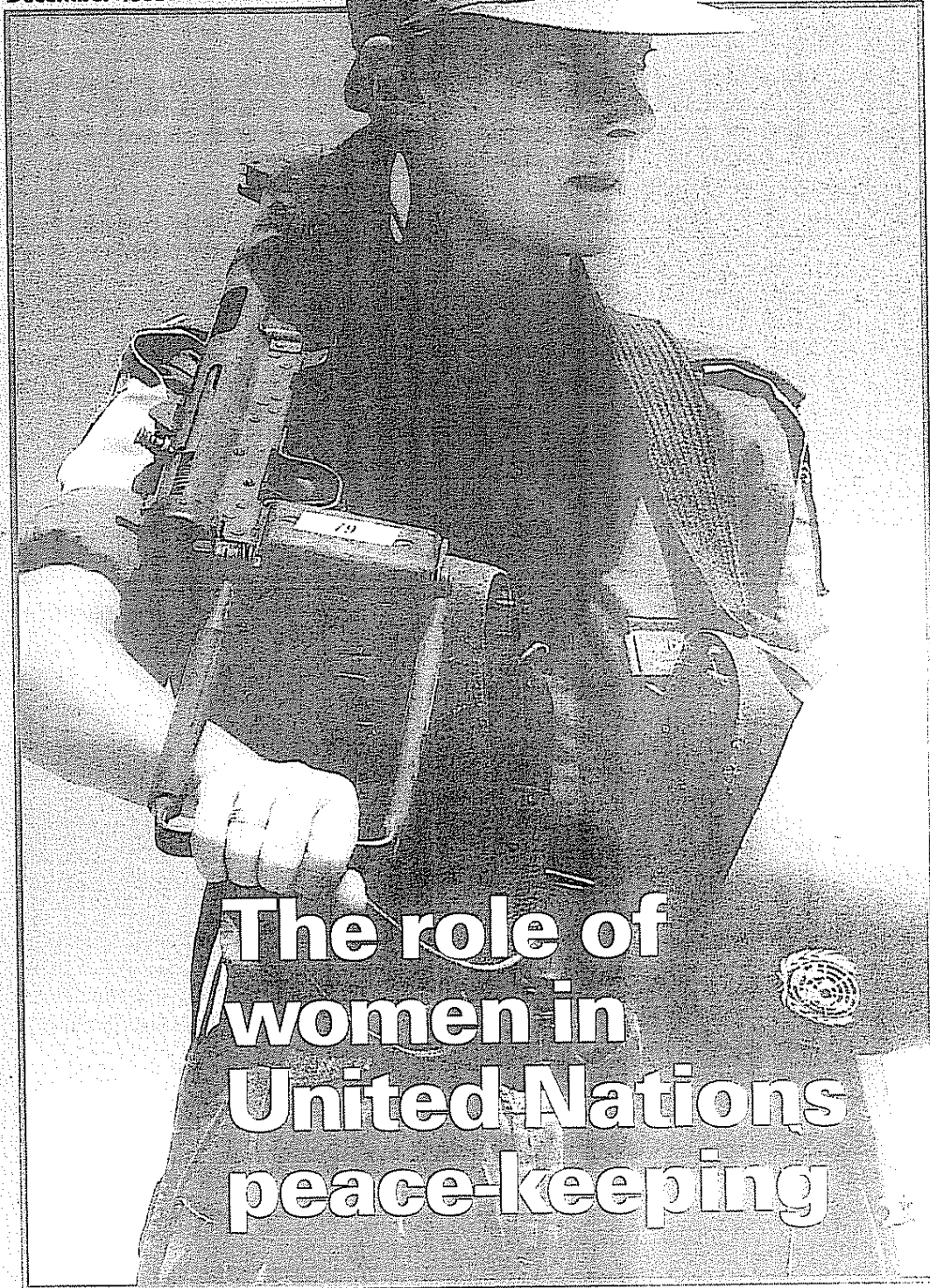


women 2000



PUBLISHED TO PROMOTE THE GOALS OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

December 1995



The role of women in United Nations peace-keeping

Photo: John Esarc

UNITED NATIONS

Division for the Advancement of Women
Department for Policy Coordination
and Sustainable Development

The Role of Women in United Nations Peace-keeping

INTRODUCTION

Since its founding in 1945, a central purpose of the United Nations has been the maintenance of global peace and security. The United Nations role and function in peace-keeping missions has expanded greatly since the "Blue Helmets" were first dispatched in 1957. Following the cold war, United Nations operations to maintain international peace and security, as defined by the Secretary-General in the 1992 *Agenda for Peace*, have expanded and become increasingly complex. Moreover, UN peace-keeping operations have come to account for the largest share of the Organization's expenditures.

UN peace-keeping missions today include more non-military/civilian components for preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. These civilian components have meant a broadening in the range of personnel and skills deployed beyond the traditional military.

The expanding participation of women in UN peace-keeping is the subject of this issue of *women 2000*. Two questions are addressed: the question of gender balance in UN peace-keeping, and the question of a women's perspective on peace-keeping and the influence which women may have on peace-keeping as a result of this perspective. In relation to the issue of gender balance, two hypotheses are explored. One is that special measures (e.g., affirmative action) are needed to produce greater gender balance in peace-keeping. The second is that gender balance in peace-keeping operations contributes to more effective peace-keeping.

This article first examines why women have remained largely excluded from military and police roles in UN peace-keeping operations and then analyses apparent reasons for their limited participation in the civilian components of peace-keeping missions. It also analyses why, in the non-military areas of UN peace-keeping, women have increasingly made a contribution, but largely as members of the rank and file, not in decision-making positions. The article documents the trends in women's participation in peace-keeping, which show a slight increase in recent years, and explores possible explanations for these trends.

