

Box 2.4 Women, Peace, and Security: A Decade of Resolution 1325

In light of the tenth anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the UN began to review the inclusion of a gender perspective in peace operations in an effort to accelerate progress and assess the challenges still facing robust implementation. The landmark resolution called for the integration of women into the peace and security processes and has since been complemented with three additional resolutions—1820, 1888, and 1889—in order to better support women in every stage of the peace process and ensure their security.

This past year saw a series of events meant to commemorate the anniversary, including Global Open Days organized by DPKO, UNIFEM, UNDP, and DPA. These meetings helped bring together women's organizations with UN officials to engage in dialogues about pressing issues for women and their priorities for peace. More than 1,500 women from countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Croatia, and Sri Lanka were able to meet with Special Representatives of the Secretary-General to discuss problems with sexual and gender-based violence, the need for better monitoring and evaluation, and access to timely information.

In addition, the Open Days brought attention to the effort to increase women's inclusion in the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding phases. The Secretary-General issued a report in September on the initiative as well, outlining seven commitments meant to ensure that women's priorities are addressed,

including the provision of security, adequate financing, and a systematic inclusion of women in each stage of the process. The report further urged member states to act with consistency and coherence in implementation, but acknowledged the difficulties ahead in attaining the resources and the security necessary to enable significant action.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon also pledged that the UN would lead by example in implementing Resolution 1325, citing the growing number of women in decisionmaking positions such as Special Representatives and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General as proof of its successful advances. Other areas seem promising as well, including the effort to increase the number of women serving as UN police personnel in peace operations. Bangladesh and India have each deployed all-female police forces, and the UN is gradually moving toward their target of having women comprise 20 percent of the force.

Progress, however, has been uneven and inconsistent at times. August's mass rapes in the Congo highlighted some of the gaps that still threaten women's security, while the Open Days dialogue revealed the dearth of financial resources, especially those that focus on the education and economic development of women. Furthermore, the increase in the incorporation of gender issues into peace agreements is contrasted by the fact that less than a quarter of these agreements contain specific provisions.

The Security Council's Open Debate in October additionally highlighted some of the issues stunting full implementation. Michelle Bachelet, making her first appearance as executive director of the newly formed UN Women, commended the preparation the UN has done, but urged a shift from policy to action. Despite the call for tangible commitments from member states during the debate, the majority opted out, choosing only to reaffirm their commitment and intentions to support Resolution 1325 instead of guaranteeing any measurable action. The event did lead to the adoption of twenty-six indicators meant to track future progress in order to help fill in the data gaps that have made assessment difficult so far.

Looking to build on the momentum of the anniversary and create a plan for moving forward into the next decade, the Security Council agreed to hold a high-level review in 2015 to renew commitment to Resolution 1325, assess the progress on all levels, and address continuing obstacles. It also signaled its intention to integrate the indicators put forth by the Secretary-General to monitor implementation, and called for annual reporting and a strategic framework to further guide the UN forward. Some women's organizations, for their part, are hoping the decade to come will be one of strong action and measurable progress in order to create the change that is needed.