four-person team is attempting to bring more clarity and transparency to the selection process for senior peacekeeping appointments, primarily SRSG's and DSRSG's. The Section has a roster of 400 qualified men and women, which is mined to provide the Secretary-General with three or four candidates to consider for each available post. Out of personal commitment—not a formal mandate—the Chief aims to include at least one woman on every short list of candidates received by the Secretary-General.^{clvii}

The Section's roster was created by identifying open senior posts in peacekeeping, determining qualifications and establishing an appropriate profile for each mission assignment, and seeking out individuals that meet these requirements. In this short time, in addition to compiling an initial roster, the Senior Leadership Appointments Section has created a candidate profile and template for the Secretary-General and the appointments panel to evaluate all candidates. In its second year, the Section will develop standard operating procedures, clarify its role, get the roster “to a healthy place,” and conduct more outreach inside and outside the UN, particularly to non-Western member states.^{clviii}

“Tokenism or placing women simply for the sake of placing women, is not helpful to anybody. It's not good for the Organization, for the particular mission, or for the woman herself.”

--Ariel Morvan, Chief, Senior Leadership Appointments Section, DFS^{clvi}

Despite being understaffed, the Senior Leadership Appointments Section is “making the difference,” according to gender experts within the UN.^{clix} Human resource managers agree, noting that the Section has coordinated particularly well with desk officers.^{clx} Still, the Section's planned outreach will be critical. Several representatives of member states on the Security Council who were interviewed for this report were either not aware of the office's existence or had not yet been approached by the Section to provide candidates for the roster or for recent appointments.^{clxi} Similarly, at least one woman senior manager recently hired for a peacekeeping mission had no contact with the Section and only learned of its existence after assuming her position.^{clxii}

Recruitment and Outreach

A woman is also heading the new DFS **Recruitment and Outreach Unit**, created in May 2006. With only seven officers, the Unit's mandate covers applicants for 22 occupational groups and 512 position titles. Staff review each application for peacekeeping field positions in Galaxy, conduct preliminary interviews with those who have no field experience, clear a list of at least three candidates for each position, and send these names to the mission level or substantive experts for the technical clearance process. When the Unit was formed, there was a backlog of 200,000

applications, which is now steadily being addressed. The Unit is also reviewing current applications and informing new candidates of where they stand in the process.^{clxiii}

The Recruitment and Outreach Unit is also reviewing vacancy announcements to ensure they are attracting candidates with the appropriate background and experience. “Gender sensitivity is now incorporated in all vacancy announcements.”^{clxiv} A random scan of vacancy announcements reveals that, in fact, one of the competency requirements for environmental engineers in peacekeeping missions is: “commitment to implementing the goal of gender equality by ensuring the equal participation and full involvement of women and men in all aspects of peace operations.”^{clxv} Similar language is in place in vacancy announcements for Legal Officers, Associate Human Rights Officers, Finance Officers, Police Training Officers, Administrative Officers, and senior Civil Affairs Officers, among others. Furthermore, the Recruitment and Outreach Unit has declared women to be the first “filter” for every position.^{clxvi} That is, women candidates are prioritized for the DFS review and clearance process.

To fulfill the growing number of open positions in peacekeeping missions, this Unit has begun more targeted outreach inside and outside the UN system, visiting universities, professional conferences, and thematic events around the world. Given limited staff resources, the office focuses outreach to areas of the greatest need, such as Arabic speakers, logistics, and procurement. In many cases, however, the professional women’s organizations in engineering or logistics, for example, remain heavily US and Canadian-centric. In addition to outreach, the Unit uses a standard list of partners to distribute vacancy announcements, including women’s organizations. Some women’s groups have approached the Unit directly and were added to the circulation list for vacancies. Otherwise, staff members have dedicated time to web searches, seeking out women’s networks and other groups to post the vacancies.

