



Gender, Peace and Security and the 2030 Agenda: A Way Forward for the South Africa

31st March 2016, Pretoria

Introduction

On the 31st March 2016, SALO and Saferworld launched a co-authored briefing paper, **Gender, peace and security and the 2030 Agenda a way forward for South Africa**. The event was a wide range of stakeholders who included civil society organisations, diplomats, policymakers, veterans, academics and members of the public. This was a useful opportunity to not only disseminate key findings of the paper, but also validation. Built around the briefing paper, the discussion was aimed at exploring how South Africa can use the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – particularly through its Goal 16 and 5 – and UNSCR 1325 Resolution to advance a gender, peace and security agenda domestically and internationally. The discussion was structured in two panels, one looking at *Gender, peace and security challenges in South Africa and the role of 2030 Agenda and other international policy frameworks* and a second on *UNSCR 1325 and South Africa: Lessons Shared*. Speakers for the first panel included Ms Madeleine Rees, Human Rights Lawyer, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom; Ambassador Trine Skymoene, Ambassador to South Africa, Royal Embassy of Norway; Ms Yatima Nahara, Secretary-General, Pan-African Women’s Organization and High Commissioner Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini of South Africa to Namibia while Ms Petronella Mugoni-Sekeso, Senior Programme Officer for Knowledge Production, ACCORD; Ms Rita Manchanda, Research Director, South Asia Forum for Human Rights; Ms Bregje Wisjenbeek, Policy Officer Political Affairs, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Ambassador Thenjiwe Mtintso, South African Ambassador to Romania made the second panel.

Summary of Discussion

South Africa ranks amongst the top ten countries when it comes to women’s participation in politics. Women account for forty and forty one percent in parliament and cabinet respectively. South Africa has mainstreamed gender in its security sector, and signed up to a number of international and regional frameworks, including the SADC Gender Protocol, the 2030 Agenda and the UN Security Council Resolution on women, peace and security (UNSCR1325). However, the dialogue, affirmed one of the key findings of the briefing paper that more still needs to be done, and a lot of challenges remain, in order to make real impact for women on the ground. In particular, despite the high number of women in politics and in the security sector most ordinary women remain vulnerable and insecure. In addition, the patriarchal culture within the security sector remains a challenge with many in the military, as seen elsewhere in the world, often displaying negative attitudes towards women. Further demonstrating this schism between the increased representation of women and the everyday life conditions for women, are the continued allegations of abuse and sexual violence concerning male peace-keepers and police.

The briefing paper identified a number of reasons why linking the gender, peace and security agenda with the 2030 Agenda should be a key focus for South Africa. Several arising in the dialogue include:

1. The 2030 Agenda is a set of global development outcomes that all countries have committed to, while the UNSCRs represent an international policy framework for addressing women, peace and security specifically. The 2030 Agenda takes a developmental approach to gender equality, conflict and insecurity that complements the UNSCRs linking women's experiences of conflict to the international peace and security agenda;
2. The 2030 Agenda can serve South Africa in promoting technical capacity and political will to address structural barriers towards achieving gender equality, development;
3. The 2030 Agenda does not explicitly mention masculinities, rather it offers an entry point for addressing violent notions of masculinity in South Africa, through its focus on addressing structural and unequal power relations between men and women;
4. The interlinkages in the 2030 Agenda is an opportunity for greater coherence and coordination among horizontal and vertical sets of actors in the implementation of relevant policy frameworks. This linkage will be crucial in order to bridge existing silos that exist between the gender, peace and security communities and the development communities;
5. The 2030 Agenda will provide a comprehensive follow-up and review mechanism and a global indicator framework. These will assist states in monitoring progress towards meeting many of South Africa's gender, peace and security commitments in the 2030 Agenda as well as beyond.

In her response to the paper, Prof Cheryl Hendricks largely agreed with the assertions and noted that the challenges highlighted are primarily around inequality and insecurity; the persistence of high levels of gender-based violence; patriarchal cultures in the military and the police. These issues, she observed, are characteristic of all government departments, not just the military and the police. She further explained how internal gender dynamics are affecting South Africa's external engagements.

On the policy recommendations which include tackling root causes, advocating an integrated approach to gender, prioritising SGBVs, supporting civil society, and monitoring and evaluation; Prof Hendricks queried whether these were sufficient to address the scope of the problem that gender mainstreaming presents towards peace and security. She noted that among the lessons learned from implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was the recognition of the pervasive impact of gender relations on development and that this has been addressed in the 2030 Agenda. This normative shift motivates for an end to the silo approach to development and to peace and security. The evident change in thinking warrants peace-making actors to review what peace and security and/or peace-building means in today's world. According to Prof Hendricks peace has come to simply mean to live long, to live well, to live in dignity and to live with compassion. As a result, the global consensus built into the 2030 Agenda is that both elements of negative and positive peace are necessary for a better world by the year 2030.

