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III. SESSION – A COHERENT APPROACH TOWARDS THE ACTIVITIES IN
RELATION TO EARLY WARNING, CONFLICT PREVENTION/RESOLUTION,
CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND POST-CONFLICT REHABILITATION

**TOPIC: SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN THE CONTEXT OF UN SCR 1325 ON WOMEN
PEACE AND SECURITY**

The OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability adopted in 2003 reflects the profound changes in the types of security threats confronting us in the 21st century. It provides in many ways an apt framework for addressing those challenges I will deal with here today, namely the integration of a gender perspective into the contemporary security dialogue especially in regard to post-conflict situations. Any comprehensive approach to security which takes the changing character of armed conflict and its consequences in the form of pervasive sources of instability into account, will gain from closer attention to the implications and consequences of the security threats for all parts of the population, young and old, men and women, boys and girls. Before I address these let me point to the relevance of the major global instrument for addressing the issues arising from the topic of women and security, namely UN Security Council Resolution 1325. It was adopted in October 2000 and is one the points of reference for the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. Intensified cooperation with other organizations who have the implementation of this Resolution on their agenda such as the UN, EU, NATO, and the Council of Europe would go a long way in implementing both the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and of SCR 1325. Several participating states, among these Norway, Denmark, Sweden and the UK have adopted their own implementation plans, fully recognizing the importance of the involvement of women in all forms of peace- and democracy building activities. Many relevant gender security issues were already raised at last year's seminar on "Women in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management" sponsored by the Swedish government, with the Swedish foreign

minister giving the opening statement. That seminar was organized as a side event. Today's intervention is I have been told a first, in that gender security issues are addressed at the Annual Review Conference itself.

UN Resolution 1325 has as its focus in part a cluster of issues where the OSCE excels, namely security sector reform in all its aspects. By giving priority to security sector reform and assisting countries in strengthening and reforming their judicial system, their police and military forces, and their penal system one would address key elements of the new transnational threats to security identified in the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security. By strengthening the rule of law, the judicial system, and democratic institutions one would combat organized crime, trafficking in SALW and in persons, and terrorism. Integrating a gender perspective into the OSCE Security Strategy would significantly improve its utility and effectiveness. Strengthening cooperation with other international organizations would give more clout to these endeavors.

Why are these general reforms of the security so relevant and crucial from a gender perspective? The reasons should be obvious: large parts of Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia suffer from severe security deficits which have adverse effects on the lives of people, communities and whole nations. Security deficits persist also in post conflict situations. All too frequently the security situation of women is not improved in post conflict situations. Lawlessness is pervasive and threatens the lives and wellbeing of all, but especially women and children. Even the security forces themselves are in many instances not considered public service institutions but rather a major source of insecurity, and are thus an obstacle to democratic development and the rule of law. In many instances the security forces themselves have very unclear perceptions of their roles and there is little or no trust in them. And it is a fact that women have more reason to fear any man they might meet when unaccompanied, uniformed or not, in situations of armed conflict or post-conflict, than men have. As one prominent woman from Bosnia Herzegovina pointed out: "I've learned that there is really little difference between violence in war and violence in peace – for women it is just the same....we need to continue our own battle."

In times of war it is men who die. They are the primary target and they make up most of the fighting force. Young men died at Srebrenica and Kosovo. But we must also remember that sexualized violence and attacks on the civilian population, once an unfortunate side effect, has become a major feature of modern armed conflicts. Quite often civilian populations rather than armies become a major target of attack. This is one of the major changes in the nature of conflict in the 21st century.