UN peace-keeping – where are the women "blue helmets"?

Since its founding 50 years ago, the United Nations has undertaken a total of 36 peace-keeping operations, 20 of which have taken place since 1988. In total, peace-keeping missions have involved more than 720,000 personnel from 77 Member States, including UN staff, at a cost of more than US\$12.4 billion. In 1995, some 69,356 military and civilian police personnel are serving in the 17 active military peace-keeping operations.¹ Article 8 of the Charter of the United Nations calls for equal participation of men and women in the work of the Organization. Yet, almost no women have served in the military contingents of UN peace-keeping operations, and until recently these operations were almost entirely military in nature.

Statistics gathered from a number of Member States which contributed troops to military peace-keeping missions indicate that only 5 of the 6,250

troops who served between 1957 and 1979 were women. During the period 1957-1989, out of a total of approximately 20,000 military personnel, there were only 20 women.² These served mainly as nurses in medical units. Between 1989 and 1992, the total number of women rose to 255, still representing little more than 1 per cent of military personnel (see *table 1, page 2*). Despite the increased presence of women in national militaries and, more specifically, as officers in combat units in at least four countries, women in UN peace-keeping still comprised only 1.7 per cent of military contingents in the 17 peace-keeping missions active in 1993 (see *table 2, page 3*).

Changes in women's participation in national militaries and UN peace-keeping

"One of the most striking characteristics of militaries themselves is that they are almost exclusively male."³ This is a question of both numbers and culture. The small number of women in UN military peace-keeping operations is partly explained by national policies which discourage the participation of women in the military and, more specifically, in combat roles. Many countries continue to prohibit women from military service, and only a few allow women to serve in combat roles. In only 5 out of 25 reporting countries do women comprise more than 10 per cent of military personnel.⁴ Only a few countries have permitted women to serve in the military for a sustained period, while some have opened up to women only recently (see *table 3, page 4*).

The United Nations has no detailed policy on women in peace-keeping. Notably, the United Nations did not specifically request women peace-keepers until 1994. However, in UN document A/50/691, paragraph 59, the Secretary-General has recommended to the General Assembly, *inter alia*, a target of 50 per cent women in UN field missions. A number of UN

officials have indicated to Member States that the Organization would welcome more women soldiers, but the UN has little control over the selection and allocation of peace-keeping troops. Member States control their own national militaries and determine policies regarding who receives combat training and which units are assigned to peace-keeping duty. Once political approval has been obtained within Member States, decisions regarding which units are selected for peace-keeping duty are the prerogative of the highest-ranking military authority in the country, generally the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. Consequently, in spite of recent UN requests for women peace-keepers, contributing Member States still may

Venezuela and Zambia. Other countries have specific restrictions in combat zones.⁵ In regard to peace-keeping missions, a noticeable change finally came in the early 1990s in the Western Sahara operation (MINURSO), where women comprised 10.2 per cent of military personnel as of 1993 (see table 2, page 3). One possible explanation for the relatively high percentage of women is that a number of the troop-contributing Member States, including France, the United States and Australia, are nations with relatively higher proportions of women among their peace-keeping staffs. Another is the presence of a large medical unit in Western Sahara composed of mainly female nurses and doctors. In fact, a majority of women who serve in mili-

majority (90 per cent) serve in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia. Currently, 44 (3.3 per cent) out of the approximately 1,300 Swedish nationals serving in UNPROFOR are women. Twenty-one women serve as nurses and support staff in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Macedonia, one Swedish woman serves in the military police, and five females are administrators. In Croatia, there is one woman professional military officer and a female reserve officer and 15 female administrators who serve in the peace-keeping forces. One Swedish female police officer served in Mozambique with ONUMOZ.⁷

In Sweden, women who have undergone basic military training may apply and are recruited on the same basis as men. Moreover, Swedish women without military training also have the opportunity to serve in UN peace-keeping forces overseas. They serve mainly in nursing, liaison, office and administration, mail and canteen functions. The 1994 Swedish national report submitted to the United Nations for the second review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies states that additional efforts should be made to raise the awareness of UN peace-keeping personnel regarding the vulnerable situation of women civilians in armed conflicts and suggests that an increase in the participation of women in UN peace-keeping operations would contribute to a better understanding of this problem.

Similarly, there has been a slight increase in women's participation in military peace-keeping missions at the initiative of other troop-contributing Member States. Of the more than 3,600 United States military personnel assigned to six UN peace-keeping missions, women have served in a variety of positions, including medical and administrative jobs, logistics and supply, military police and other occupations that are not traditional or combat-related.⁸

Table 1. Member State-contributed male and female personnel in UN peace-keeping missions by office/enlisted/other for selected years,^a 1957-1992

M=Male F=Female	TOTAL		OFFICERS ^b		ENLISTED ^c		OTHER ^d	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1957-1979 ^e	6 205	5	509	0	5 673	5	23	0
% women		0.1		0.0		0.1		0.0
1989-1992 ^f	17 463	255	2 051	39	14 945	186	467	30
% women		1.4		1.9		1.2		6
Total 1957-1992 ^g	23 668	260		39	20 618	191	490	30
% women		1.1		1.5		0.9		5.8

Notes:

^a Available data for personnel contributions to missions of select countries (i.e. Austria, Brazil, Canada, Fiji, Finland, France and the United Kingdom).

^b Military officers include all ranks from Lieutenant to Colonel.