Ms Madeleine Rees however, while appreciating the change in the global stance to be more inclusive of gender issues in the 2030 Agenda, decried the lack of resources and policy commitment in previous global instruments like the MDGs and the Beijing Declaration. These she argued have failed women on the global level. She urged for better attempts in the newest avenue, the 2030 Agenda, to merge high level and ground level women interests in order to see gender outcomes materialise. It is essential to understand the dynamics of gender discourse, gender roles and norms, that they are not standardized or static; they are socially constructed, changeable, and varied within and across cultures, societies and throughout history. Gender disparities also intersect with socio-economic determinants such as age, class and income, race, ethnicity, nationality, place of residence, education, sexual orientation, gender identity, and health, including sexual and reproductive health.

The intersection between gender and other socio-economic determinants was further highlighted by Ambassador Thenjiwe Mtintso who cautioned women's groups from misrepresenting the varied concerns in their fight against the common adversary, patriarchy.

If you talk with a working women about how she experiences patriarchy in South Africa, and then with a white woman of the northern suburbs (of Johannesburg), you are dealing with different experiences. One woman said to Ruth Mompati who passed away in 2015, 'You know, Mam Ruth, you are talking about getting

out of the kitchen while I'm still looking for the kitchen. Wena, you are ready to get out of it because you have it, but I'm still looking for the kitchen.' So we need to be sensitive.

In terms of the masculinist culture of the military and the police in the paper, speakers recommended a more targeted, but holistic and innovative approach to address the deep-rooted, vested and multi-layered challenges of gender inequality and insecurity. Prof Hendricks for example, pointed out that currently, responses have been partial, often disconnected, biased and, in some cases “misguided”. The tools that been ineffective against patriarchy and left behind issues in militarism as well as routine and coercive domination, as seen in the continuously high levels of violence against and abuse of women and girls in the South African society.

Ambassador Skymoem, reflecting on Norway's experience, suggested that the strategies that challenge inherent patriarchal values would be more likely to succeed when both men and women are involved in the process of mainstreaming women's rights.

'I want to draw your attention to the role of men. Even the most modest goals will not be reached unless we also engage men – or rather, unless men engage themselves. Women can go on preaching to the converted but we also need male agents of change. Gender, peace and security is not only the responsibility of women. We need male political leaders who see the value of involving women at the top in a real sense. We need male soldiers who integrate the gender perspective on the ground. We need men who take their share of the responsibility at home: raising children, doing housework, etcetera. Only then will we all have equal opportunities.'

Going further to explain the challenges of patriarchy, Ambassador Mtintso asserted that South Africans have not yet unravelled the embeddedness of patriarchy. Patriarchy in South Africa takes a different form and shape from other patriarchies, and due to the colonial experience, it includes imported forms of patriarchy as well as indigenous kinds. For instance, when it comes to hindering women's rights in South Africa the fault is often laid upon indigenous, African patriarchal beliefs. However, these indigenous systems also include values like *Ubuntu* which highlight how important it is to unpack public rhetoric. In effect, the South African patriarchy is a tapestry of these patriarchies. Gender activists are thus confronted by a multifaceted patriarchy with each patriarchy embedded in the other, this is reflected in class, race and gender discourse.

'So we are bringing all these many tendencies of patriarchy and you respond with a 'one-size-fits-all' in terms of the resolution of patriarchal relations. And remember, patriarchy by definition, adapts to whatever its environment is; it's like a chameleon – if it finds green, it becomes green, if it finds red, it becomes red; and it's like an amoeba, it spreads out into the society and it captures.'

The capture of the patriarchy is what makes the inclusion of women in masculine institutions difficult. Ambassador Mtintso's own experience in the *umKhonto weSizwe*, was telling of how women are absorbed by the structural framework. Part of the stagnation in the transformation of South African institutions, she opined, is that the women's movement is largely events-based. Consequently, civil society in South Africa is passive and seem to be dependent on government. Nevertheless, the most effective arrangement would be a partnership between government and all civil society actors.

A coordinated response to gender mainstreaming is likely to be more successful and the likes of the Netherlands' UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan (NAP) processes are examples South Africa can draw from. Ms Bregje Wisjenbeek explained how the Dutch UNSCR 1325 NAP is unique in the world. The arrangement of the NAP comprises of fifty civil society organisations signatories. The civil society organisations involved include human rights organisations and women's organisations, but also think-tanks in an inclusive and transparent process. This is divergent from traditional peace and security arrangements of an exclusive nature.

