



Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Increasing Women's Leadership and Participation in Peace and Security and Humanitarian Response

Headquarter and global case study

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HEADQUARTER AND GLOBAL CASE STUDY

Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRF	Development Results Framework
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
LANGWE	United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
IGSO	Intergovernmental Support Office
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
INSTRAW	United Nations International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOWG	NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PSC	Peace and Security Cluster
RBM	Results-Based Management
SRSR	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SWAP	System-Wide Action Plan
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women

1. Introduction

The evaluation case study of UN Women's contribution to increasing women's leadership and participation in peace and security and humanitarian response at the headquarter and global level seeks to capture headquarter-level dynamics regarding the evolution and effectiveness of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda. It focused on support provided by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and its predecessor entities to women's leadership and participation in relation to different relevant thematic areas of peacebuilding and in contexts of variable levels of conflict, post-conflict and fragility. Unlike the country case studies, this study did not focus on any particular programme or pre-selected set of activities.

The headquarter-level case study ensured that the evaluation exercise was not limited to the experience and effectiveness of UN Women's country offices in the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda. Rather, the evaluation aimed to capture the effectiveness and impact of this agenda at the different levels of its development and implementation – global as well as national – and in relation to the three dimensions of analysis that guide the evaluation process namely: the policy and normative dimension; the programmatic and operational dimension; and the organizational capacity dimension.

2. Methodology

Fieldwork for the headquarter case study consisted of a 10-day visit to New York (United States of America) in December 2012. Interviews were held with 31 respondents from UN Women, other United Nations entities, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Member States. The same questionnaire was used for the headquarter case study as for the country case studies, but the emphasis on the policy and strategic dimension and the organizational issues relating to the thematic Peace and Security Cluster (PSC) and the corporate level were taken into account.

There were several challenges in preparing the headquarter- and global-level case study. First, the assessment of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda was conducted during the transition to UN Women. The assessment of the evolution of the peace and security and humanitarian response work was therefore closely bound up in the complexities of this process, as were other thematic areas that now feature in the organization. As such, some of the factors that were identified as potentially affecting UN Women's effectiveness to fulfil its peace and security mandate were more the result of corporate-level issues and the transition experience than of the normative, programmatic and operational direction of UN Women and its predecessor entities in this thematic area. Inevitably, UN Women's effectiveness in developing the peace and security agenda is enmeshed in the transition process, and many of the associated challenges were likely to be echoed corporately and across the thematic work of the organization.

Second, some headquarter-level issues left a limited paper trail and documentation. The evaluator was therefore obliged to rely on interviews with different stakeholder groups and key interviewees to triangulate findings. However, the exercise required an assessment and judgement on the interviewees' alternative interpretations of the same processes, events and decisions which made this type of assessment susceptible to error and potentially unintended bias, and the caveat was noted. Where possible, the evaluator drew on the documentary sources that were made available or otherwise obtained.

The case study discusses the contextual factors which are relevant to understanding the work of UN Women at the headquarters level in relation to the peace and security and

humanitarian response agenda, including a review of the evolution of the women, peace and security agenda. Section 4 presents the findings, which include a consideration of the theory or theories of change UN Women uses to inform its headquarter engagement on women, peace and security, as well as findings in response to the evaluation questions matrix. Section 5 summarizes the findings, while Section 6 provides some forward-looking recommendations for UN Women's consideration.

Limitations to assessing UN Women's humanitarian response work

The case study terms of reference called for an assessment of UN Women's strategic position and coherence with respect to its contribution to humanitarian response and peace and security. Humanitarian response did not feature in the strategic objectives, organizational structures or operational activities of the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and is, therefore, a new area of work for UN Women. Goal 4 of UN Women's Strategic Plan Development Results Framework (DRF) defines UN Women's responsibilities as providing:

Support to existing coordination mechanisms to generate a more effective United Nations system-wide humanitarian response to respond to the specific needs of women and girls will also be a focus of UN Women, working with partner agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and membership of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (UN Women, 2011b).

Engagement in humanitarian emergencies is also mentioned in some of the outcomes. However, the DRF 2011-2013 does not provide any indicators regarding either humanitarian response or humanitarian action (UN Women, 2011b).

In 2012, UN Women established a Humanitarian Unit and the recruitment process was actively underway to build up its capacity and expertise. It was critical to note the importance of enhancing UN Women's support to humanitarian response and humanitarian action more generally and, as such, this deserves a forward-looking assessment of its own. Strong reservations were expressed during the inception phase about the possibility of robust findings and recommendations in this evaluation. It was decided to include humanitarian response as a formative element to lay out a baseline for future work, and on the premise that case studies might shed some light on the limited experience of UN Women and its predecessor entities in providing support during humanitarian emergencies. The limited documentary evidence and data from fieldwork available, confirmed these earlier concerns. As a result, a complete assessment of UN Women's humanitarian action work during the period under evaluation was not possible.

3. UN Women's peace and security and humanitarian response agenda

As noted in the desk study, UN Women's peace and security and humanitarian response agenda evolved along three different but interconnected tracks.

First, developments in the wider women, peace and security normative agenda constitute the core of UN Women's peace and security work which are represented in the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and related resolutions, and reflected across a range of United Nations, UN Women and predecessor entities' activities and initiatives. These resolutions are the key component of the strategic content of the United Nations' policy for women in peacebuilding processes and conflict-affected states and provide the normative content of women, peace and security work. They also provide the frame for action and monitoring of results concerning a gender-responsive perspective in United Nations-wide

work on peace and security. In addition, the PSC monitors actions across the United Nations' wider peacebuilding architecture in relation to the Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding. UN Women's role in crafting the Plan is discussed further below. The key point to note here is the expanded presence of UN Women in United Nations-wide contributions to peacebuilding processes.

Second, the evolution of the strategic planning and programming work which underpins the peace and security agenda at the global, regional and national level (formerly through UNIFEM and other predecessor entities, and currently through UN Women) reveals its growing prominence, as reflected in UN Women's strategic plans and associated DRFs and management results frameworks (MRFs) (UN Women, 2011a, b and c; UNIFEM, 2007), as well as the UNIFEM Thematic Strategy Paper (UNIFEM, 2008).

Third, the transition process to consolidate UN Women included important changes to the mandate and organizational development of the new entity, to ensure improved coherence between normative and operational/programming work of UN Women (A/64/588). A thematic division of labour now distinguishes the peace and security work as a new thematic cluster.

The starting point for UN Women's strategic direction on women, peace and security is the Platform for Action, which dates back to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Among the 12 areas of critical concern identified at the Conference, women and armed conflict emerged as a thematic area connecting peace with gender equality and women in power and decision-making. The mandate for gender equality and women's empowerment is based on the Charter of the United Nations and the equal rights of men and women. Work on gender equality within the United Nations has subsequently been guided by key milestone developments: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2; and other internationally agreed development goals as contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 2005 World Summit, and United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960.

Prior to the establishment of UN Women, the women, peace and security agenda was distributed across UNIFEM, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the United Nations International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), but they lacked a system-wide coordination role. In merging these entities and developing a new mandate, UN Women will be better placed and organizationally more coherent to meet its normative support, coordination role and operational objectives. It continues to play a catalytic role, but its mandate is now described as follows:

Grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the composite entity will work for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. Placing women's rights at the centre of all its efforts, the composite entity will lead and coordinate United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world. It will provide strong and coherent leadership in support of Member States' priorities and efforts, building effective partnerships with civil society and other relevant actors (United Nations, 2010a, A/64/588, para. 5).

The new organizational structure gives UN Women a leading role in supporting the implementation of global norms and standards on gender equality and women, peace and security which is to be achieved through effective intergovernmental engagement, an enhanced coordination role within the United Nations system and catalytic operational presence at the regional and country levels. The new composite entity is also called upon to ensure closer linkages between the normative agenda and operational engagement.

Relevant United Nations policy for the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda

UN Women and its predecessor entities played a central role in advancing the global normative agenda and shaping United Nations policy and engagement on women, peace and security, in particular in response to the activism of national and international women's civil society organizations (CSOs) and movements. In the period covered by the evaluation there were some important milestones at the global level regarding normative changes and progress in implementing resolution 1325 and related resolutions. These milestones occurred simultaneously with the transition to UN Women, and in which UN Women and its predecessor entities played a strategic role.

Three of the key milestones in the period under evaluation include: the adoption of additional resolutions which follow on from resolution 1325; the System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) and the development of 26 Indicators on the implementation of resolution 1325; and the development of the Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding.

Adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960

Before 2008, implementation of resolution 1325 was slow and had little impact on the ground. At the same time it was generally agreed that it had fundamentally altered the visibility and global awareness of how women experience conflict, and the importance of their role in peacebuilding and post-conflict situations.¹ A UNIFEM study published in 2010 (and revised in 2012) revealed that women had been included as signatories in only 2.4 per cent of peace agreements since 1992 (UN Women, 2012f). There has, however, been an important transformation in global policy and discourse, and international commitments over the last decade regarding the need to address the specific ways in which conflict and post-conflict situations affect women, and to enhance women's participation in all aspect of post-conflict peacebuilding processes.

Prior to 2008 there had been efforts to adopt a successive resolution to resolution 1325, including around and following its five-year anniversary of resolution in 2005, but there was insufficient political momentum at that time. For example, in 2006 the United Kingdom attempted to table a resolution on sexual violence (Swaine, 2010). By 2008, UNIFEM spearheaded a successful effort to change the Security Council's approach to sexual violence against women in conflict, from seeing it solely as a humanitarian concern to recognising it as a tactic of warfare, and therefore a security problem requiring not just services, but also a security and political response. The result was resolution 1820 which was presented by the United States with strong backing from other Member States (notably the United Kingdom and Nordic countries).

The renewed engagement to resolution 1325 since 2008 has resulted from a combination of factors. First, the ten-year anniversary represented an opportunity to reinvigorate women, peace and security at the global level. Second, the accelerated momentum was strongly

¹ See Barnes (2011) for a review of the history of implementation of resolution 1325. Swaine (2010) provides an analysis of the different debates on the merits and weaknesses of resolution 1325 and related resolutions.

related to strong leadership on sexual violence from some members of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict Group.² Third, Member States holding the Security Council presidency were interested to facilitate and broker a change in the international visibility of issues relating to resolution 1325, in particular women's participation. Fourth, the continuing activism and pressure from women's organizations contributed to maintaining the momentum around resolution 1325's ten-year anniversary. Finally, there was a commensurate degree of strategic positioning and more proactive advocacy by individual members and sections of UNIFEM and OSAGI, who took advantage of these spaces and opportunities for engagement, and shaped new opportunities for intergovernmental and inter-agency coordination engagement. These efforts were undertaken in the context of major budget constraints (especially for OSAGI, which had no budget line for the implementation of resolution 1325). From this resulted the later resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960.