It is still the case that direct battle deaths are usually male, indirect deaths and severe casualties are as often female. Civil wars kill and maim people long after the shooting stops. (1) Not only has sexual violence become a strategic instrument of war as the Balkan wars have shown. Also the proliferation of SALW and the discovery by organized crime of the high profits to be gained in trafficking in women are severe threats. The consequences of sexualized violence and other forms of severe deprivation can be traced if one compares the life expectancy of women and men in war and post conflict situations.(2) In practically all societies of the world women live longer than men in peace time. New research shows that this gap between the life expectancy of men and women is strongly reduced in conflict and post conflict situations. The reason is that women die earlier and more frequently. Women commit suicide at an alarming rate, although they are often not registered as suicides, usually as a result of gang rapes. Women die from the consequences of lack of medical care and poverty, women are even more exposed than men are to human rights violations where the rule of law is weak, even more exposed to poverty where unemployment is the rule, and even more powerless than men where democracy is not entrenched. Women's death rate often does not decrease in post conflict times but remains stable or even increases. For women the lawlessness of many post-conflict situations with its widespread violence is as dangerous and devastating as a situation of armed conflict outright. Violence and the use of force are in many situations where they occur equally threatening in their consequences when it comes to women. Threat and fear of abuse will keep women from leaving their homes, working or participating in societal life. It is quite well known that the reluctance to send

children to school is usually an early warning indicator of widespread problems and lack of security.

The abundance of small arms and light weapons is another threat to women, both during armed conflict but also in post conflict situations. They represent a major source of instability, their use being widespread both in destabilizing communities and homes. Efforts to collect these arms in local communities, to organize violence reduction initiatives and arms recovery strategies would gain by involving women's organizations in this work. They have the information and the motivation to limit the number of small arms. Sexual and domestic violence at gunpoint represent an alarming reality throughout the OSCE area. At the same time targeted assistance should be directed at boys and young men who are both the principal users and owners of small arms and the largest group of direct victims. Their demand for guns is a critical factor behind the diffusion of violence within and between communities. (3)

Women in the Kosovo for example knew long before the fighting started that large numbers of small arms and light weapons were being accumulated and used in training. But no one listened to their concerns. Conflict prevention efforts could gain a great deal by involving women and their organizations if nothing else but as sources of information. Gender-based early warning indicators are numerous, such as sex-specific refugee migration, increase in female-headed households, upsurge in acquisition, concealment and training in weapons by men, women and children, and eyewitness accounts by women about the use of small and light weapons.(4)

Trafficking in persons, the overwhelming majority of whom are women and girls, has become a major source of income for those involved in organized crime. It is apart from the narcotics trade the major source for financing terrorism. The OSCE and NATO can be commended on their work in this area. Employment opportunities for women are the major antidote, but good police work and especially gender sensitizing border police as well as recruiting(and retaining) more women police can go a long way in limiting the numbers being trafficked.

These then are some of the reasons for my emphasis on security sector reform as a central task for the OSCEs work with women. The first and obvious reason has to do with the comparative advantage the OSCE has in this area. The overriding problem for many women in crisis and conflict situations is their own physical security and that of their children. Only when the basic need for personal security is met can one begin to consider the need for women's participation in those decision making processes which affect their lives -- in other words a focus on their democratic rights. Security sector reform provides a foundation for economic development. Personal safety and security and a firmly established rule of law are absolute preconditions for women's participation in the labor market and in public life, both of which are essential if they are to become equal partners in the social and economic life of societies. SSR increases stability and trust in the rule of law, which are absolute preconditions for peace- and democracy building.(5)

Women's trust will depend on the system's ability to remove threats to their personal security. Once that is improved they themselves can become security providers for their community in a variety of ways.

Security Council Resolution 1325 has three major focal points: Protection and Human Rights, women's participation in peace operations, and the participation of women in conflict prevention, mediation and peace building. My comments up to now have concentrated on protection issues. Let me also say something on the relevance of women's participation in all types of peace operations, be they military, police or civilian. Also this aspect is of great relevance for the effectiveness of security sector reform. In the experience of those who have deployed women in peacekeeping forces, in police forces and among civilian personnel in peace operations the presence of women has been shown to enhance access to services for civilian women, lower the incidents of sexual misconduct on the part of male personnel, and encourage the confidence and trust of civilian populations in general. Sexual misconduct and involvement in prostitution on the part of international and national security forces is often the beginning of subsequent trafficking activities, because criminals begin to see the potentially great economic gain from this activity. The integration of women in both international and national security

forces has thus wide ranging positive implications. In other words, interestingly the presence and participation of women in the security sector has proven to be crucial in bringing about successful operations and in preventing criminal behavior. It is for that reason the Norwegian government has put such great emphasis on recruiting women to the Norwegian Crisis Response Pool, recruitment of police, and the recruitment of women to the armed forces. All this is a result of our recognition that service abroad will involve greater and greater need of personnel who can communicate with both women and men. The Swedish emphasis on the need for more civilian personnel in peace operations also has the recognition of the consequences of female personnel in the field as one of the motivating factors.