Logistics

At headquarters, as of 2006, the **Logistics Support Division** made up 40 percent of DPKO staffing, but only 17.4 percent of these professionals were women.^{clxvii} This compares to 37.43 percent professional women throughout the Secretariat, clearly demonstrating the challenge of identifying and attracting women to a traditionally male-dominated field that includes positions such as engineering, fuel management, and aviation and air safety.^{clxviii} In response, the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) partnered with DPKO to conduct research and make recommendations on the recruitment of women for logistics positions at headquarters. Several action items from this report are being addressed, including targeted outreach to women candidates. A temporary Gender Outreach Officer was tasked in 2007 to initiate outreach to women in logistics positions primarily through the development of a database and print and online advertising. However, there are little funds dedicated to this effort. The Gender Outreach post expired early in 2008, and currently there is no gender capacity in the Logistics Support Division.^{clxix} Dedicated capacity to recruit women for logistics positions at headquarters is seen as critical, a “real necessity” according to DPKO’s Gender Affairs Officer, a means for practical implementation of the mandates of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.^{clxx}

Other mechanisms and activities to improve recruitment for peacekeeping posts include the following:

- **Greater collaboration in the recruitment of “joint DSRSG’s”**—In most peacekeeping missions, there are two DSRSG’s: one for political affairs and one for development. The recruitment process for the DSRSG for development was revised in 2007 to increase collaboration and decision-making between DPA, DPKO, UNDP, and OCHA. The process now includes joint development of job qualifications and vacancy announcements; nominations by 16 UN agencies from a pre-approved list of UNDP’s Resident Coordinator candidates or outside suggestions (see Box: The UNDP Resident Coordinator Recruitment Process); selection of a short list for interviews with OCHA, UNDP, DPA, and DPKO; and a final joint recommendation to the Secretary-General along with two alternate candidates. For all other DSRSG’s, DPKO alone nominates the candidates. The large pool of pre-screened Resident Coordinators, of which half are women, leads to a greater number of women candidates on the short list than the selection process for other DSRSG’s.^{clxxi}
- **A new Enterprise Resource Planning system**—The UN is in the process of building an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that will replace Galaxy in two or three years.^{clxxii} According to the

Secretary-General: “The ERP system will facilitate the integration of currently fragmented process aspects of human resources management...” A major component of the ERP will be an e-staffing software package that “conforms to best practices in the use of technology for recruitment.”^{clxxiii}

- **A new talent search system**—The Secretariat is currently seeking vendors to develop a talent search system, which DFS will share so that outreach is centralized for both headquarters and field positions.
- **Increased outreach to civil society**—DFS and DPKO have begun to regularly discuss the issue of peacekeeping recruitment with non-governmental organizations outside the UN system. For example, in October 2007, the Project on Justice in Times of Transition in partnership with the International Crisis Group, the German Mission to the United Nations, and DLA Piper facilitated a meeting bringing together senior DFS staff with a variety of external actors for an all-day dialogue on “Broadening the UN’s Access to Qualified Candidates for the Field.” The meeting generated recommendations for increased collaboration.^{clxxiv}

Institutional Culture: Changing for the Better?

Beyond these new structures are changes in attitudes, behavior, and institutional culture at headquarters and in the field. Some senior managers at headquarters and in the field—both men and women—have expressed and demonstrated a personal commitment to increasing women’s participation. At least three male SRSG’s have specifically requested women candidates when seeking to fill their deputy positions and other senior management posts, as well as their own replacements upon transfer or retirement.^{clxxv} In some cases, the hiring process was delayed until qualified women candidates were at least included in the applicant pool and interview process.

Within DFS, in just the past two years, key senior level human resources and outreach positions are now occupied by women. All have made vocal commitments to fulfilling the mandates of Security Council Resolution 1325 and are working on a daily basis to make this a practical reality:

- Advocating for harmonization of conditions of service in peace operations, to remove a primary obstacle to women’s ability and decision to deploy to the field.^{clxxvi}
- Pressing for allocation of resources for sufficient gender expertise within DPKO.
- Encouraging transfers for women to male-dominated departments and vice versa. Because Human Resources is 85 percent women and logistics is nearly 100 percent men, two staff agreed to transfer between departments.^{clxxvii}
- Incorporating gender sensitivity in vacancy announcements and making women candidates a priority in the clearance process.
- Including a female candidate on every short list of three candidates reviewed by the appointments panel and the Secretary-General.