- Resolution 1820 (2008) emphasized sexual violence as a matter for the Security Council to consider further and succeeded in drawing attention to the issue. It was also seen as expressing the voice of affected women. Swaine (2010) noted that the focus was more on women as victims rather than as agents of change, and suggests that this may have been because the process by which the resolution came about was more of a top-down and closed-door process than one emerging from the wider consultation that had preceded the adoption of resolution 1325. Paragraph 3 of resolution 1820 demands that 'the views expressed by women of affected local communities' be taken into account.
- Resolutions 1888 and 1889 (2009) were adopted under the Security Council Presidency of the United States and Vietnam respectively, within a week of each other. Resolution 1888 focused more on accountability for the implementation of resolution 1820, while resolution 1889 called for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to represent and advance the United Nations' work on sexual violence in conflict. Repeated calls this to happen in relation to resolution 1325 had never been realised. The emphasis of resolution 1888 is on protection.
- Resolution 1889 placed a renewed emphasis on women's participation and agency. It asked the Secretary-General to produce a set of indicators for the Security Council to monitor progress in implementing resolution 1325. The Technical Working Group on Global Indicators was created to develop the indicators and present a shortlist to the Secretary-General within six months. The resolution also called for a report by the Secretary-General on women's participation in peacebuilding which was finally published in 2010. It set in train negotiations across the United Nations peacebuilding architecture to ensure increased attention to gender issues in a range of post-conflict planning and spending areas and was the basis of the Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding (discussed below).
- Resolution 1960 (2010) mandated new institutional tools to address impunity for sexual violence in conflict and issues of accountability. Specifically, it called for

² The United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict group is a group of 13 United Nations entities brought together in 2007 by UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The group conducted scenario-based training of peacekeepers and published, *Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice* (UNIFEM/DPKO 2010), and the Secretary-General's report, *Women's Participation in Peacebuilding* (United Nations, 2010b).

the naming and shaming of perpetrators of such violence, and empowered the new SRSG on conflict-related sexual violence to agree action plans with parties in armed conflict to prevent it.

Parallel to the resolutions, and as a result of action agreed within these, monitoring and accountability systems on resolutions 1325 and women, peace and security were put in place.

Women, Peace and Security SWAPs

To improve United Nations coherence in the area of women, peace and security, there have been two SWAPs on resolution 1325, (2004–2007 and 2008–2009). Both were coordinated through the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANGWE) Task Force on Women, Peace and Security. At the request of the Secretary-General, the 2008–2009 SWAP was ‘reconceptualised as a result-based programming and monitoring and reporting tool’ on the implementation of resolution 1325 to improve accountability.

The 2008–2009 SWAP compiled submissions from 32 United Nations entities on: their planned activities in five thematic areas (prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery, and normative); their expected achievements; and how they were to be measured (based on a pro-forma submission template that included a results-based management [RBM] framework). Reviews of the first SWAP in 2006 and 2007 revealed an increased commitment to implementation, and improved coordination, planning and programming within the United Nations system (S/2006/770, 2006.; S/2007/567, 2007; and S/2008/622, 2008). An evaluation of the 2008–2009 SWAP found that it had improved coordination somewhat and made progress on RBM in the work of the United Nations on resolution 1325 (OSAGI, 2010). However, it also highlighted some fundamental shortcomings, in particular that the SWAP was over-ambitious and under-resourced and that it was unclear as to whether it was a coordination mechanism, a strategic planning tool or both. The evaluators described the SWAP as ‘more a list of activities than a planning tool with [...] thematic areas ill-defined and no monitoring and evaluation framework in place’. There was little evidence that the SWAP improved concrete and measureable outcomes at country level or that it had improved accountability for resolution 1325.

Monitoring progress on resolution 1325: The 26 indicators

In response to the renewed initiative outlined in subsequent resolutions, in 2010-2011 the OSAGI/UN Women Task Force on Women, Peace and Security developed a strategic framework to guide implementation of resolution 1325. In 2010, the Secretary-General presented a set of 26 indicators which currently represent the key measure for progress in implementing resolution 1325. In 2011, the Secretary-General presented the *United Nations Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security, 2011-2020* (United Nations, 2011b) and, with the creation of UN Women, the Task Force became a Standing Committee.

The 26 indicators were defined through a consultative process with United Nations entities, Member States, CSOs and other stakeholders, with the help of external consultants. Specific country experiences of national action plan (NAPS) for the implementation of resolution 1325 were taken into consideration, and over 2500 indicators were mapped and evaluated. The process was finalized through a technical fine-tuning that resulted in the 26 indicators.

The indicators were included in the *United Nations Strategic Results Framework* (United Nations, 2011b), which identified four thematic areas against which to monitor progress. It also outlined intermediate goals for 2014 and associated indicators which the Standing

Committee on Women, Peace and Security was responsible for evaluating.³ The Security Council reviewed the indicators in October 2011, with UN Women leading their refinement.

The four pillars of the results framework include:

- **Prevention:** Of conflict and all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.
- **Participation:** Women participate equally with men, and gender equality is promoted in peace and security decision-making processes at local, national, regional and international levels.
- **Protection:** Women's and girls' rights are protected and promoted in peace and security decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and international levels.
- **Relief and recovery:** Women's and girls' specific relief needs are met and women's capacities to act as agents in relief and recovery are reinforced in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The 26 indicators are mapped against these four pillars and different United Nations, including UN Women, are ascribed lead roles. Various United Nations entities report on 40 per cent of indicators, the United Nations reports on 30 per cent indicators at the country level and Member States can voluntarily report on up to 33 per cent. In addition, the strategic results framework developed a number of outcomes and outputs against the four pillars. UN Women leads on a number of these, in coordination with other United Nations entities (United Nations, 2011b).

Finally, a number of respondents repeatedly indicated that the annual *Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security*, presented at the Open Debate in the Security Council on resolution 1325, was a useful source of information and reporting on progress. Prior to 2011, it was perceived as a more descriptive document reporting on information provided by relevant stakeholders. Since then it has reported on the indicators, and is said to be used (and perceived by others to be used) more strategically both to advance the normative agenda and as an analytical tool.

The Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding

The Secretary-General's *Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding* emphasized promoting women's access to leadership and participation in various activities and decision-making positions, in relation to the range of thematic areas of work relevant to peace and security and humanitarian response. In relation to this, UN Women established a partnership with the Peacebuilding Commission and its Secretariat, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), to ensure that gender issues are addressed in peacebuilding plans and in the allocations of the Peacebuilding Fund. The Policy Committee designated UN Women a lead role in supporting coordination and monitoring of the Seven-Point Action Plan.

The role of UN Women and its predecessor entities in creating the conditions which enabled these landmark measures to come into being cannot be overemphasized. The effectiveness of their efforts was also reflected in some of the strategic alliances that were forged at critical points in the period under consideration, with some pioneering Member States and with other United Nations entities and specialized agencies. There were also disagreements among

³ The PeaceWomen Project (www.peacewomen.org) is also monitoring progress towards the 2014 targets. In addition, the important work – and role – of women's movements, and concretely of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (see, for example, Taylor et al. 2012), plays a key role in tracking country reporting.

predecessor entities about the direction and pace of these changes. Some were concerned about the level of buy-in among Member States which was perceived as being less than ideal. Others considered that there was a historical and political opportunity to accelerate the pace of change vis-à-vis implementation of resolution 1325, including by scaling up monitoring systems through, for example, the 26 indicators. In the end, the collective effort of predecessor entities in the period under evaluation contributed to the accelerated pace of progress in advancing women, peace and security.

Interviewees from different stakeholder groups described the period before and after the ten-year anniversary of resolution 1325 as a time of quantum leaps taken to reframe and reenergise the women, peace and security agenda. There was resistance from some quarters, but it was also a period during which the predecessor entities positioned themselves strategically to cement old alliances and build new ones. Respondents reiterated the importance of the transition to UN Women in contributing to increasing the pace of change.

Critically, as part of this process, UN Women effectively pushed for the inclusion of a funding threshold of 15 per cent for projects to be allocated to women's empowerment and women's concerns in post-conflict rebuilding efforts. Although progress on this remained disappointing, a quantifiable funding commitment against which the United Nations system could be monitored was at least established.

Developments of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda

Against this wider policy and system agenda, the intended programmatic and operational work of UN Women and its predecessor entities was captured in strategic plans and concrete programmes which were developed at the national, regional (and subregional) and global level. Programming also included joint programming with other United Nations entities.

Peace and security-related interventions have featured in the work of UN Women and its predecessor entities in different ways over the years. With the exception of Haiti, these interventions did not include humanitarian response.

Strategic plans

UNIFEM's Strategic Plan 2008–2011 integrated peace and security issues within its three broad thematic areas of work, namely: enhancing women's economic security and rights; reducing the prevalence of violence against women and HIV/AIDS; and advancing gender justice in democratic governance.

Support to women in peace and security and humanitarian response was one of five goals in UN Women's Strategic Plan 2011–2013 and Goal 4 of the DRF (framed as support to women's leadership in peace, security and humanitarian response).

The OSAGI and DAW Strategic Frameworks 2008–2009 and 2010–2011 defined the goals of both entities, which were to be measured mostly against quantifiable indicators such as the number of NAPs and strategies prepared by Member States, and regional and subregional organizations. DAW, however, did not work on women, peace and security.

Organizationally, the change from UNIFEM to UN Women resulted in four new thematic clusters: ending violence against women; peace and security; economic empowerment; and leadership and governance. Its predecessor entities were not organized thematically. Thematic areas which currently feature in the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda were already planned and undertaken in UNIFEM's programmatic work under conflict-prevention and peacebuilding (UNIFEM, 2008a).

Programmatic content

Programmatic content was developed at the national, regional, and global level, and in joint programming while global programming is developed at headquarter level.

The creation of UN Women was intended to devolve much decision-making on programming content to the emerging regional architecture at the regional and country level, in line with the move towards a redistribution of resources and competencies.

Headquarters should continue to ‘be able to carry out its higher-level oversight functions and provide guidance and support to regional offices [...]. As part of its oversight and guidance functions, headquarters will also strengthen its capacity to provide corporate guidance on strategic planning and RBM’ (UN Women, 2012d). The intention is for headquarters to be a knowledge hub and research centre, to provide guidance and tools and technical advice in the different thematic areas of peace and security and humanitarian response, and to position UN Women as the global leader in the development and articulation of policy on gender equality. It appeared that the detail of this corporate capacity to provide guidance on programming and strategic planning was still being rolled out.