^c Enlisted personnel include all ranks from Private to Master Sergeant.

^d Other includes all non-military personnel contributed by Member States, including civilian police, electoral monitors and other specialist functions.

^e Selected years 1957, 1961, 1965, 1967, 1974 and 1979.

^f Selected years 1989, 1991 and 1992.

^g Total for selected years listed in notes 5 and 6.

Source: Report of the statistical compilation of women in peace-keeping prepared by the United Nations Statistical Division for the second issue of *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*, Statistical Division/DESIPA, STAT 321(a), United Nations, 29 March 1994.

restrict or prohibit women's participation in UN peace-keeping.

Nevertheless, the situation is slowly beginning to change. Since 1970, the percentage of women in national militaries has been increasing slowly but steadily. Several countries now allow women to serve in combat roles, including Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United States,

tary peace-keeping missions still do so in non-combat roles.

A number of countries have actively recruited females into national peace-keeping forces. In 1979, Sweden first included women on an experimental basis. At that time, more than 4,000 women applied, and 42 were finally admitted.⁶ Among the 1,400 Swedes who currently serve in UN peace-keeping forces, the vast

Table 2. Current Member State-contributed personnel to UN peace-keeping missions, by mission, 1993

Mission	ALL PERSONNEL		MILITARY ^a		CIVILIAN POLICE	
	Total	% Women	Total	% Women	Total	% Women
UNOSOM II (Somalia)	29 703	2.1	29 703	2.1	0	0.0
UNTAC ^b (Cambodia)	19 232	n/a	15 684	n/a	3 548	0.2
UNPROFOR (Yugoslavia)	24 853	1.6	24 200	1.6	653	2.1
ONUMOZ (Mozambique)	6 501	0.1	6 501	0.1	0	0.0
UNIFIL (Lebanon)	5 247	2.3	5 247	2.3	0	0.0
UNFICYP (Cyprus)	1 237	1.1	1 201	0.7	36	16.7
UNDOF (Golan Heights)	1 103	4.0	1 103	4.0	0	0.0
ONUSAL ^c (El Salvador)	706	0.3	161	0.6	545	0.2
UNIKOM ^d (Kuwait/Iraq)	369	1.9	369	1.9	0	0.0
MINURSO ^e (Western Sahara)	350	9.4	324	10.2	26	0.0
UNAVEM II (Angola)	316	1.0	256	0.0	60	5.0
UNAMIR (Rwanda)	512	0.0	510	0.0	2	0.0
UNTSO (Jerusalem)	220	0.0	220	0.0	0	0.0
UNOMIL (Liberia)	246	0.0	246	0.0	0	0.0
MICIVIH (Haiti)	113	2.7	62	0.0	51	5.9
UNMOGIP (India/Pakistan)	38	0.0	38	0.0	0	0.0
UNOMIG (Georgia)	12	0.0	12	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	90 758	1.7 ^e	85 837	1.7 ^e	4 921	0.7

Notes:

- ^a Including all military personnel (e.g. officers, enlisted, military observers); excluding civilian police.
^b Figures reflect staffing levels at second quarter 1993.
^c Figures for ONUSAL reflect deployment of personnel during the entire period of 1993.
^d Military figures based on field communiqué and lengths of rotations among Member State contributors.
^e Excluding UNTAC.

Source: Report of the statistical compilation of women in peace-keeping prepared by the United Nations Statistical Division for the second issue of *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*, Statistical Division/DESIPA STAT 321(a), United Nations, 29 March 1994.

According to its national report submitted for the second review and appraisal in 1994, Ghana sent an infantry company composed of male and female rifle soldiers to serve in the refugee camps with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR). In recent years (1991-1993), Australia deployed its first female soldiers for UN peace-keeping

duty with the United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) in Cambodia.⁹ Women accounted for approximately 3.2 per cent of Australia's National Defence Forces involved in UN peace-keeping operations in 1993.¹⁰ Women in the British Armed Forces are currently serving in support roles in the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFI-

CYP) and in UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia.¹¹ Also, women volunteers have served in a military contingent on loan from Finland to the United Nations. Currently, women from the Danish Home Guard and the Armed Services are assigned to UN peace-keeping forces and operations in the Balkans.¹² Finally, the first French female military officer has been serving with UNPROFOR in Sarajevo as a media spokesperson for the United Nations.¹³

Another factor which may contribute to women's participation in peace-keeping is the presence of women in top-level decision-making positions in the military. Examples are the former Minister of Defence in Finland, Ms. Marta Elisabeth Rehn, and the former Deputy Minister of Defence in Poland, Ms. Danuta Waniek. Similarly, women occupy civilian leadership positions in the United States Department of Defense. For example, Ms. Sarah Sewall is the first person to occupy the recently created position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peace-keeping and Peace Enforcement Policy.¹⁴

Civilian police forces — a role for women

One area in which improvement in the low percentage of women's representation might be achieved is in the civilian police components of UN peace-keeping operations, as there are more women officers in civilian police forces than there are women in the military. However, the average participation rate of women in UN civilian police forces is 0.7 per cent (see table 2, page 3). One reason for this very low percentage is that many UN police officers are on loan from military police units, an occupational category where women are largely underrepresented. Should Member States shift to contributing civilian police, given the growing presence of women in the national civilian police forces in many

countries, this could result in greater female participation in UN peace-keeping operations.