While there is no concrete reason to believe men in these positions would have not taken the same action, one can argue that having women in these important personnel positions has had—and will continue to have—an impact on the recruitment of women.

Conclusion

As the number and complexity of UN peacekeeping operations continues to increase, so does the need for experienced professionals to lead and manage these missions. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of UN peacekeeping missions has risen by more than 400 percent. The critical need for personnel is compounded by a chronic vacancy problem and high turnover in peacekeeping missions. In addition, as the mandates of peacekeeping missions have expanded to include peacebuilding and reconstruction, it has also become clear that a multitude of skills, experiences, and perspectives are necessary to staff these missions. Unfortunately, the UN is missing opportunities to tap into a rich source of talent for leadership roles in peacekeeping operations: women. The UN needs qualified women, but it also has the obligation to ensure their participation.

The UN has committed itself to 50-50 gender balance throughout the organization, and to the equal participation of women in all aspects of peace processes, including peacekeeping. In addition, in recent years, there has been increasing recognition of women's efforts to build sustainable peace, and the positive impact women's participation can have on peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes. However, commitments and public pronouncements about the importance of women's participation have not resulted in significant improvement in women's numbers. Only seven women have ever held the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and only one woman serves in this position currently.

“It makes a difference having women in personnel. If you have gotten here, then you know how it is... There is demonstrated commitment on a personal level. If I can do something [to advance women] I will.”

—Donna Maxfield, Chief,
Personnel Management and
Support Services, DFS^{clxxviii}

The UN is failing to market peacekeeping opportunities to women effectively, to recruit women for senior level roles, and to promote and support the advancement of women within the UN system. There are clear problems with non-transparency, lack of marketing and outreach, and a system in which promotion and advancement is often biased in favor of those with powerful allies and supporters. At the senior leadership level, the recruitment process is opaque, highly political, and has proven virtually impossible for those outside the system to understand or influence. Even when women candidates for SRSR positions “make it on the short list” in the decision-making process, various factors such as the pursuit of geographic balance and favoritism toward certain candidates often work against women, especially those who are less well-known. At the professional levels, the recruitment process is confusing, inefficient, and unable to accommodate the flexibility and speed that is necessary to identify and attract the talent that is needed in field operations. The majority of female UN staff members interviewed for this study were recruited through informal networks and contacts already inside the UN.

The UN is not retaining female staff, as reflected by the fact that the organization experiences higher turnover of women than men. One of the major problems is the unequal conditions for DPKO personnel as compared to other UN components. The vast majority of DPKO missions are designated as non-family duty posts even in locations where the staff of other UN agencies and funds are permitted to bring spouses and children. The non-family duty issue was repeatedly cited as a disincentive to accepting peacekeeping positions.

Women inside the UN are highly concentrated in the most junior positions, and the numbers of women decline sharply at the upper management levels. Women point to lack of career development opportunities and a failure to groom staff at the mid-level for more senior positions. They also experience both blatant and implicit discrimination in headquarters and in the field. However, the double standards and negative attitudes do not dissuade women from taking positions in peace operations; the vast majority of women interviewed for this study were extremely positive about their experiences in the field.

Senior level women described their approaches in field missions similarly, as collaborative, consultative, and inclusive. They often emphasized a personal commitment to women's participation – inside the missions and in the host country – and to addressing problems that disproportionately affect women, such as sexual abuse and exploitation. Women in leadership positions serve as important role models for younger women in the mission, and as a symbol of women's participation for the host country.

Recent efforts inside DPKO and DFS to reform the way that human resources are managed, are encouraging. However, the commitment of a few key individuals throughout the UN will only go so far in bringing more women into the system. The UN Secretariat, with adequate support and resources provided by the member states, must prioritize staffing these crucial peacekeeping positions with the best talent available and ensuring that those who serve in difficult and challenging situations are rewarded for their efforts. Increasing the leadership opportunities for women in peace operations will require significant efforts by the UN, member states, and civil society. Each of these relevant actors has an important role to play in moving this issue forward.