Research

There was a strong sense that the knowledge base and production of evidence-based research in UNIFEM and the other predecessor entities were severely under-resourced in the past. INSTRAW had the most explicit mandate to provide knowledge management and coordinate research but it was severely understaffed and, in 2009, only had nine members of staff to coordinate knowledge (UNIFEM, 2009). Their tasks nominally included action-oriented research that lead to gender-responsive policies, programmes and projects at all levels; knowledge management to increase understanding and support decision-making and actions on gender and women’s issues; capacity development of relevant stakeholders to address and effectively integrate gender issues in all policies, programmes and projects; and institutional development to shape a financially sustainable institution which was innovative, applied good governance and worked in partnership with other relevant United nations entities.

In practice, INSTRAW had to leverage strategic partnerships in order to meet its objectives, such as with the Democratic Control of Armed Forces to produce outputs on security sector reform (SSR) including a number of key publications and guidance notes on gender-responsive SSR which constituted key references in this area.⁴

In UN Women, the task of undertaking research to guide its work lies at headquarters. UN Women is expected to ‘[u]ndertake new and consolidate existing research and analytical work and act as a hub/centre of knowledge and experience on gender equality and women’s empowerment’ (A/64/588, 2010a). The thematic clusters are responsible for this task, but it was unclear where the overall responsibility for knowledge management (as opposed to knowledge production) lies in UN Women.

The internal publication UN Women Peace and Security Monthly Update is a rich source of information on UN Women’s involvement in peace and security, including high-level engagement.

The thematic clusters are mandated to develop evidence-based policy guidance to support programming which is reiterated in the new regional architecture document (UN Women, 2012d). The emphasis on evidence-based knowledge was hugely commendable, but effective knowledge management remains underdeveloped (including in terms of how it will be

⁴ http://www.peacewomen.org/peacewomen_and_the_un/un-implementation/research-and-training-institutes/entity/24/united-nations-international-research-and-training-institute-for-the-advancement-of-women-un-instraw#. A key example is Bastick and Valasek (2008).

coordinated at headquarter level, and across headquarter, regional and country-levels) and a challenge. A number of interviewees also raised concerns about the risk of both replication and ‘silo-isation’ across thematic areas. For instance, it will be important to establish a clear line of communication on research regarding post-conflict governance and the thematic cluster on leadership and political participation.

Organizational developments

The process of consolidating the new entity was still evolving at the time of the evaluation. For this case study the key issues to note related to the direction of intergovernmental engagement and inter-agency coordination and the new thematic organization of UN Women.

Organizationally, intergovernmental engagement and coordination functions were tasked to OSAGI and DAW. Now they formally sit in the Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnership Bureau and, in particular, the Intergovernmental Support Office (IGSO). Policy and programming work is located in the Policy Division within the Policy and Programme Bureau. The Bureau also houses the Peace and Security Section (PSS) (now separate from the Leadership and Governance Section), and the Programme Support Division, which is organized by regions and holds the Fund for Gender Equality, the UN Trust Fund to end Violence against Women and the Institutional Development Unit.

While the consolidation process was yet to be completed, the boundaries between different tasks and how they were allocated were unclear. At headquarter level this included the question of the boundaries between thematic clusters, and therefore the need for close engagement and coordination across these to avoid replication of efforts and ‘silo-isation’. Intergovernmental engagement and inter-agency coordination roles were also still being defined, with the former sitting formally with the IGSO. In practice, however, the PSC performs much political work in peace and security and humanitarian response and is undertaking intergovernmental work through its daily engagement and advisory work with Member States and other intergovernmental bodies. It was also tasked with preparing the Secretary-General’s report to the Security Council on women, peace and security. The PSC also has key coordination tasks, such as chairing the Inter-agency Group on Peace and Security (previously chaired by OSAGI). However, it was reported in interviews that coordination roles were still not clearly defined and, at the time of the evaluation, the coordination strategy had not yet been completed. Finally, there was a need for greater clarity and systems on knowledge management, and on where the responsibility for achieving this lies.

4. Findings

Theory of change: leadership and participation

Not one signal theory of change was featured in the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda, be it in general or in relation to how best to support the leadership and participation of women. The importance of leadership and participation was largely taken as a given. As noted in the desk study, there was consensus both on the *intrinsic* value of enhanced levels of participation and leadership capabilities of women across the components of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda; and on the *instrumental* value of participation and leadership for women, the degree to which these contribute to advancing peace as well as gender equality goals in the contexts where the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda is relevant. The evaluation took as given the intrinsic and instrumental value of support to women’s leadership and participation. What is considered

was the underlying thinking and logic underpinning recommendations on policy and action on how best to support women's leadership and participation in peace and security work.

It was possible to identify different expressions of underlying theories of change in the range of policy, strategy and knowledge outputs of UN Women and its predecessor entities at headquarter level. Theories of change varied in terms of how explicitly the processes of change resulting from the actions of UN Women were described and justified. There were some explicit narratives about the assumed causal connections between inputs aimed at increasing women's participation, outputs and progress towards intended outcomes and goals. To varying degrees, there were also implicit assumptions about what type of action leads to transformative change. However, in many cases the degrees of change described in headquarter policy and strategy documents were at too high a level of abstraction to include a great deal of detail. By contrast, theories of change were more developed in research outputs.

Thus, there was great variation in how explicitly theories of change were articulated in relation to the best way to provide practical support for women's participation and leadership in peace and security and humanitarian response. There was variation both across type of activity and output, and also between the work conducted at headquarter, regional and country levels in relation to the Security Council resolutions and to the different themes and sub-themes which make up the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda.⁵ Moreover, there was still only limited knowledge about the differences made by women when they participate and lead in peace and security work, in part because there were too few (documented) cases. Finally, the importance of context specificity was critical in shaping the consequences of enhanced women's voice for peace and security outcomes (as reflected in PSC knowledge outputs, discussed further below).

Headquarter activities and outputs were grouped and briefly reviewed along three types of activities, engagement and associated outputs to examine the range of narratives on transformative change in peace and security and humanitarian response with a focus on women's leadership and participation. The three types of activities were:

- 1 The theories of change implicit in the resolutions, and associated activities and actions, as well as the thinking which underpinned the strategic planning of UN Women and its predecessor entities.
- 2 The evolution in the knowledge base and research which underpinned the work of UN Women and its predecessor entities in peace and security.
- 3 The thinking behind the politically strategic but more ad hoc and adaptive work of intergovernmental and inter-agency engagement undertaken by individuals and sections of UN Women and its predecessor entities to achieve progress on women, peace and security.

The sources drawn upon here included UN Women documents, external documents, academic research and interviews.

⁵ The lack of clear and concrete theories of change was also reflected in the broader field of gender and peacebuilding and state-building. See, for instance, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Policy Guidance on State-building (OECD-DAC, 2010) or the World Development Report on Conflict (World Bank, 2011).

Theories of change in the resolutions, monitoring frameworks and associated action plans, and in UN Women's strategic thinking

Women, peace and security resolutions

As the implementation and monitoring mechanisms and actions associated with the resolutions evolved, there was to varying degrees a narrative of causal change regarding the importance of enhancing women's participation in the women, peace and security agenda. The resolutions largely rested on the starting point that women's participation in peace and security work was important in furthering transformative change which would improve the lives of women on the ground, address their particular experiences of conflict, advance gender equality goals, and support the achievement of peace and security. Recommended actions were intended to provide guidance on how to support this, to signal the necessary mechanisms to monitor progress, and to better capture shortcomings in the implementation of the resolutions' goals, including in relation to supporting women's leadership and participation.

Resolution 1325 was undoubtedly the landmark moment for the women, peace and security agenda which firmly called on the international agenda the call to increase women's participation in decision-making for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. At the core of this resolution, which continues to be the centrepiece of the women, peace and security agenda, was the recognition that women's participation at different levels and stages of peacebuilding, conflict-resolution and peace processes were instrumental to enhancing gender equality and addressing women's specific needs and experiences of conflict. Resolution 1889 furthered this notion and was also echoed in the other associated resolutions.

Implementation of the resolutions remained slow but certain actions have evolved at the global and national level, which in turn constitute concrete and observable measures of progress. The Seven-Point Action Plan, NAPs and the 26 indicators (eight of which fall within the participation pillar) were perhaps the most relevant examples (and spaces) of action where implementation of the spirit of resolution 1325 was monitored. They reflected the underlying assumption about the importance of and correlation between the increased participation of women, and better outcomes in relation to prevention, protection and recovery and gender equality more broadly. They also indicated some actions to further the agenda and the underlying theories of change regarding these actions are examined below.⁶

The development of NAPs constitutes both an indicator of progress and a valuable action in itself (see UN Women's Strategic Plan 2011–2013). Since UN Women is mandated to support NAPs to implement resolution 1325, there was no issue about whether to support their development. Rather, what mattered was to reflect on how, in concrete ways, NAPs and their implementation could be most effectively supported to achieve the intended outcomes – and thus the robustness of underlying theories of change. The evidence base on NAPs remains limited.⁷ While in most national contexts, women's organizations and gender specialists have driven their development, the NAPs did not necessarily enable leadership and participation of women in broader policy and planning processes in relation to peace and security issues. There is, therefore, a need for a closer analysis of country-specific experiences, including to consider whether NAPs risk further 'silo-ing' and keeping the gender equality agenda in the periphery of gender ministries but with little meaningful impact

⁶ See UN Women (2012a), notably the chapter on tracking implementation, for a discussion of the results logic underpinning the indicators. The Seven-Point Action Plan is explained and justified in the Secretary-General's report on participation.

⁷ The chapters in Barnes and Olonisakin (2011) were an important contribution to assessing the impact of resolution 1325 on the ground. See also Swaine (2010) for a critical perspective of progress on resolution 1325 and a special focus on the NAPs.

on power and resource allocation in other ministries, or whether they may become merely a box-ticking exercise that satisfies the international community, but with little transformative impact on the lives of women. UN Women should be encouraged to critically observe and reflect on the value added of concrete experiences of resolution 1325 NAPs, in terms of how they could be more effective given the context-specific political conditions and what factors explain their effectiveness or limitations, as a means to expand the knowledge base to monitor progress on resolution 1325.

Monitoring/implementation frameworks

The 26 indicators provided a useful quantitative measure to monitor progress by different types of stakeholder (UN Women, other United Nations entities and Member States), despite the eight indicators under the participation pillar appearing to be little more than counting exercises. However, such quantitative data are important with the strategic value of the indicators system lying precisely in what the data reveals about different stakeholders' commitment and conduct, including over time. For instance, stakeholders (both international and national) can be assessed both on what they chose and chose not to report, creating a basis for information to be tracked over time through which reputational costs for poor/non reporting or failure to make progress can be generated.