Statistical data on police personnel in national settings from 1986 indicate that on average women constituted 11 per cent of the civilian police forces in 33 nations, both developed and developing (see table 4, page 5)¹⁵ Although the highest percentages of female police officers were found in Finland (22.1 per cent), the United States of America (21.1 per cent) and Portugal (21.1 per cent), a number of developing countries also demonstrated significant percentages. By using civilian police officers, the current level of women's participation in UN peace-keeping missions could be increased, as has been the case in Cyprus, where women comprised 16.7 per cent of the civilian police forces in the UNFICYP mission in 1993 (see table 2, page 3). A woman also has served as police commissioner in Kismayo, Somalia.¹⁶

Multi-purpose peace-keeping mandates and the expanding role of women

As a result of the significant increase in the civilian components within peace-keeping missions, new roles and expanded opportunities for women's participation have evolved. Women have served as legal and political advisers, civilian police officers, election and human rights monitors, and information specialists and administrators. They have been involved in promoting national reconciliation and democracy, refugee repatriation, and humanitarian assistance. Women have also served as team leaders in human rights and election-monitoring missions and, in a very few isolated cases, have been in decision-making roles, supervising international and local personnel.

Between 1957 and 1991, women constituted from 5 to 23 per cent of the international civilian staff serving in UN peace-keeping operations for

which data are available (see table 5, page 7)¹⁷ In 1993, 11 of the 19 UN peace-keeping missions had significant civilian components, and one third of the international UN civilian staff were women. The 12 missions with the highest percentages of women were all

Military Adviser's Office, including the Office of Planning and Support, only 3 out of the 60 Professionals (5 per cent) are women. Of the 47 military officers on loan to the Field Administration and Logistics Division (FALD) in the Department of Peace-keeping

Table 3. Women in regular armed forces

Country	Total active armed forces	Number of Women	Proportion of total
Australia	61 600	7 600	12%
Belgium	63 000	3 000	5%
Brunei	4 000	250	6%
Canada	78 100	8 700	11%
China	2 930 000	136 000	5%
Cyprus	10 000	445	4%
Denmark	27 000	1 000	4%
France	409 600	16 400	4%
Germany	367 300	280	0.08%
Greece	159 300	5 900	4%
India	1 265 000	200	0.02%
Ireland	13 000	100	0.8%
Japan	237 700	8 000	3%
Netherlands	70 900	2 600	4%
New Zealand	10 000	1 150	12%
South Africa	78 000	4 200	5%
Spain	206 500	200	0.1%
United Kingdom	254 300	17 650	7%
United States	1 650 500	198 800	12%

Source: *The Military Balance 1994/1995* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1994)

established since 1990. In contrast, 5 of the 7 with the lowest percentages were established more than 15 years ago, in part because of the small number of civilians participating in these missions.

The introduction of women military officers in the UN Secretariat

For reasons similar to those discussed in the section above on "Changes in women's participation in national militaries and UN peace-keeping", from 1957 to 1993 no female military officers were assigned to peace-keeping offices at UN Headquarters. In the

Operations (DPKO), only 2 (4.2 per cent) are women.¹⁸ In general, women occupy the lower-level positions in the peace-keeping arena. Professional women and female military officers are largely absent from senior management levels in peace-keeping.

This trend has begun to be reversed with the recent appointment of a few women military officers to Professional posts in the UN Secretariat. In January 1994, the first female military staff member was posted from the Royal Netherlands Army to the Field Administration and Logistics Division (FALD) in DPKO. Three more women

officers were appointed in 1995 to Professional posts¹⁹ In addition, a non-commissioned officer from France is assigned to personnel and administrative duties connected with peace-

the Focal Point for Gender in the United Nations and by concerned women Professionals.

The presence of gender-aware persons may have also contributed to

commission recommended lifting the restriction on female participation in combat roles in all but submarine units in Canada²¹

Women Professionals in peace-keeping missions

The percentage of women Professionals assigned to UN peace-keeping missions has varied significantly depending upon the type of mission. The election/human rights mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) has had the highest proportion of women (48.7 per cent). Many of the external mission applicants were women, in particular lawyers concerned with human rights, who were well informed about indigenous issues and could relate well to local human rights workers, the majority of whom were women.

Similarly, the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH), which has monitored human rights, has featured a high percentage of Professional women (39.2 per cent), in comparison to the military observer mission (UNMIH), with only 12.9 per cent women. The multi-purpose UN observer mission in El Salvador, with human rights monitoring, military and police mandates, also has had a significant proportion of women (37 per cent) (see table 6, page 8)²²

Clearly, UN peace-keeping missions with multi-purpose mandates attract and allow for a higher proportion of women than do strictly military and/or police peace-keeping missions.

Throughout the history of UN peace-keeping, there have been only two women in top decision-making positions. In February 1992, Margaret Anstee (United Kingdom) was appointed as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) to coordinate the activities of the United Nations in conjunction with the Angolan Peace Accords. She served as Chief of Mission until civil war erupted following