The non-transparent processes within the UN, lack of access to data, and the difficulty in finding entry points from the outside, have limited the ability of civil society to formulate strategies to advocate effectively for women's leadership opportunities. Inside the UN, those who are committed to increasing women's opportunities are constrained by significant political and bureaucratic realities, as well as the competing priorities, needs, and interests of the member states and the host countries in which the UN operates. Member states have not approved the harmonization reforms that are needed to staff and retain qualified personnel, and recommending female candidates for peacekeeping positions does not appear to be a priority, even in countries that are supportive of Security Council Resolution 1325. Lack of dialogue and partnership among the UN Secretariat, member states, and civil society continues to obstruct the development of new strategies and actions that could ultimately increase women's advancement and leadership opportunities.

One of the goals of this study is to improve the understanding of the barriers that exist for women while highlighting the perceptions, experiences, and contributions of women who have served in peacekeeping and throughout the larger UN system. Ultimately, WIIS hopes that the data gathered in this report will create an impetus among all relevant actors – inside and outside the UN -- to establish new initiatives and policies to increase women's participation in senior leadership roles. The recommendations that are included in this report emerged from the insights of those who have served in peacekeeping missions, as well as those who seek to improve the effectiveness of future missions. Interviewees from inside and outside the UN system emphasized the need to improve:

- Communication and dialogue among the UN Secretariat, member states, and civil society organizations;
- Marketing and outreach to women and women's networks about peacekeeping opportunities;
- Resources and personnel to implement needed human resources reforms;
- Incentives and rewards to attract qualified women from outside the UN and retain/promote talent already inside the system;
- Mechanisms to ensure accountability of senior managers on gender balance goals;
- Research, documentation, and sustained advocacy from civil society.

This study is the first project of a multi-phased effort by WIIS to examine women's leadership opportunities in the peace and security field. WIIS plans to conduct future studies on women in civilian, senior level positions in regional organizations' peace operations, including the European Union and NATO. WIIS is also launching an inaugural project on the status of women in decision-making positions in the US national security community, including the US Government, the military, academia, and the private sector. The purpose of these projects is to gain a deeper understanding of the status of women in international peace and security careers, at both the national level and within multilateral institutions, to identify challenges to women's advancement, and to provide recommendations to all relevant actors to more effectively support women's opportunities to enter, advance, and lead in peace and security.

APPENDIX I: ACRONYMS

1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
BINUB	United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi
CEB	Chief Executive Board
“D”-level	United Nations Senior Management Level (D-1 to D-2 Levels)
DPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
DFS	United Nations Department of Field Support
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning System
ERSG	Executive Representative of the Secretary-General
IAAP	Inter-Agency Advisory Panel
INSTRAW	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
MINURCAT	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
“P”-level	United Nations Career Professional Level (P-1 to P-5 Levels)
PCC	Police Contributing Countries
RC	Resident Coordinator
SIPA	School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University
SLIP	Senior Leadership Induction Program
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TCC	Troop Contributing Countries
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	African/ United Nations Hybrid Operations in Darfur
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
WFP	World Food Programme
WHN	Women’s Humanitarian Network