Moreover, the indicators established a database against which progress against the four pillars could be assessed in relation to each other. For example, it was possible to determine whether there were more favourable indicators or whether progress on participation correlated positively with progress in other pillars (prevention, protection and relief/recovery). This is notwithstanding the limitations of what quantitative results frameworks can say, for example, about the quality of women's participation and leadership or the more substantive aspects of transformation that are sought.

The Seven-Point Action Plan also contains a narrative of causal connections between participation of women, the application of gender analysis and the achievement gender-responsive impact in peace and security work. The focus of attention was on what the United Nations system could do better, and the development of seven action points by which to monitor its conduct in enhancing women's participation.

The Secretary-General's report on *Women's Participation in Peacebuilding*, which was presented to the Security Council, discussed the seven action points (United Nations, 2010b), drawing on evidence and analysis of history and current practice. The report reiterated the intrinsic and instrumental value of enhancing women's participation. It also set out explicit measures the United Nations system was to undertake to ensure not just an increase in numbers, the meaningful consultation with women in peacebuilding and post-conflict planning and financial resources to support participation as a means to achieve a lasting impact in advancing gender equality goals. The report pointed to the socio-political complexity of the processes and context, and stressed the need for caution regarding linear or simple assumptions such as women in decision-making positions necessarily applying a gender perspective or prioritise gender equality goals and that the weight of structural conditions are reflected in entrenched gender biases in social norms and formal legislation. Notwithstanding these caveats, the report proposed specific actions which go beyond quantitative indicators of change.

Strategic Plans

UN Women's Strategic Plan 2011–2013 set out a results chain in the DRF with respect to Goal 4 on its peace and security and humanitarian response agenda. The outcomes were articulated in terms of incorporating gender equality goals. Indicators and targets were

variably framed in numerical form (e.g. ensuring that women constitute 20 per cent of mediators, negotiators and technical experts in peace negotiations administered by UN Women by 2015). In terms of indicative outputs, such as the enhanced capacity of gender advocates to influence peace talks, post-conflict planning processes and so on, indicators were generally quantitative, such as the proportion of conflict-affected or post-conflict countries in which gender equality advocates had enhanced capacity to participate and influence. However, there was little indication of what this meant in practice, and how transformative change to achieve more women's leadership and participation could be more meaningfully achieved. The underlying theory of change was thus poorly articulated in relation to how women's participation and leadership could be best supported in practice across the different thematic areas of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda.

OSAGI and DAW's Strategic Plans 2008–2009 and 2010–2011 and UN Women's Strategic Plan 2011–2013 set out goals and indicators for intergovernmental work and inter-agency coordination regarding progress in peace and security and resolution 1325. The former were mostly defined in quantitative terms and said little about how progress was to be achieved. However, evaluations of OSAGI and DAW noted the importance of their accumulated deep understanding of the United Nations environment, which made their intergovernmental work effective in building up relations with Member States. Their mandate had included preparing reports on behalf of the Secretary-General and servicing the Security Council during the Open Debate, a role now filled by the PSC.

However, it was in the nature of global strategic plans that underlying theories of change remained quite general and descriptive, rather than analytically fully developed both because of the breadth of the issues and range of potential actions, and because they were high-level documents.

On policy and strategy processes, issues regarding underlying causal assumptions about change were noted. One concern was that meeting numerical targets was not enough in itself (even if these targets were intrinsically and instrumentally important, as noted above) to achieve more fundamental change. While the indicators and Strategic Plans had an implicit narrative of focusing on the qualitative aspects of women's participation in peace and security, how this was to be achieved in practice was not followed through. Also, in the limited literature on progress on resolution 1325 there was a reminder of the importance of context specificity and the need to take into account the more complex socio-political realities of gender relations, including how they cut across class, ethnicity and the political economy of conflict and post-conflict processes of reconstruction, peacebuilding and eventually state-building (Swaine, 2010; Barnes, 2011; United Nations, 2010b). This suggested that guidance on supporting women's leadership and participation needed to include measures to engage with the political economy of each context in order to identify entry-points for action.

At the same time, as was noted in interviews, the limitations of the implementation and monitoring processes agreed in the resolutions reflected that these were themselves the product of deeply political and contested processes among a range of stakeholders, where active resistance to gender equality goals remains entrenched among a number of Member States. For instance, in the Open Debate and the Secretary-General's annual report to the Security Council on resolution 1325, some Member States expressed resistance to the indicators and even disregard for their value (see, for instance, the statement by the Federation of Russia in the 2012 Open Debate).⁸ The normative support function of UN

⁸ http://peacewomen.org/assets/file/russia_wps2012.pdf

Women on the implementation of women, peace and security is a deeply political enterprise, which inevitably involves encountering resistance to the implementation of internationally agreed norms and standards.

Thus, in assessing the theories of change featured in the implementation and monitoring actions and mechanisms associated with resolution 1325, it was important to take into account the political realities and sensitivities of peace and security work and the resistance of some Members States to the women, peace and security agenda. What mattered most, therefore, was the effectiveness of the daily political work of the PSC on the women, peace and security agenda and engagement with the wider United Nations pillar on peace and security. However, much of this work took place behind the scenes and through informal and undocumented exchanges and conversations with intergovernmental actors and other United Nations entities which meant that such intergovernmental and coordination work did not feature in formal results frameworks or log-frames.

Global policy and strategic documents were inherently limited because they reflected politically negotiated outcomes (such as the resolutions and monitoring/accountability actions) because the peace and security agenda is thematically very wide and guidance at the global level is necessarily general (as in the case of Strategic Plans). As a result, underlying theories of change were susceptible both to the constraints of needing to reflect consensual positions rather robust logical reasoning, and it also meant that this level of engagement was far removed from operational implementation in country. In terms of the implicit theories of change underpinning the political daily work of UN Women and its predecessor entities, it was inevitable that these were not planned or made explicit from the outset, in part because of the highly politically sensitive nature of the issues.

Notwithstanding, while the importance of women's participation was reiterated in all these policies, frameworks and processes, the specifics of how best to support leadership and participation remained under-theorized in the implicit theories of change. In particular, there was limited consideration of what constitutes women's leadership capacities in the contexts where the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda was relevant, and how these needed to be nurtured and supported. The importance of empowerment and agency was thus implicitly taken as given – as outcome and process – but with relatively limited reflection or indication on how they could be best supported and enhanced.

Knowledge documents and guidance for programming

In contrast, more nuanced and politically informed analysis and guidance on how to achieve change featured much more strongly in the emerging body of evidence-based knowledge outputs and policy/programming guidance produced by UN Women and its predecessor entities. A brief review of a selection of such documents signalled the importance and merit of building an evidence base on causes of change, and the value of context-specific (gender and conflict) analysis and assessment of factors which enable or constrain progress on women, peace and security and gender equality goals in conflict, post-conflict or fragile settings.

The (implicit) theories of change and recommendations about how best to support women's participation (and, to a much lesser extent, leadership) and with what effect, featured in the outputs and were more nuanced. They were less articulated in logic and results chains and more through analytical narratives drawing on evidence about how transformation takes place, what actions can contribute to this and the factors explaining effectiveness. It was important to note that there was no single analytical format. Knowledge resources included reports, guidance notes, explanations of mechanisms of monitoring and accountability in

place and e-learning courses on national and regional implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. It was hard to judge uptake, but it was reported in interviews that over 6000 people have undertaken e-learning courses.

Appendix 1 lists (and summarizes) a selection of knowledge outputs which illustrate the breadth of documents that featured among the knowledge production of UN Women and its predecessor entities. They were not selected on the basis of their influence (which could not be determined in the scope of the evaluation), rather they were intended as examples of both evidence-based and analytically robust outputs. Some also featured in the UN Women *Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security* (UN Women, 2012a).

In addition, the range of documents supported and produced by INSTRAW prior to the creation of UN Women were an established source of knowledge on some peace and security issues.⁹ For instance, outputs on gender-responsive reform of the security sector constituted an important body of knowledge, including on how best to support efforts to increase women's voice and participation in security and justice sectors. Such knowledge production has historically been severely under-resourced.

Critically, the emerging body of knowledge outputs from predecessor entities and UN Women constituted a valuable resource for informing theory-driven and evidence-based recommendations for policy and programming because it looked more closely at how specific actions could contribute to strengthening women's participation (and leadership). Notably it also took further the need to engage with the political economy complexities of context-specific processes of conflict, post-conflict, fragility and so forth. Some of the outputs exemplify the importance of ensuring that gender analysis and conflict analysis inform, in much more strategic ways, the choices for context-specific action, identifying opportunities, and engaging with the strategic actors whose commitment and support is relevant to achieving more substantive change regarding gender equality goals and addressing the specific experiences of women in conflict.

The value of this knowledge production, which was rigorous and evidence-based, cannot be over-emphasized, in particular how it directly informed the development of theories of change within programming and strategic work at regional and country office levels. UN Women will need to address the important question of ensuring visibility and uptake of these knowledge outputs outside the United Nations, and guidance on how they can inform the work of country offices. From the interviews, it was unclear as to whether there was a project to take forward knowledge management in the entity, where it will or how it will be coordinated. The thematic clusters seemed to have a role in this, but a wider knowledge-management platform at the corporate level is also important, in particular to give support to the thematic clusters. As noted in the document on regional architecture and in interviews at headquarter and country level, this organizational issue seemed to remain underdeveloped .

Politically strategic work undertaken by individuals and sections of UN Women and its predecessor entities

In terms of implicit theories of change informing UN Women and its predecessor entities' work *in practice*, there was value in recording the politically strategic work undertaken by individuals and sections within UN Women to advance its normative and policy goals. Such work included day-to-day politically intuitive practices at headquarter level which constituted much of how change was advanced, as well as nurturing strategic partnerships and alliances

⁹ http://www.peacewomen.org/peacewomen_and_the_un/un-implementation/research-and-training-institutes/entity/24/united-nations-international-research-and-training-institute-for-the-advancement-of-women-un-instraw#

by identifying opportunities, including engaging with Member States, which arose because of the domestic political context, changes in embassy staff or particular crisis moments.

Underpinning this were implicit theories of change about what type of actions can help to make progress on women, peace and security and on the thematic areas of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda.