Table 4. Civilian police personnel for 1986

Country	Number of police personnel			
	Total	Male	Female	% Female
Argentina	31 584	28 867	2 717	8.6
Austria	27 656	27 632	24	0.1
Bahamas	1 572	1 427	145	9.2
Bangladesh	74 508	74 295	213	0.3
Botswana	2 424	2 371	53	2.2
Burundi	126	114	12	9.5
Canada	54 604	52 420	2 184	4.0
Cyprus	3 781	3 713	68	1.8
Denmark	9 416	9 060	356	3.8
Dominica	380	365	15	3.9
Finland	11 589	9 027	2 562	22.1
France	199 757	195 347	4 410	2.2
Honduras	6 100	5 200	900	14.8
Hong Kong	25 762	23 599	2 163	8.4
Italy	76 092	75 420	672	0.9
Jamaica	5 781	5 410	371	6.4
Japan	256 546	239 900	16 600	6.5
Kiribati	228	226	2	0.9
Liberia	2 085	1 759	326	15.6
Malta	1 383	1 318	65	4.7
Nepal	23 620	23 495	125	0.5
New Zealand	5 307	4 472	835	15.7
Norway	5 996	5 603	393	6.6
Philippines	55 900	52 700	3 200	6.0
Portugal	1 736	1 370	366	21.1
Singapore	7 397	6 383	1 014	13.7
Sri Lanka	23 739	22 976	763	3.2
Saint Kitts and Nevis	329	306	23	7.0
Sweden	17 390	15 565	1 825	10.5
Trinidad and Tobago	4 849	4 585	264	5.4
United States	629 745	496 870	132 875	21.1
Uruguay	23 786	21 344	2 442	10.3
Zimbabwe	17 034	16 174	860	5.0
Total	1 608 208	1 429 313	178 843	11.1

Source: Women's Indicators and Statistical Database 1995 (Wistat), version 3. CD-ROM (United Nations publication, Sales No. E 95.XVII.6)

keeping, bringing the total number of women to 5 (4 per cent) out of a total of 122 military personnel in the UN Secretariat.²⁰ These women were recruited after a specific request for more female military officers was made to the Military Adviser's Office by

changing the situation of women in peace-keeping. For example, Major General Maurice Baril (Canada), Military Adviser at the United Nations, served on the Chief of the Defense Staff's Special Commission on Women in Combat in 1986 in Canada. This

elections²³ She was the only woman to serve as Special Representative of the Secretary-General among the 25 appointed since 1948 (4 per cent) The only other woman to serve in a senior position was Angela King (Jamaica), in the all-civilian United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA). Ms King served initially as Chief of Mission for 16 months and later as Deputy Special Representative.

According to UN data, there were no women in top policy- and decision-making levels (D-2 to USG) in any of the UN missions active in June 1995. Nor were there women in senior management positions above the rank of P-5 in either MICIVIH (Haiti) or ONUSAL (El Salvador), and only one woman at the P-5 level in MINUGUA (Guatemala) At the P-5 level, there was one woman in MINURSO (Western Sahara), one in UNFICYP (Cyprus), one in UNMIH (Haiti) and

three in UNOSOM II (Somalia). In terms of the percentages of UN women staff members serving on various mission assignments, there were none of D-2 to USG rank, 14.0 per cent at the P-5/D-1 level, 20.3 per cent at the P-3/P-4 level and 34.5 per cent at the Professional entry level (P-1/P-2) (see table 7, page 9)

Between 1957 and 1970, the percentage of women in General Service posts of UN peace-keeping missions varied from 49 to 86 per cent. Between 1975 and 1991, the percentage decreased, with women comprising only 15 to 30 per cent of the General Service posts in UN peace-keeping operations (see table 5, page 7) Among factors explaining why the administrative support units of UN peace-keeping missions have fewer women, particularly in recent years, is that in the earlier missions the vast majority of General Service staff were

part of the international personnel assigned to the missions. In recent missions, however, many General Service staff have been hired locally

The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), Namibia, 1989-1990

A few case-studies provide insight into the expanded roles and contributions of women in civilian peace and security missions. The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), 1989-1990, provides the most illustrative example of an operation in which women were encouraged to play significant roles. Its multi-purpose mandate included both military and civilian functions, such as the disarmament and repatriation of armed groups, monitoring the repatriation of more than 43,000 refugees, the release of political prisoners, monitoring local police activities, and supervising voter

Impressions of women in peace-keeping missions: making a difference

- When a critical mass of women in UN peace-keeping missions exists, local women in the host country are mobilized through a positive demonstration effect. For example, the success of local women and NGOs in being able to defuse violence in South Africa probably contributed to the conclusion that UN military personnel were not needed in preparing for elections.
- The participation of women in UN peace-keeping missions focuses attention on the need for an up-to-date code of conduct for UN peace-keepers, particularly in the area of human rights and gender issues.
- In performing their tasks, women were perceived to be compassionate, unwilling to opt for force over reconciliation, willing to listen and learn, and contributors to an environment of stability and morality which fostered the peace process.
- The presence of women seems to foster confidence and trust among the local population, a critical element in any peace-keeping mission.
- Women are successful as negotiators, active in proposing constructive solutions, action-oriented and often willing to take innovative approaches to establish a dialogue between polarized groups. They sometimes use unorthodox means such as singing to defuse potentially violent situations.
- Women's participation helps to break down traditional views and stereotypes of women in countries and local communities where they serve and among peace-keepers.
- Contrary to some expectations, many women willingly accept the challenges of working in all types of situations, including in dangerous and isolated areas.
- Civilian women peace-keepers work effectively with both military and police personnel.