However, the mere presence of women is not enough. First of all it will be some time before we have enough women candidates to make up a critical mass (by which one usually means about 30%). The recruitment and retention of female personnel in the security sector will for a period need affirmative action and anti-discrimination policies, respect women's need for health policies different from those of men, and stop sexual harassment which still is a feature of all armies and police forces. We need in other words gender equality policies and programs inside our own security forces. As important as the presence and integration of women professionals is the training of men in what has been come to be called "gender sensitivity" is at least as important. What do we mean by that? We know from experience that "gender blindness" is pervasive among those working in the security sector. Gender sensitivity is first of all an awareness of the basic human rights of women, of criminalizing those who commit transgressions, of putting an end to impunity for those who commit these transgressions. It is also learning that women and men have in many situations different needs but also different perceptions. It is a sad fact of life that many men have a tendency to belittle sexual transgressions and harassment of women by other men, not realizing how these actions are experienced by women. Security forces need to be trained in respecting the equal worth of women as human beings, and inter alia preventing and responding to violence against women. Only then can one begin to build up the trust in the system that is so often sorely lacking in post conflict societies.

Recognition of the importance of trust in the system for political development and the absolute requirement of respect for the rule of law are basic to the concepts of Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect. They have gained credence over the past few years largely because the interdependence of respect for human rights, the rule of law including the judicial system and democratic development has been accepted by the international community. And respect for all members of the society, both women and men is one of the cornerstones of this interdependence. Gender and equality policies and plans are often the subject of derision and ridicule believed to be of interest only to the few. There are in many parts of the world still few persons in authority who understand how much could be gained by recognizing the importance of giving the other half of the population the respect and recognition they deserve. The rewards on the other hand of doing so would be significant.

Women could become security providers in their communities if their basic security needs were met. They could become partners in conflict prevention and peace building if one took their organizations into account, and listened to their efforts of problem solving. By giving women a stake in their societies and a voice inside organizations and institutions one would not only give them more control over their own lives, one would also strengthen state institutions, including the justice and security sectors. The OSCE has already extended its Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality to follow up Resolution 1325. It remains now to integrate the security perspectives of SCR 1325 which after all is entitled “Women, peace and security” more explicitly into the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century. The OSCE Strategy is after all the basic policy document outlining the organization’s response to global threats and challenges. And as I have tried to show here this response would gain in strength and effectiveness if it gender sensitized its indicators and instruments. The comprehensive concept of security presented in the Strategy would gain in practical relevance if one gave increased attention to gender issues. Gender issues have until now been mainly treated as a Human Dimension Issue. I hope that the organization and participating states will include it in the Political –Military Dimension

as well. The OSCE's security sector reform efforts are an excellent point of entry in this respect, and would give added value in the organization's cooperation with the UN, NATO, and the Council of Europe.

NOTES.

(1).Hazem Adam Ghobarah, Paul Huth, Bruce Russett, "Civil Wars Kill and Maim People—long after the shooting stops." *American Political Science Review*, vol.97, nr.2. May 2003

(2) Thomas Plümper and Eric Neumayer, "The Unequal Burden of War: The Effect of Armed Conflict on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy." University of Essex and London School of Economics, September 2005.

(3) Anne Thurin, NISAT, PRIO, Oslo, 2006. Personal communication.

(4) Felicity Hill," Women's contribution to conflict prevention, early warning and disarmament," *Disarmament Forum*, UNIDIR, Issue 4, 2003.

(5) Annika Hansen, "Security Sector Reform – State of the Art and Impediments," Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, 2005.