APPENDIX II: UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

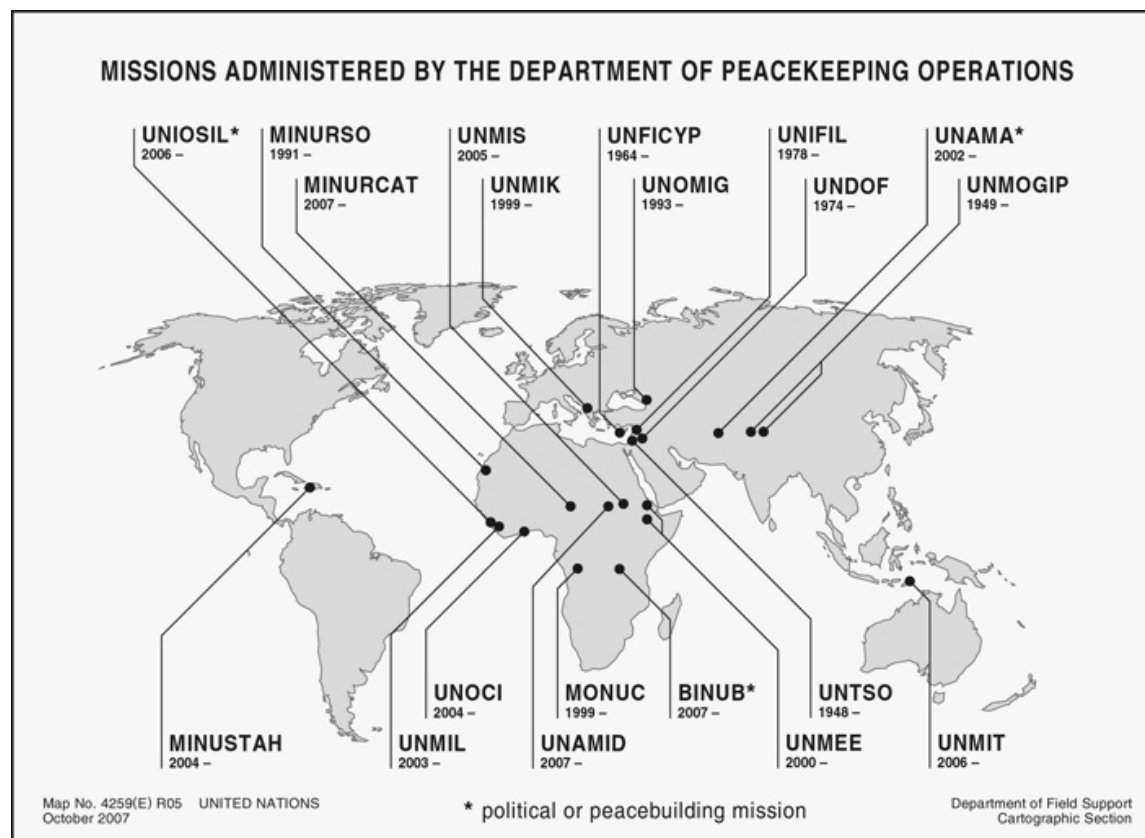


Figure 1: Last Updated by UNDPKO on March 31, 2008.
Available at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm>.

Personnel

Uniformed personnel*	88,416
Including 74,569 troops; 11,330 police and 2,517 military observers	
Countries contributing uniformed personnel	118
International civilian personnel* (31 January 2008)	5,187
Local civilian personnel* (31 January 2008)	12,036
UN Volunteers*	2,031
Total number of personnel serving in 17 peacekeeping operations*	107,670
Total number of personnel serving in 20 DPKO-led peace operations**	109,773
Total number of fatalities in peace operations since 1948***	2,461

Table 1: Last Updated by UNDPKO on March 31, 2008.
Available at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm>.