Table 5. International UN civilian staff in peace-keeping missions, by selected years, 1957-1991

Year	All categories		P-5 to USG		P-1 to P-4		GS-1 to GS-7		FS-1 to FS-7	
	Total	% Female	Total	% Female	Total	% Female	Total	% Female	Total	% Female
1957	266	11.7	8	0.0	17	11.8	45	64.4	196	0.0
1961	783	22.2	24	0.0	116	11.2	328	49.1	315	0.0
1964	460	12.0	29	3.4	37	5.4	104	50.0	290	0.0
1965	356	11.2	22	0.0	17	17.6	53	69.8	264	0.0
1970	264	5.3	9	0.0	4	0.0	15	86.7	236	0.4
1975	669	8.7	16	0.0	13	0.0	310	18.1	330	0.6
1980	956	12.6	12	0.0	16	0.0	503	19.7	425	4.9
1985	958	13.4	10	0.0	20	15.0	487	15.0	441	11.8
1986	1 166	12.5	9	0.0	17	35.3	698	16.6	442	5.4
1987	1 127	12.2	11	0.0	10	10.0	678	17.0	428	4.9
1988	1 099	12.7	15	0.0	12	25.0	729	16.5	343	5.0
1989	1 590	23.0	59	10.2	258	38.6	902	29.8	471	6.2
1990	1 506	14.2	23	0.0	23	13.0	875	20.3	585	5.6
1991	1 449	14.5	20	0.0	28	25.0	894	19.1	507	6.3

Source: Report of the statistical compilation on women in peace-keeping for the second issue of *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*, Statistical Division/DESIPA, STAT 321(a), United Nations, 29 March 1994

education and elections for a Constituent Assembly responsible for drafting a new Constitution.²⁴ Extensive interviews, training and careful selection of UNTAG staff occurred before the mission began. Selection criteria were based upon staff qualifications, experience and geopolitical balance. Moreover, there was a deliberate policy of recruiting women at all levels.²⁵

The background of the Secretary-General's Special Representative to Namibia was probably an important factor. He came from the Nordic region, where women have "broken through" to play a prominent role in national political decision-making and where women have achieved the most significant gains in the struggle for gender equality. A conscious policy decision by the Special Representative apparently enabled more women to participate, particularly in leadership and decision-making positions, in various aspects of the UNTAG operation. Notably, 60 per cent of the Professional staff who were recruited for UNTAG were women, including many in decision-making positions.²⁶ Although the highest-level positions were occupied by men, five women served at the Director level (D-1/D-2), and women held 3 out of 10 senior field posts as regional directors.²⁷ One regional direc-

tor had 800 peace-keeping troops under her supervision at a border post in northern Namibia. Reflecting on her experience, she noted that the Deputy Representative had also supported the strategic placement of women in positions of decision-making and authority in UNTAG. In her experience in dealing with the South African police, being a woman provided an element of surprise and gave her an advantage.²⁸

The United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA)

Another mission which deserves mention is the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA), which is the only completely civilian UN mission to date. In this mission, women comprised approximately one half of its international personnel, at least during its initial phase. UNOMSA was composed entirely of civilian observers. There was no military presence or perspective in the mission's concept of operations. During its earliest period, the number of observers was limited to 50. The Chief of Mission of UNOMSA, Angela King, appointed women to 50 per cent of the team leader positions as regional coordinators.²⁹ Female regional coordinators were assigned to Natal and the Eastern Rand, two areas which

experienced over 80 per cent of the political and criminal violence during the pre-electoral process. During the first 16 months of UNOMSA, women comprised 53 per cent of the mission staff, especially in peace-building and peacemaking structures. Later, the mission's mandate was expanded beyond human rights monitoring, conflict avoidance and peacemaking to include election monitoring. Immediately prior to the April 1994 elections, when 3,500 election monitors were selected by their national Governments, the participation rate of women declined dramatically, to 21 per cent.³⁰

The United Nations Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC/UNTAC)

A second large multi-purpose peace-keeping operation (UNAMIC/UNTAC), involving 22,000 mission personnel, took place in Cambodia between 1991 and 1993.³¹ Its mandate included human rights, electoral monitoring, military operations, civil administration, civilian police protection, refugee repatriation and rehabilitation components, culminating in national elections. The participation of women in UNTAC in Cambodia was particularly disappointing in the light of their previous involvement in Namibia. Although there was a substantial female repre-

sentation among the civilian international staff, UNTAC was predominantly a male peace-keeping operation in which women held no decision-making positions. All of the Director-level posts, 7 at the D-2 level and 13 regional directors at the P-5/D-1 levels, were held by men.³² Despite requests to national Governments which did

Table 6. Percentage of women in UN peace-keeping missions

Mission	% Female
MICIVIH / Haiti	39.2
ONUMOZ / Mozambique	16.6
ONUSAL / El Salvador	37
OSGAP / Afghanistan	0
MINURSO / Western Sahara	23.3
UNAMIR / Rwanda	15.7
UNARDOL / Lebanon	0
UNAVEM / Angola	3.2
UNDOF / Golan Heights	0
UNCYP / Cyprus	14.2
UNIFIL / Lebanon	20.0
UNIKOM / Kuwait/Iraq	11.1
UNMB / Burundi	0
MINUGUA / Guatemala	48.7
UNGIP / India/Pakistan	0
UNMIH / Haiti	12.9
UNMOT / Tajikistan	0
UNOMIG / Georgia	10.5
UNOMIL / Liberia	0
UNOSOM II / Somalia	15.3
UNPROFOR / Yugoslavia	20.8
UNSCO / Occupied Territories	0
UNTAC / Cambodia	0

Note: Statistics as of 31 May 1995, United Nations

not send women, there was little visible high-level presence of women among international civil servants assigned from UN Headquarters, from the UN specialized agencies and among mission appointees.

A few women served in the Australian, Canadian and Netherlands military contingents of UNTAC. But there were few women in the civilian police, of whom there were approximately 4,000 in the UNTAC operation. One woman serving with the Board of

Inquiry Office commented that the presence of more women in the military and police might have dispelled the impression of some of the local population that the United Nations was "an army of occupation".³³ The UNTAC civilian police monitors represented the only semblance of a functioning police/administrative system, so their presence and role were extremely important.³⁴ A visible presence of female officers would have enabled the Cambodian population, especially women and children, to regard the civilian police as an ally in their daily struggle for survival.