An example to note was the planning and work in the run up to the Wilton Park Conference on the role for military peacekeepers (UNIFEM, 2008b; and interviews). Here, the preparation and subsequent follow-up work included prefacing the meeting with a review of experiences of protection strategies in peace-keeping operations, in the Analytical Inventory of *Peacekeeping Practice* (UNIFEM/ Department of Peacekeeping Operations [DPKO], 2010), combined with a series of conversations, meetings, and intergovernmental and inter-agency engagement, and providing a space for engaging with military and security actors involved in peace-keeping regarding the relevance of the following issues (selected by way of example):

- The importance of creating a mind shift among military staff from seeing sexual and gender-based violence as an inevitable consequence of war or conflict to recognising it as both a security problem requiring a security and tactical response, and a political problem requiring a political response;
- The development of concrete protection measures that could more strategically and creatively draw on a peacekeeping presence to create safer environments for women, including by listening to what women perceive as the greatest threats and risks on a day-to-day basis;
- Increasing the number of uniformed women personnel;
- The value of empowering local women by engaging with them and facilitating the space for women's voice and engagement in public decision-making; and
- Achieving concrete impact on the wording of resolution 1820.

The conference represented an example of how building strategic partnerships – even where there is initial resistance – can lead to important shifts in thinking and approaches, and new alliances with different stakeholders (in this case military personnel in peacekeeping forces) that can most effectively result in change.

In this more informal, and less documented, role of brokering and facilitating dialogue and political engagement of UN Women, the evaluation found differing views on process issues, i.e. on what actions were most likely to result in progress on the women, peace and security goals and on resolution 1325. For instance, some respondents suggested that the 26 indicators were premature in view of the degree of political resistance among Member States. Within the United Nations system, despite strong support for the creation of an accountability tool, there was some concern about the potential bureaucratic overload that could result. Overall, most respondents saw this as an important step forward for the implementation of resolution 1325 because it created the possibility of establishing a baseline for monitoring and accountability, and a database of specific and verifiable information provided by different stakeholders.

There were different opinions within UN Women on what the normative support function should entail which had implications for the role of intergovernmental support. One position was that intergovernmental work would see UN Women taking a more *proactive approach* to driving the implementation of the women, peace and security resolutions by creating enabling

conditions, incentives and accountability mechanisms to encourage stakeholders to meet normative commitments reflected in the women, peace and security agenda. The other position saw intergovernmental work as involving a neutral facilitation of progress in the implementation of women, peace and security – at the pace set by Member States, whose commitment ultimately would decide the possibility of progress. The former position acknowledged the deeply political nature of intergovernmental work, and as such required proactive, politically strategic engagement. The latter assumed that UN Women was a neutral player, tasked with facilitating and supporting Members States’ progress on women, peace and security. Although these differences of views do not currently seem to be problematic, they are worth signalling because UN Women may need to reflect on the future direction of intergovernmental work. In interviews outside UN Women, the merits of a politically proactive approach to intergovernmental engagement were noted as having contributed to giving impetus and visibility to the women, peace and security agenda in the period under evaluation.

It is, therefore, important to note that much international engagement and action takes place outside the formal strategic plans and action plans set out in internationally agreed commitments. In practice, progress in enhancing women’s participation and leadership in women, peace and security is the result of myriad informal exchanges, networks, brokering of conversations, facilitation of spaces for dialogue and exchange of ideas among strategic stakeholders. In large measure this constitutes the intergovernmental and coordination role of UN Women and its predecessor entities.

In a world of international interventions in conflict, post-conflict and development, this element rarely, if at all, features in results frameworks, planning or formally articulated theories of change. Yet they constitute critical areas of action and interaction which can contribute meaningfully to changing mindsets, attitudes and fostering commitment to policy and normative goals which merit further reflection, including for identifying lessons on what works.

Conclusions on theories of change

In policy and strategy documents, theories of change regarding the role of participation and leadership of women, and specifically how best to advance the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda, are underdeveloped. The instrumental value especially of participation is taken as a given (documents make markedly less reference made to leadership) – and this assumption is not at issue in this evaluation. There is, however, far less explicit narrative on *how* best to support this. There is also variation across the thematic areas of peace and security and humanitarian response, so that for instance supporting participation in transitional justice is clearly not the same as – and serves different purposes from – supporting women’s participation in post-conflict governance.

In the monitoring and implementation of action points (e.g. the 26 indicators or the Seven-Point action plan) there was an (inevitable) emphasis on numbers in tracking support to women’s participation and progress on resolution 1325. Such a focus was not problematic for this type of framework, and the PSC work explicitly focused on the quality of content, for instance of peace agreements. However, theories of change on how to translate the content, for example of peace agreements to implementation on the ground, and monitoring such implementation remain underdeveloped partly because of the lack of available evidence on what works. Moreover, context specificity matters greatly in determining what are likely to be viable entry-points

As noted in the desk study, there was unlikely to be a single theory of change regarding how women's participation and leadership could best be supported, and how this in turn contributed to other goals (other than in very general terms) because the range of themes and sub-themes which constituted the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda was too diverse. This was, in some respects, reflected in the DRF of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2011–2013.

Supporting progress on women's participation and leadership roles was a deeply political undertaking, both for what it signifies in terms of contesting gender relations and advancing gender equality goals, and for the progress in achieving women's agency and empowerment (and the impact of this on other peace and security and humanitarian response goals). To be meaningful, work in this area cannot be 'sanitized' and reduced to a check-list, but requires politically strategic action.

Many of the knowledge and guidance outputs from UN Women and its predecessor entities pointed to the complexity of the intended transformation processes they supported, and the need for politically strategic and contextually appropriate programming and action. They included highly relevant insights on the importance of taking account of political economy factors. However, more could be done, including through improved knowledge management, to make visible the analytical approaches informing these knowledge outputs. They could also more purposefully inform the theories of change in operational work regarding what effective action/support might look like in enhancing women's participation and leadership in the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda.

Such insights also feature in the day-to-day practice of UN Women staff at headquarter level. The important role of brokering strategic alliances and partnerships, facilitating dialogue, creating space for formal and informal conversations among different stakeholders in order to shift attitudes, and change the course of political and international agendas, contribute to substantive progress and are critical to achieving progress on advancing normative commitments of the women, peace and security agenda. Somewhat inevitably these rarely featured in formal theories of change and results frameworks of either UN Women and of international development actors more generally, precisely because of the highly political nature of such interactions. However, the central importance of such work should not be lost.

Finally, in unveiling these processes differences of opinion within UN Women about approaches to intergovernmental work, and the implicit theory of change on how best to achieve progress on resolution 1325 and other resolutions at the headquarter level, were observed. Such differences of opinion, which highlighted a more politically proactive approach, versus a more 'facilitating' role, were not necessarily problematic for the entity, but were worth noting in terms of tracking over time what works best to achieve progress on the normative support function on women, peace and security, and how UN Women chooses to position itself moving forward.

Findings to Evaluation Questions

Dimension 1: UN Women's policy and strategic direction

In what ways did UN Women influence policies and practice (within the United Nations system and key external agencies) in relation to women's political participation and leadership in peace and security?

Impact

Partnership and coordination

Results/achievements/impact

UN Women and its predecessor entities had many different kinds of policy impacts to enhance women's leadership and participation in peace and security work. A selection of examples is listed below, although it should be stressed that, in addition to the more visible outputs such as the 26 indicators or the new Security Council resolutions, the more day-to-day political work through intergovernmental engagement or coordination efforts were equally important despite being less visible or measurable in results frameworks. For example, these included efforts to ensure the correct wording was used in the renewal of mandates to secure funding for gender-responsive commitments in United Nations missions, or facilitation of political exchanges which lead to progressive changes in policy, discourse, attitudes, mindsets and ultimately practice of a wide range of stakeholders.

Examples of policy impacts contributions:

- Constant monitoring of country-specific resolutions and mandate renewals, and engagement with Security Council members to encourage adequate attention to gender equality, justice, leadership and participation issues in its instructions to the United Nations for conflict resolution and recovery in specific situations;
- Influence in the design and putting into practice of actions on Security Council resolution implementation and monitoring, such as the SWAP, the 26 indicators, the Seven-Point Action Plan and increased numbers and development of NAPs. The 26 indicators were noted as an important quantitative mechanism for establishing baselines and charting progress. Monitoring mechanisms were still being developed but initial data were now reported in the Secretary-General annual report to the Open Debate (United Nations, 2012). Importantly, this was the only set of indicators that the Security Council has ever accepted; and
- UN Women and its predecessor entities played a strategic role in influencing global policy on peacebuilding to ensure that gender analysis featured more prominently across different sub-thematic areas of policy. As a result:¹⁰
 - Policy on gender-responsive security and justice sector reform and corresponding action has evolved in the last decade, and UN Women and its predecessor entities played a key role in this through engagement and follow-up action, including working with key partners in the United Nations system. Examples include UN Women's work with DPKO and UNDP to develop a system-wide policy on gender and SSR (e.g. with support in Haiti, Liberia, Timor-Leste and Uganda). In turn, this was informed by the experiences of the 'From Communities to Global Security Institutions' programme, although they are not directly linked. UN Women was also instrumental in driving

¹⁰ See also Hendra (2011) and UN Women (2012c).

United Nations-wide responses to sexual violence in conflict, and was founding member of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, a core driver of resolution 1820 and a leader on justice responses to conflict-related sexual violence. UN Women led pre-deployment training for peacekeepers on preventing conflict-related sexual violence and also drafted the United Nations *Integrated Technical Guidance Note on Gender-Responsive Security Sector Reform*, which was adopted as United Nations-wide policy to ensure women's needs and capacities in the United Nations support to SSR.¹¹

- The Joint Strategy on Gender and Mediation was developed through increased collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), which was an important achievement regarding UN Women's influence in United Nations-wide systems. Specifically, this three-year strategy aimed to identify and prepare qualified female mediators, increase the availability and quality of gender expertise in mediation processes, and enhance women's participation in peace processes.
- There was a stronger commitment to women's participation in peacebuilding through its partnership with the Peacebuilding Commission and the PBSO. As a result, there was greater effort to ensure that gender issues were integrated into peacebuilding plans, as well as in how the peacebuilding fund is allocated.
- Support to NAPs including through engagement with Members States and CSOs remained an important role for UN Women.
- Strategic engagement on transitional justice and work on the rule of law included collaborative engagement with UNDP. UN Women and its predecessor entities were engaged in supporting the integration of gender-sensitive measures in transitional justice processes, including in truth commissions (such as UNIFEM's support to the Sierra Leone Truth Commission). More recently the Secretary-General made a commitment to ensure that all Commissions of Inquiry and related investigative bodies established by the United Nations and United Nations-supported truth commissions would have 'dedicated gender expertise and access to specific sexual violence investigative capacity, drawing in the support of UN Women'. UN Women subsequently deployed gender experts and gender-based crimes investigators to support a number of United Nations Commissions of Inquiry (e.g. in Guinea-Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Syria) (Valji, 2012).
- Advocacy work and support to women's movements remained important, including support to women's participation in international donor and other engagement conferences.