APPENDIX III: INCREASE IN PEACEKEEPING PERSONNEL

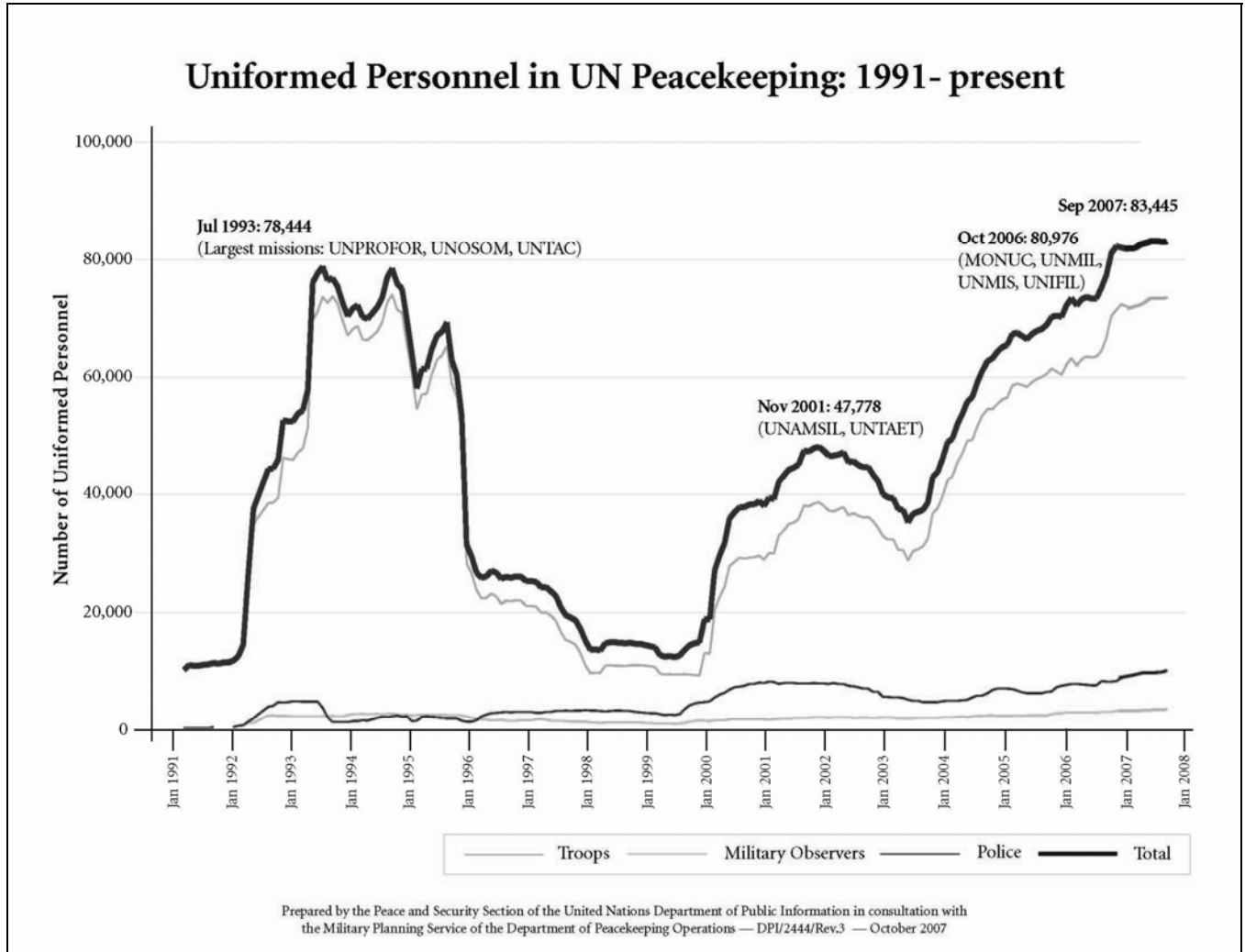


Figure 2: Last Updated by UNDPKO in October 2007. Original graph in color. Available at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/chart.pdf>.

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ⁱⁱⁱ *UN Peacekeeping 2007—Excerpts from the Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization [UN document, A/62/1]*. New York: United Nations, 2007 <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/SGreport.pdf>.

^{iv} *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Background Note: 30 November 2007*. New York: United Nations, 2007 <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote010101.pdf>. In addition to 17 peacekeeping operations, the UN leads 11 political and peacebuilding missions with 3,827 mostly civilian personnel (*United Nations Political and Peacebuilding Missions Background Note: 31 October 2007*. New York: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2007 <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/ppbm.pdf>.) DPKO supports and directs three of these missions, while another eight are led by DPA.

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^{xiii} Falkman, Helle. Personal correspondence with Jolynn Shoemaker, 8 May 2008. The seven peacekeeping missions with gender advisors include Cote d’Ivoire (UNOCI), Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), Haiti (MINUSTAH), Kosovo (UNMIK), Liberia (UNMIL), Sudan (UNMIS), Timor-Leste (UNMIT). The seven peacekeeping missions with gender focal points include Cyprus (UNFICYP), Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), Georgia (UNOMIG), India/Pakistan (UNMOGIP), Middle East (UNTSO), Syrian Golan Heights (UNDOF), and Western Sahara (MINURSO). The four political and peacebuilding missions with gender advisors include: Afghanistan (UNAMA), Burundi (BINUB), Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), and Nepal (UNMIN).

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<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/SRSG/table.htm>.

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^{clxxviii} Maxfield.

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