Allegations of sexual abuse and mistreatment of women and children by UN male military and police personnel became an important issue for local communities in UNTAC. The United Nations responded by creating a Community Relations Office within UNTAC. No formal code of conduct for peace-keepers exists, but UN peace-keepers are expected to act as model citizens and in conformity with UN norms, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Standards of Conduct for International Civil Servants. A new Code of Conduct for UN Peace-keepers, which includes guidelines on the human rights of women and children and gender issues, is currently being developed.

Women in peace-keeping - making a difference

According to the hypothesis stated above, that women's perspective is important in management and in peace-keeping missions in making a difference, it is not sufficient that peace-keeping operations have the participation of women at all levels, including at policy- and decision-making levels. It is not simply a question of gender balance and numbers; it is also a question of the differences women can make.

Evidence suggests that the increased presence of women helps to

create good relations with local communities, since the establishment of trust is an essential element in any peace-keeping operation. For example,

Table 7. Professional women as percentage of UN mission staff as of 31 May 1995*

Level	per cent of UN mission staff
D-2 to USG	0
P-5 / D-1	14.0
P-3 / P-4	20.3
P-1 / P-2	34.5
Total	23

Source: Statistics compiled from UN personnel statistics as of 31 May 1995

* Includes UN staff members on fixed-term contracts of limited duration (less than 12 months)

in Rwanda (UNAMIR), an infantry company composed of male and female rifle soldiers from Ghana is working in the refugee camps. That experience and others suggest that women refugees often would rather discuss their problems with women soldiers than with male soldiers. The inclusion of women in military, police and civilian components of UN peace-keeping has acted as a deterrent to the abuse of power, including sexual harassment and rape. It has been argued that problems involving the abuse of power and sexual exploitation might be minimized, if not eliminated, by increasing the number of women in peace-keeping missions, especially in decision-making positions. This could result in a positive change in attitudes towards women.

Some scholars subscribe to a feminist theoretical perspective on conflict resolution. This school of thought asserts that women are socially conditioned to be more peaceful and peace-loving and less violent than men. They attribute the more pacifist orientation of females to the roles that women play as mothers responsible for giving birth to and nurturing future generations and as conciliators within the family and in their local communities. They argue that women, as a result of their intermediary role within the

household and community, have well-developed negotiating skills which could and should be extended into conflict resolution and negotiations in national and international arenas

It has also been contended that the presence of women contributes to differences in decision-making in terms of content, priorities, management style, organizational culture and group dynamics.³⁵ Women's leadership is likely to bring less militarily inclined peace-keeping. There is a minimum level of representation required to enable any minority to influence the culture of a task-oriented group. It has therefore been argued that where women have joined organizations or decision-making bodies in sufficient numbers, they have created a more collaborative atmosphere, characterized by mutual respect, and sought consensus rather than a winner-take-all (zero sum game) solution. According to this perspective, women tend to focus more on resolving rather than simply discussing problems,³⁶ a characteristic important in dealing with peace and security matters, preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, peace-making and peace-building

Existing evidence on UN peace-keeping operations, although fragmentary, seems to confirm the "critical mass" theory and the hypothesis that women's participation brings new elements, values and perspectives to such operations. Discussions with a number of former participants in recent UN peace-keeping missions suggest that

the participation of women, although they have been few in number, has contributed a new dimension to these missions.

CONCLUSIONS

Gender bias by the United Nations, even if unintended, has apparently been a factor contributing to the low representation of women in UN peace-keeping operations, especially in top-level positions. This may change if a recent proposal is implemented to extend "... the target of 50 per cent women and men in posts subject to geographical distribution by the year 2000, as set by the General Assembly in resolution 49/167, to all other categories of posts; namely to posts with special language requirements as well as **field missions** and mission replacement posts, irrespective of the type or duration of the appointment, or of the series of Staff Rules under which an appointment is made. The percentage should apply both overall and within each category"³⁷

Moreover, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, in its recommendations on women and armed conflict, called for actions to be taken "... to promote equal participation of women and equal opportunities for women to participate in all forums and peace activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level, including in the United Nations Secretariat with due

regard to equitable geographical distribution in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations".³⁸ The Platform for Action further recommended that national Governments "strengthen the role of women and ensure equal representation of women at all decision-making levels in national and international institutions which may make or influence policy with regard to matters related to peace-keeping, preventive diplomacy and related activities and in all stages of peace mediation and negotiations, taking note of the specific recommendations of the Secretary-General in his strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000)".³⁹ Implementation of these recommendations could also lead to an increased role for women in peace-keeping operations.

The growing presence of female officers in national militaries, including in combat roles, and in civilian police forces is also likely to contribute to increasing participation of women in UN peace-keeping missions. Growing experience with women performing in various roles and functions in civilian peace-keeping missions may also contribute to change.