Member States, United Nations entities and bodies, as well as non-UN Women respondents, acknowledged a greater visibility of the strategic and intellectual leadership of UN Women on peace and security and humanitarian response at headquarter and global levels.

Weaknesses and challenges

At the same time, some United Nations entities were sceptical about what difference UN

¹¹ <http://unssr.unlb.org/>

Women's new role will make in practice, which was manifested in a 'wait and see' approach as to whether it can meet expectations to sustainably maintain change in influencing global policy and practice.

Resolution 1325 was not mentioned in UN Women's founding mandate and it was unclear whether this represented a missed opportunity or a deliberate decision. Some respondents noted that work on women, peace and security was implicitly included in the new mandate, in view of the degree to which the prior mandates of predecessor entities have been amalgamated into the new composite entity.

The political resistance to elements of women, peace and security and the effective implementation of the resolutions should not be underestimated. Proactive intergovernmental engagement and coordination work at headquarters will be important in responding to this. However, this needs to be closely connected to political processes in-country, and therefore in-country UN Women engagement through its expanded mandate to engage with Member States governments is important. Ongoing work with other United Nations entities may require the development of specific agreements. In the case of its relationship with DPKO, some respondents suggested UN Women formalize an agreement on how country-level coordination should proceed where there are peacekeeping missions.

Gaps in technical expertise on some thematic and sub-thematic areas of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda were reported. Notably, what UN Women could contribute to humanitarian work was unclear, in particular because most UN Women staff (with some exceptions) had no expertise in humanitarian action and response. It was suggested in a few interviews that UN Women was not equipped to be a humanitarian actor and should not aspire to such a role. UN Women could instead contribute to informing humanitarian action on how to be more effective in integrating gender-sensitive approaches which take account of women's experiences and needs in crises and humanitarian contexts. In 2012, UN Women established a Humanitarian Unit and proactive recruitment was underway to fill the capacity gap.

Factors explaining impact/effectiveness

The technical expertise on women, peace and security and profound knowledge of the United Nations environment reflected in the intergovernmental and coordination roles of UN Women and its predecessor entities were acknowledged (OIOS, 2011; OSAGI, 2010; interviews). Despite resource constraints UN Women's predecessor entities contributed to sustained engagement with relevant intergovernmental bodies and inter-agency forums.

The transition to UN Women and its renewed mandate provided an opportunity to reinvigorate policy work on women, peace and security. It has led to increased levels of seniority in key positions, which in turn has resulted in UN Women being taken more seriously on women, peace and security issues by senior staff in other United Nations entities. For instance, since it was established, UN Women's Executive Director has chaired IANGWE meetings. It was also noted that increased seniority in country offices will improve inter-agency coordination (OSAGI, 2010; interviews).

The UN Women's Executive Director role of Under-Secretary-General has also given the entity more visibility and political influence in the United Nations system. The importance of this achievement in the negotiations leading up to its establishment should not be underestimated and respondents noted its relevance in ensuring a more effective UN Women presence and agenda-setting power in the Security Council. The Executive Director of UN Women also sits on the Secretary-General's senior management team and participates in weekly Policy Committee meetings, an important decision-making body in which a number of entities participate under one representative. UN Women is not represented by any other entity and is

the 14th member of this Committee. The Executive Director's presence on the Policy Committee indicates the importance the Secretary-General assigns to gender issues in all of the United Nations' work. It also gives UN Women both greater visibility and more immediate accessibility to political missions which, in addition to the Executive Director's personal credibility, resulted in concrete achievements, such as briefing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) who subsequently created the post of senior gender adviser.

The effectiveness of intergovernmental work predated the creation of UN Women, and reflected the strategic mobilization of UN Women's predecessor entities to use the anniversary of resolution 1325 to push for progress in women, peace and security work. For instance, the intergovernmental work of UN Women and its predecessor entities to support the active engagement of those Member States who, in the period under evaluation, committed to accelerating progress on women, peace and security, was perceived as critical in tabling new resolutions and action points. In particular, OSAGI initiated the creation of a High-Level Political Committee for the ten-year anniversary. Moreover, the careful political work undertaken recently with Member States achieved some major advances (such as to obtain support for the 26 indicators).

There was also a marked shift in the direction of coordination efforts – notwithstanding some resistance and scepticism regarding UN Women's new role and mandate in other parts of the United Nations. The change in inter-agency relations was in part attributed to UN Women's mandate and its new presence at the decision-making table. However, in relation to women, peace and security old partnerships were already reenergised and new alliances forged. Here, efforts to engage senior-level management paid off. For instance, working with DPA contributed to increased efforts to more effectively support the participation of women in peacemaking and peace agreements processes. There was also reportedly a closer synergy with DPKO, UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The work of the PSC team was also recognized as valuable in securing the commitment of strategic members of other United Nations entities, including the degree to which its knowledge outputs contributed to the intellectual and actionable development of the peace and security agenda, and the value of certain individuals in achieving this commitment should not be underestimated. The challenge for UN Women will be how to institutionalize further the strategic and intellectual capacities in the PSC, noted by stakeholders in coordination work as important qualities in peace and security work.

Constraining factors

There were also a number of constraining factors which limited the effectiveness of headquarter work on women, peace and security.

Resource and mandate constraints were limited the capacity of UN Women's predecessor entities to achieve progress on women, peace and security through high-level political work, notwithstanding their key contributions to the drafting of resolutions and earlier efforts to galvanize progress through, for example, SWAPs (OIOS, 2009; OIOS, 2011; OSAGI, 2010; interviews).

How sustainable were the efforts and results of UN Women's policy influencing/engagement?

Sustainability

The intergovernmental and coordination work of UN Women and its predecessor entities contributed to the political sustainability of the women, peace and security agenda, even if progress over the ten years of resolution 1325 was reportedly uneven. Globally there was a discursive shift in the last decade regarding the need to take account of women's experiences in

conflict and their contribution to post-conflict processes of change due, in large measure, to the technical expertise and political skills in working through the politics of the United Nations system and the Security Council which was attributed to UN Women and its predecessor entities (OIOS, 2011; OSAGI, 2010; interviews).

Some reported concerns included, the remaining sense of fragility regarding the gains made in relation to resolution 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda. It was not clear how far the commitment to the agenda was institutionalized beyond UN Women and United Nations entities, notably in terms of the degree of Member States' 'ownership' regarding levels of substantive commitment (and not just lip service) to the spirit of resolution 1325. Second, even in other parts of the United Nations system there was a perceived tendency in some entities to put junior people in gender advisory roles (although no concrete examples were cited) (OSAGI, 2010). Reportedly this is changing as women, peace and security work is gaining prominence.

How effective was UN Women in its policy engagement at different levels, including global regional and national?

Effectiveness and coverage

Partnership and coordination

During the period under evaluation, strategic partnerships were forged at the global level which reflected both a long-term build up of partnerships and a more recent strategic positioning of the PSC to newer alliances, key international actors, and participation in influential policy debates and fora.

Inter-agency coordination

The quality of work and dedication of the PSC among other entities was widely recognized. It contributed to securing a degree of commitment and inter-agency support for the peace and security agenda, in some cases leading to a change in the relationship.

Some United Nations entities expressed concern about what the new mandate would mean in terms of UN Women's expectations about its inter-agency coordination role on women, peace and security, and implications for operational work. Other entities see UN Women's role as remaining essentially catalytic and of providing technical expertise. UN Women needs to be clearer on this issue to avoid the duplication of efforts. It was also unclear how UN Women's monitoring of how women, peace and security features in United Nations-wide peace and security work will evolve through its coordination role .

It was also still unclear how deeply embedded 'ownership' was among other United Nations entities for some of the women, peace and security agenda. For instance, respondents confirmed the importance of and commitment to resolution 1325, but there was some reticence regarding the bureaucratic viability of the indicators. Some saw it as yet another reporting task rather than a measure which will lead to a change in attitudes and conduct in other entities. However, this remains to be seen.

Intergovernmental work at headquarters

As previously noted, UN Women, in its work with Member States, the Secretary-General and the Security Council has had an impact on shaping policy. However, there was less evidence of influential engagement with other international debates, fora and policy discussions, for instance on state-building. UN Women had a limited presence in debates and discussions in the OECD International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) on the development of state-building outputs and associated processes, which are lacking in robust gender perspectives, although it did comment on INCAF's recent work on integrating gender perspectives in state-

building. Exchanges with the World Bank seem underdeveloped, despite its globally strategic work on conflict and fragility. Engagement with the new fragility hub, the Global Centre on Conflict, Fragility and Development, in Nairobi is underway. Finally, UN Women seemed under-represented in work regarding the International Dialogue and *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*, as confirmed through interviews, although there was some engagement through UN Women's membership of the Programme Coordination Group. UN Women made specific inputs including suggestions on gender-sensitive indicators across the five New Deal areas, it sponsored *Cordaid* to hold a number of national consultations with women on the New Deal and it supported CSOs to engage with Ministers of Finance in South Sudan and Liberia to discuss New Deal issues. Given the importance of nurturing ownership for women, peace and security agenda among Member States, this was a potential opportunity for outreach in countries where UN Women's input could have strategic value.

The state-building agenda is relatively recent, which was important because some of the wider debates on working in fragile and conflict-affected situations are happening in these fora, and UN Women has an opportunity to have considerably more impact than currently seems to be the case. Other United Nations entities (such as UNDP) appear to have a regular presence in these fora, and UN Women could contribute to inspiring more effective gender-responsive strategies in an international agenda where it remains fundamentally underdeveloped.

Regional-level intergovernmental work is expected to play an important role in UN Women's normative support function. There was progress with the European Union and NATO, but more work is to be done with the African Union, the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of American States. Regional offices are expected to be instrumental in nurturing such relationships.

Women's civil society organizations

In interviews at headquarter and country level, stakeholders expressed the need for UN Women to not lose sight of UNIFEM's historic legacy of working with grassroots organizations. There was a concern that, in becoming a United Nations entity, UN Women would lose its distinctive capacity to work more closely and flexibly with beneficiary groups on the ground than perhaps characterises other United Nations entities' work.

Notwithstanding, work with women's groups remains important. The close collaboration with NGOWG was perceived as strategic, to both maximise outreach and coverage and facilitate the voice of women at headquarter and global levels. A new NGO coalition was added, on the basis of UN Women's lobbying, to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Moreover, the Committee on Women, Peace and Security engages with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders following the PSC's efforts to diversify and enrich the range of NGOs contributing to strategic discussions on advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

To what extent does the current policy/strategic direction reflect the lessons learned from policy engagement on peace and security and humanitarian response since 2008 and how fit for purpose was it for the new UN Women mandate?

Relevance and coherence

The transition process in itself reflected a decision based on the need to elevate the status of the entity in order to integrate gender equality goals in United Nations business more meaningfully.

The reorganization of UN Women drew on a range of evaluation and assessment documents and processes. First, the *Field Capacity Assessment* was conducted as part of the UN Women Executive Director's *Vision and 100 Day Action Plan*. The *Plan* was prepared to inform the

transition process of the nature of field presence; the needs and capacities of country-level staff; and the imperative to build better systems to connect normative and policy work with operations (although this remains underdeveloped). Second, evaluations of its predecessor entities informed some of the decisions on how to merge functions (e.g. intergovernmental and coordination) and the division of labour in UN Women (some of which remains quite fluid and incomplete), (OSAGI, 2010; OIOS, 2011).

More importantly for this evaluation, the thematic reorganization gave due visibility to the peace and security agenda, bringing UN Women into line with a wider international agenda which has increasingly focused attention on fragile and conflict-affected situations, where the need to enhance promoting gender equality is especially pressing.

Dimension 2: UN Women's policies, programming and operations

To what extent did UN Women programmes achieve the expected results? What explained variations?

Effectiveness
Impact

Although this question was especially relevant for the country fieldwork, there were some notable observations in relation to headquarters.

Thematic clusters had a direct role in shaping the content of global programming, to which they were supposed to provide guidance and support. The PSC endeavoured to systematize its work on providing intellectual leadership of peace and security work, focusing on evidence-based research, and the development of tools and guidance in the range of thematic areas that the agenda encompassed (some outputs are noted above). There was also a system of prioritization and planning in place, which enabled the PSC to prioritize, work through and systematize research and knowledge production across the range of themes and sub-themes contained in the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda. Some areas were more developed than others, especially in relation to research on how better to support leadership and participation of women within the different sub-themes.

Knowledge outputs were reportedly of a high standard, and potentially a very rich source for supporting programming content and capacity, although uptake could be more effective in conflict-affected settings.

To what extent was UN Women able to translate global policy/strategies in programmatic work?

Effectiveness
Relevance and coherence

As noted, the thematic work of the PSC was recognized as cutting edge and based on rigorous quantitative and qualitative research methods. Knowledge outputs were mostly premised on the need to work with the specificities of context and not to adopt blueprint approaches. However, there were concerns about how this knowledge and strategic vision can more effectively inform programmatic work in peace and security.

Part of the challenge related to UN Women more widely. There was a perceived lack of clarity on whether the systems currently being developed through the new regional architecture would better link normative/policy work and operations. Transition processes inevitably generate uncertainty. However, the new architecture was not perceived to intuitively suggest a clear flow

of communication and exchange between headquarter thematic areas and programming processes at the regional and country level.

Stakeholder groups were concerned about how to address (if not necessarily resolve) the issue of blurred boundaries across the thematic content of the different clusters. For instance, the question was raised as to when the Governance and Leadership Section should step in to lead on democratic governance once post-conflict governance becomes more normalised . Well-intended efforts to establish a thematic division of labour inevitably run up against the messy realities of country-level politics. It will be important, however, to ensure good communication systems across themes at headquarter level in order to avoid replication and ‘silo-isation’ across what are intrinsically connected processes, including in how guidance and support is provided to country offices. Resource and capacity constraints are a relevant issue here.

To what extent were UN Women programmes tailored to the specific socio-political and cultural and economic context in which they operated? How was this translated into programme design and planning?

Relevance and coherence
Sustainability

These questions were especially relevant for country-level fieldwork. A key role for the PSC cluster would be to provide analytical guidance on how best to strategize country-level programming in ways that better integrate contextual analysis (including conflict, political and gender analysis) in design, implementation and monitoring. Analysis already featured in headquarter-level knowledge outputs which take account of the complexity of political economy factors that enable opportunities for change and effective engagement of UN Women, should become valuable resources for regional or country programme staff.

Analytical guidance should deliberately aim to inform how theories of change are developed for programming at country office level.

How effective was UN Women at identifying and using key opportunities and partnerships at country level?

Partnership and coordination
Effectiveness and coverage

The question was relevant for country case studies.

How effective were UN Women programmes at fostering/strengthening national ownership through country engagement of intended outcomes regarding improved leadership and participation of women in relevant peace and security and humanitarian response intervention/process?

Effectiveness
Partnership and coordination

The question was relevant for country case studies.

How innovative was UN Women in its programmatic approaches and what lessons were learned that can be replicated in different contexts?

Relevance and coherence
Sustainability

The PSC was recommended for some innovative ways of working. The creative strategic

positioning of the peace and security agenda with a range of relevant global stakeholders, and using informal networks and conversations, combined with formal fora of policy and debate to manoeuvre key objectives into position, was regarded as effective at headquarter level in peace and security work. In some cases this involved working with more unlikely actors (e.g. the military) to achieve practical change in how operations work on the ground provided more effective protection and prevention measures.

Working flexibly to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and volatile situations was also important in conflict settings. UN Women and UNIFEM demonstrated how to be adaptive in responding to crisis from a gender-responsive perspective.

The role of accompaniment and the provision of technical expertise on specific policy issues to support Member States and other United Nations entities in moments of crisis was important, for instance in the work of DPA or the PBSO. It was suggested that this could be a valuable area of growth in UN Women's work. On the ground, UN Women has been advising United Nations-wide work and response in crisis settings (for example, recently in Mali).¹²

Dimension 3: UN Women's organizational capacities, resources and structures

How adequate were UN Women's human and financial resources to effectively engage in conflict-affected countries?

Effectiveness and coverage

At the headquarter level UN Women was recognized as 'punching above its weight' on peace and security issues, despite important resource constraints and that the peace and security agenda received the smallest allocation of core funds.

How fit for purpose was UN Women in terms of the technical skills of its staff and its broader capacity to fulfil its mandate?

Relevance and coherence

At headquarter level, the high quality of technical skills and thematic expertise among UN Women's predecessor entities and the PSC, in relation to the evolving peace and security and humanitarian response agenda were acknowledged. Moreover, in interviews, political skills at headquarters were noted as critical to achieving results.

It remains unclear how effectively these capacities and skills were being institutionalized at the country level. The PSC could play a role in informing how capacity development on analytical, thematic and political skills can be scaled up in peace and security and humanitarian response in other levels of UN Women.

How effective was UN Women at coordinating gender-related work across United Nations entities and other key partners?

Partnership and coordination Sustainability

Among other entities there was a friendly but 'wait and see' perspective as they observe the evolution of UN Women. Respondents confirmed that UN Women participated in most of the peace and security fora in the United Nations, and played a strategic and leadership role in chairing the IANGWE.

¹² <http://www.unwomen.org/2013/01/un-women-executive-director-calls-for-inclusive-peace-process-and-immediate-stop-to-human-rights-abuses-against-women-in-ongoing-conflict-in-mali/>

At the time of the field mission, there were concerns about the linkages and systems to connect intergovernmental work at headquarter level with similar work in regional offices who were considered to need support in their intergovernmental work with Member States. Given the need for sensitivity and a deep understanding of regional politics, this was especially important with respect to conflict situations. Furthermore, this work will rely heavily on the regional offices' ability to build up strategic networks and partners with relevant regional stakeholders.

How effectively did UN Women manage risks in its operations? What strategies worked best?

Effectiveness and coverage

It was not clear how risk was managed which was perceived as a problem by other entities. It also remained an underdeveloped area during the transition process. Given the nature of the contexts of peace and security and humanitarian response work, it will be important to develop better risk-management systems as it is not enough simply to identify risk.

How fit for purpose were UN Women's M&E and reporting systems? Did they adequately capture lessons learned on results and impact?

Effectiveness and coverage

Relevance and coherence

Past evaluations and overall interviews suggested that UN Women and its predecessor entities lacked effective M&E systems.

In conflict settings, which tend to be politically fluid and volatile, there were particular challenges in monitoring progress and results.

Summary of findings

During the period of the evaluation (2008–2012), UN Women and its predecessor entities played a key role in accelerating the pace of change regarding progress in the implementation and visibility of the women, peace and security agenda – notwithstanding the very slow progress in the previous eight years. This reflects a combination of factors, including a renewed drive to support progress on resolution 1325 by a number of stakeholders.¹³

The transition to UN Women and its new mandate created new space for more effective political work and intergovernmental engagement at headquarter level. UN Women enjoys a significantly elevated political stature both in its coordination role within the United Nations system and in relation to intergovernmental actors which has not only helped revitalise the women, peace and security agenda, but has also enhanced political access to Member State representatives at the global level.¹⁴ UN Women and its predecessor entities at headquarters have effectively used this to achieve progress on the monitoring and implementation of resolution 1325 in global policy.

Coordination work in the area of women, peace and security in the period under evaluation saw a shift in intensity, resulting in newer, closer and more synergistic partnerships with other United Nations entities whose engagement was important for progress on peace and security goals. Some of these were new alliances with strategically important and weighty actors in conflict and post-conflict settings (i.e. DPKO, DPA, PBSO and the Office of the

¹³ Including key Member States, women's organizations, and individuals and sections within former UNIFEM and other predecessor entities, as well as the opportunity of the ten-year anniversary and the creation of the new composite entity.

¹⁴ The country-level fieldwork assesses access to government in-country.

High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR]). Their improved commitment to and support for better integrating the peace and security agenda of UN Women could potentially result in a transformative shift in some of the United Nations-wide peacekeeping and political work of peacebuilding, where gender perspectives, and the participation and leadership of women tended to be a low priority. Progress remains slow in practice, but the importance of women's participation and leadership in shaping peacebuilding outcomes, for instance, is now more visibly on the agenda. The importance of this discursive shift should not be underrated.

There was considerable evidence of the effectiveness of strategic positioning by the PSC and UN Women's predecessor entities to obtain concrete results in advancing progress on resolutions 1325, associated resolutions, and concrete monitoring and accountability mechanisms – building on the experience of the SWAP, and also making the most of opportunities as these have arisen (e.g. the drive from key Member States in support of resolution 1325, the ten-year anniversary; the mobilization on the ground and transnationally of women's organizations).

The importance of UN Women and its predecessors entities' role in brokering exchanges of views, facilitating dialogue, accompanying Member States and other players in the development of women, peace and security-related policy and the resolutions specifically, was especially valuable in terms of results and impact and thus should be nurtured at headquarter, regional and country office levels. This aspect of actionable strategic engagement needs to be better documented so that, among other things, it features in theories of change about what can contribute to progress towards intended outcomes. The politically difficult areas of work inherent in the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda made the importance of these political skills especially noteworthy.

Staff in UN Women and its predecessor entities were noted for their strong technical and thematic expertise and for advancing the view that policy and programming needed to draw on robust evidence and research. Knowledge outputs from both the predecessor entities and the PSC were potentially important sources of thematic analysis and practical guidance in women, peace and security work, but knowledge management remained underdeveloped in terms of how effectively it informed operational work.