Finally, another determinant relating to the participation of women seems to be the result of "organizational" or "mission culture". This too is changing, albeit slowly, as more women participate in peace-keeping and make a difference, particularly in policy- and decision-making positions

NOTES

- ¹ United Nations Department of Public Information, "United Nations Peace-keeping Operations", *Background Notes*, January 1995. P5/DPI/15/Revised
- ² "Peace: Women in International Decision-making". *Report of the Secretary-General*. United Nations, Economic and Social Council. E/CN.6/1995/12. para 26
- ³ Cynthia Enloe. *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1993. p 51
- ⁴ National Reports of various Member States submitted to the United Nations (Division for the Advancement of Women/ Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) for the second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1994
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ National Report of Sweden submitted to the United Nations (Division for the Advancement of Women/Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) for the second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. 1994. p 33
- ⁷ *Ibid.* p 34
- ⁸ National report of the United States submitted to the United Nations (Division for the Advancement of Women/Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) for the second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. 1994. p 95
- ⁹ Cynthia Enloe. *op cit.* p 35
- ¹⁰ National report of Australia submitted to the United Nations (Division for the Advancement of Women/Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) for the second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. 1994. p. 24 (Note: Correction in data and graph 3 verified by the Australian Mission to the United Nations and the Office of the Status of Women, Canberra)
- ¹¹ National report of the United Kingdom submitted to the United Nations (Division for the Advancement of Women/Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) for the second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. 1994. p 10
- ¹² National report of Denmark submitted to the United Nations (Division for the Advancement of Women/Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) for the second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1994, p 66.
- ¹³ Michel Peyard, "Moi, Myriam, commandant à Sarajevo", *Paris Match*. 15 June 1995. pp 98-101
- ¹⁴ National Report of the United States, *op cit.* p 95
- ¹⁵ Women's Indicators and Statistical Database 1995 (Wistat), version 3, CD-ROM (United Nations Publication. Sales No E 95 XVII 6)
- ¹⁶ Unpublished Notes on an Informal Discussion of Women in United Nations Peace-keeping, Division for the Advancement of Women/ Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. 16 November 1994
- ¹⁷ Report of statistical compilation on women in peace-keeping prepared for *The World's Women. Trends and Statistics*. 1995 Statistical Division/Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, STAT 321(a). United Nations. 29 March 1994
- ¹⁸ Data supplied by the Military Adviser's Office/Department of Peace-keeping Operations. United Nations. 1 June 1995
- ¹⁹ 1 Major [Norway] in Air Operations in the Field Administration and Logistics Division. 1 Lieutenant Colonel [US] in the Situation Centre and 1 Major [US] who serves as Military Adviser to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) and the International Civilian Mission (MCIVIH), a combined military/civilian human rights mission in Haiti. based on information supplied by the Field Administration and Logistics Division/Department of Peace-keeping Operations. 22 May 1995
- ²⁰ Data supplied by the Military Adviser's Office/Department of Peace-keeping Operations. United Nations. 11 June 1995
- ²¹ Military Adviser's Office/Department of Peace-keeping Operations. United Nations, 11 June 1995, and the Canadian Mission to the United Nations. 12 June 1995
- ²² Unpublished statistics as of 31 May 1995. United Nations
- ²³ *Information Notes UN Peace-keeping*. Update: United Nations Publication. DPI/1306/Rev4. February 1995. p 24.
- ²⁴ *UNTAG in Namibia A New Nation is Born*. United Nations. New York. 1991
- ²⁵ Unpublished notes on an informal discussion on women in United Nations peace-keeping, Division for the Advancement of Women/ Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, 3 October 1994
- ²⁶ Judith Stiehm. "Peace-keeping: Men's and Women's Work. consultant's report prepared for the expert group meeting on "Gender and the Agenda for Peace". 5-9 December 1994. Division for the Advancement of Women/ Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. New York. p 8
- ²⁷ "Peace: Women in International Decision-making". *op cit.* para 27
- ²⁸ Stiehm. *op cit.* p 8
- ²⁹ Antonia Cubiero. "Women as Agents of Change in Peace-keeping Operations: A Voice from the UN Peace-keeping Mosaic — a UNOMSA Perspective". unpublished paper, p 4
- ³⁰ Unpublished notes on an informal discussion on women in United Nations peace-keeping, Division for the Advancement of Women/ Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, 3 October 1994
- ³¹ Stiehm, *op cit.* p 11
- ³² "Peace: Women in International Decision-making". *op cit.* para 28
- ³³ Margaret Banerji. "Notes on a Personal Experience of a Woman in Peace-keeping". unpublished paper. December 1994
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Drude Dahlerup. "From a Small to a Large Minority: A Theory of a Critical Mass Applied to the Case of Women in Scandinavian Politics". In Hem Lata Swarup and Sarojini Bisaria (eds). *Women, Politics and Religion*, Etawah. India: A C Brothers. 1991. pp 267-303
- ³⁶ "Peace: Women in International Decision-making." *op cit.* para 33
- ³⁷ *Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat. Report of the Secretary-General*. United Nations, General Assembly, UN document No A/50/691. 27 October 1995, para 59
- ³⁸ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995). United Nations. UN document No A/CONF 177/20. 17 October 1995. p 61
- ³⁹ *Ibid.* p 64



NOTABLE EVENTS



**International Year of the
Eradication of Poverty, 1996**

15 January-2 February
Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women
(New York)

5-16 February
Third Preparatory Committee
Meeting for the United Nations
Conference on Human Settlements
—Habitat II
(New York)

6-8 March
Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting
on Women
(New York)

11-22 March
Commission on the Status of Women,
fortieth session
(New York)

15-19 April
Resumed General Assembly
fiftieth session on public
administration and development
(New York)

3-14 June
United Nations Conference on
Human Settlements—The City summit
(Istanbul, Turkey)

25 June-26 July
ECOSOC, 1996 session
(New York)

Division for the Advancement of Women

Two United Nations Plaza
DC2-12th floor
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel.: (212) 963-8385
Fax: (212) 963-3463

E-MAIL

Internet

fwcw@undp.org
daw@undp.org

Bitnet

nygatldaw@tigger.jvnc.net

Usenet, UUCP

uunet!nygateldaw

Web:

<http://www.undp.org/fwcw/dawl.htm>