Some weaknesses and challenges identified included:

- Dealing with conflict-affected states requires a politically 'savvy' approach to deal with sensitive issues, but there were different understandings of what this meant within UN Women (including at an individual level).
- UN Women and its predecessor entities' lessons on women, peace and security need to be taken forward to where the policy debates on peacebuilding and state-building are having impact on political processes at the country level, including in the work developed by INCAF, the World Bank, the International Dialogue and New Deal on fragility. UN Women was present in these fora but could engage more actively in the international state-building agenda, where gender perspectives remain severely underdeveloped.
- There was some progress at the regional level (e.g. with the European Union and NATO), but more work will be needed to consolidate existing partnerships with regional intergovernmental bodies (e.g. African Union, ECOWAS, ASEAN and OSCE). The new regional architecture provides for regional offices to be instrumental in this respect.

- Theories of change about how best to support women’s leadership and participation remained underdeveloped. On specific sub-thematic areas (such as peacebuilding or transitional justice) there was a knowledge base which provided a rich source of analysis and evidence from which theories of change could be developed.

5. Recommendations

Normative and policy level

UN Women should reflect on the different understandings of what its intergovernmental role should be. Should it facilitate and support policy processes as a neutral actor, reflecting a range of views? Or should it acknowledge that effective support to women’s leadership and participation in conflict, post-conflict and fragile settings is a deeply political endeavour? Supporting the implementation of global norms – as included in UN Women’s normative support functions – cannot be a politically neutral process since the intended outcomes involve redefining power relations. UN Women should continue to operate in politically strategic ways to proactively advance normative goals while working to ensure ownership by Member States.

UN Women should continue to nurture strategic partnerships with key actors in peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

UN Women should aim to engage more proactively in wider international policy fora on peace and state-building and with relevant regional organizations. Gender perspectives are crucially underdeveloped in many of the spaces where policies are being shaped, and UN Women could make a strategic difference on the ground to women in post-conflict settings.

Programming

The intellectual and strategic leadership of UN Women, its predecessor entities and the PSC has been instrumental their achieving their own significantly greater visibility in the peace and security agenda. It will be important to better document lessons from this experience to identify what has worked and why as a means to inform future strategic planning.

Development of the knowledge base should be continued to support clearer theories of change on how to better support women’s leadership and participation in women, peace and security in order to enhance women’s role as agents of change across the different thematic areas of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda.

Thematic knowledge outputs and expertise should be used to support the development of theories of change and modes of operation/programming at the country and regional level, in order to ensure greater coherence between the normative and operational mandates of UN Women.

For programming purposes, there is value in developing guidance on how to better integrate political, conflict and gender analysis into programming in ways that assess the complex political economy conditions and their implications for programme design and implementation. Such guidance should aim to provide more politically informed approaches to programming.

Organizational capacities

It will be critical to develop systems which enable more synergistic communication between the thematic cluster, other clusters and programming at regional and country office levels, including sharing of research, other knowledge products and providing technical advice. This

will be important to avoid both duplication of efforts and the ‘silo-isation’ of thematic areas that are likely to be interconnected in important ways.

Knowledge management remains underdeveloped and should be prioritized as a necessary tool to support policy and programming. It would seem that this is a corporate challenge beyond the thematic clusters.

Given the political nature of the normative support function of UN Women regarding the implementation of global norms on enhancing participation and leadership roles of women in women, peace and security, it will be important to build up political skills of UN Women staff at all levels of engagement.

It should be a priority to recruit personnel who can operate politically and flexibly to adapt to the volatility of conflict situations at all levels of the entity. Efforts should also be made to build up the thematic expertise in the women, peace and security themes and sub-themes at all levels, not only at headquarter level (currently strong on political skills and thematic expertise).

It will be important to integrate monitoring more effectively into programming so that it informs programmes as they evolve – and not as an afterthought when evaluation becomes a priority. A more robust approach to M&E than currently exists is required. Although it may be a corporate issue, M&E in conflict and post-conflict settings poses particular challenges for charting results and progress.

The unintended consequences of programming in conflict and post-conflict settings can be especially harmful to beneficiary groups. The ‘do no harm’ principle and better risk analysis should feature more meaningfully in UN Women’s peace and security and humanitarian response work.

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Interviews

Organization	Function / Title
UN Women Asia-Pacific region in headquarter	Chief
UN Women Intergovernmental Support Division	Director
UN Women Coordination Division	Director
UN Women Coordination Division	Advisor
UN Women Executive Office	Special Assistant
UN Women Programme Division	Humanitarian Advisor
UN Women Africa region in headquarter	Chief
UN Women Five Peace and Security Cluster staff members	Staff Members
UN Women Malawi office	Country Representative
UN Women Programme Division	Deputy Director of Programme Division
UN Women Liberia Country Office	Country Representative
UN Women Policy and Programme Bureau	Deputy Executive Director – Policy and Programme Bureau
United Nations Department of Political Affairs /Europe	Director of Europe Division
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	Executive Secretary
United Nations Children’s Fund Peacebuilding and Recovery	Chief
United Nations Population Fund GBV	GBV Advisor
United Nations Development Programme/Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP/BCPR)	Director: Governance & Rule of Law Teams
UNDP/BCPR	Deputy Director
Peacebuilding Support Office Policy Planning and Application	Chief
Non-governmental organization NGO Working Group	Coordinator
Member State European Union Mission to the United Nations	Advisor
Member State Colombia Mission to the	Minister of Legal Affairs

United Nations	
Member State Guatemala Mission to the United Nations	Advisor
Member State United States Mission to the United Nations	Advisor
Member State Canada Mission to the United Nations	Advisor
Member State Finland Mission to the United Nations	Gender lead
The International Dialogue Secretariat International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building	Coordinator

Annex 1: Summaries of selected knowledge outputs

Valji's (2010) document on transitional justice provided substantive and practical guidance on gender-sensitive approaches to ensure that transitional justice mechanisms and processes take account of women's experience of conflict-related violence. It was based on a qualitative review of experiences of transitional justice to date, identifying lessons learned.

The guidance note by Goetz (2010) on different aspects of how to increase women's voice in peacebuilding made the distinction between process and substance issues, where the former was about identifying how things should be done to increase the scope for women's voice, and the latter about the substantive issues of norm-changing (for instance, agreeing that SGBV should be seen as a prohibited act for which the perpetrators are accountable). An additional insight was the need to be constructive and concrete in relation to context-specific circumstances on how to enhance the prospects for women's voice and participation. For instance, the note suggested going beyond general propositions, such as 'women's views should not be ignored in preparations for a donor conference', and stressing that there should be concrete solutions regarding what steps are possible and desirable, such as setting up a consultative body of women from CSOs who can advise or participate in such processes and talks.

Goetz and Treiber (2006) developed policy guidance on how to better integrate conflict analysis to monitor the evolution of conflict situations and the associated risks for women. It proposed (drawing on the experience of pilot programmes in the Solomon Islands and Colombia) supporting conflict-monitoring capacities of women's grassroots organizations. The proposition that information about context-specific conditions was central to identifying and acting on risks associated with conflict for women in how support is provided was especially valuable.

Moser (2009) drew attention to the need to support women at the local and community level to work more strategically, working through the strategic use of stereotyped gender roles to empower women's scope for agency at the community level. Through this approach there is a more realistic and contextually grounded scope to shift attitudes on gender roles, make spaces safer including for the exchange of ideas and experiences among women and to facilitate conversations with the men in the community. Such an approach can also better inform strategies to diminish the risk of a backlash in response to change because different actors whose support is necessary are engaged.

Castillo-Diaz and Tordjiman (2010) reviewed the experience of women's presence in peacebuilding efforts and noted some of the most effective forms of ensuring that gender-responsive approaches had a lasting impact. Notably, ensuring that technical support on gender perspectives at key moments of peace agreements, norm and agenda-setting was especially effective in embedding rules into forward-looking processes. Again the review emphasized the importance of context specificity in determining what concrete opportunities and strategic choices were possible and how this could best be supported. Evidence strongly indicated that peace agreements which included a gender perspective were those where women were active and had voice, or effective mobilization in the lead-up to the process itself. Thus women's participation in peacebuilding is strategically important in achieving progress. Finally, the review provided practical ways in which women and women's groups can be supported to maximise impact.

Zahkharova's (2012) study on the implementation of NAPs delved into the political complexities of developing these in ways which were suited to specific contexts. It provided substantive and practical guidance to Member States regarding the development and

implementation of NAPs and policy strategies on women, peace and security. The guidelines also targeted civil society and regional and international stakeholders in raising awareness and implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

Annex 2: Relevant inter-agency fora

Inter-Agency Fora (Committees, Groups, Networks, Mechanisms, etc.) at headquarter level related to peace and security in which UN Women was involved:

Group
○ High-Level Steering Committee on Women, Peace and Security
○ Executive Committee on Peace and Security
i. Sub-Working Group on Mediation
ii. Sub-Working Group on Democracy
○ Civilian Capacity Review
a. Sub-Working Group on Gender
○ Senior Peacebuilding Group
○ Coordination Action and Small Arms Mechanism
○ Framework Team Meeting (Early Warning)
○ GenCap Steering Committee
○ Gender Indicators (convened by the United Nations Statistics Division)
○ IASC Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility.
i. Sub-Working Group on Gender
○ Inter-Agency Task Force on Demobilization, Disarmament and Rehabilitation
i. Sub-Working Group on Gender and HIV
○ Inter-Agency Task Force on Security Sector Reform
i. Sub-Working Group on Gender
○ Four Inter-Agency Task Forces on Guinea, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Security Sector Reform and Tunisia (and region)
○ Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism on Electoral Assistance
○ Integrated Mission Planning Process Working Group
○ Nine Integrated Mission Task Forces: United Nations Stabilization Missions in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI), United Nations Missions in the Sudan (UNMISS), Afghanistan (UNAMA), Kosovo (UNMIK), Liberia (UNMIL), Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and Darfur (UNAMID)
○ Six Interim Task Forces: Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Sierra Leone, Somalia
○ Pre-assessment pre-planning Working Group Libya
i. Sub-Working Group on Social Services
ii. Sub-Working Group on Political Process
iii. Sub-Working Group on Security Apparatus
iv. Sub-Working Group on Rule of Law
○ Post-Conflict Needs Assessment Advisory Group
○ Post Disaster Needs Assessment Focal Group
○ Peacebuilding Contact Group
○ Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group
○ Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict
○ United Nations Action on Sexual Violence in Conflict
○ United Nations Working Group on Public Administration in Post-conflict Environments
○ Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action



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ISSN: 2052-7209

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