Prof Hendricks argued that due to its moral and human rights legacy embedded in its globally renowned constitution, South Africa has a particular responsibility towards its citizens, the continent and the global community on gender. According to Madeleine Rees South Africa's broad ratification of international human rights tools means the country is well positioned to use law as a basis for achieving the 2030 Agenda. Ambassador Skymoem used the example of Norway to show how international instruments were useful to guide and push national efforts in gender mainstreaming.

Ambassador Skymoene shared three lessons from Norway's 2015 National Action Plan for the implementation covering 2015 to 2018.

1. A normative shift is necessary to find the political will to ensure execution of the National Action Plan.
2. The idea that civil society is a source to government knowledge and action as well as a partner to keep government on track through accountability is key.
3. Government needs to be open and transparent in the process of formulating plans, so that civil society can be sufficiently roped in.

Displaying the role civil society organisations can play in steering governments past bean-counting to more qualitative input by women, Ms Yatima Nahara provided a powerful example in representing the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO) at the dialogue. PAWO was established in 1962 by women who were then in the liberation movement at that time in Tanzania. It sought to unite women in exile with those in countries that had attained their independence. PAWO holds a considerable institutional memory that can offer other lessons to Africans implementing the 2030 Agenda and UNSCR 1325 in order to address the ongoing exclusion of women from politics.

Ensuring an inclusive and transparent process was identified as critical. High Commissioner Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini's personal experience on women's inclusion in South Africa's crafting of the Constitution demonstrates how inclusion and transparency can foster ownership. The success of South Africa's constitution-making process, she argued, owes to its integrated approach, women and men working together at the negotiation table. She argued that women need to be included in the same way within the negotiation process of the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and the 2030 Agenda. This would be in contrast to current trends of placing women in neutral mediation or secretariat roles.

'That's what we worked on and through that we were able to negotiate the [South Africa] Constitution which you see in front of us which is an integrated Constitution – there's no part which deals only with women in that Constitution. Whenever there was speaking about the right to life, we were there to say this right to life must cover issues of food and must make sure that women are able to also decide on their bodies'

Ms Bregje Wisjenbeek cited evidence that when women are involved in the peace process the peace is lasting. On the issue of research though, Ms Petronella Mugoni-Sekes, representing ACCORD, a renowned African think tank also put forward her experience in peace-building on the African continent. One of the key challenges in ACCORD's work is the insufficient documentation and publications on the topic of women, peace and security in Africa. As a repercussion, policymaking interventions seem not to produce gender-sensitive outcomes.

'We've [ACCORD] also found that there is a disconnect between large numbers of women in decision-making positions – for example, in the Parliaments of Rwanda or of the Central African Republic – as opposed to the actual quality in the amount of changes that are demonstrated, in terms of the 'counting women or making women count'.'

In a similar reflection on the absence of information-sharing on these themes, Ms Rita Manchanda shared her belief that there is a lack of dialogue between Global South countries and civil societies on women's rights. Ms Manchanda argued that this is a missed opportunity to ensure national and international instruments do not pursue standards prescribed from the Global North but rather from their own experiences. From her observation, women's rights activists in South Asia have preferred to engage with platforms like CEDAW where there is more political will to address these concerns under UN Women, rather than UNSCR 1325 which falls under the far more contentious United Nations Security Council. As a result, Ms Manchanda maintained that while the UNSCR 1325 can be useful, it is far more important for civil society to be strategic and work with instruments that have traction in their specific context.

To draw lessons from India, Ms Manchanda argued of India's prominence in regional politics and its weight in peace-keeping. She cautioned however, that there is a continuum between the domestic and the external profile. Generally speaking, the weakness of gender within India is also projected in the external work on peace and security. Women's groups have recognised this and in turn are pushing CEDAW's mandate to gain

extra-territorial accountability. These are items Global South civil societies, in particular South Africans, could work together towards. There are instances where the Global South have led processes for women's inclusion into the security sector. In fact, Prof Hendricks asserted that it is countries from the Global South that have seen the greatest number of female peace-keepers. Key to strengthening the activism on gender, peace and security will be understanding actors and opportunities in the Global South. Ultimately, conflict largely in the Global South requires countries in the Global South to be at the forefront of the conceptualisation of gender, peace and security.

Recommendations

- South Africa will gain from lessons in gender, peace and security models of the Netherlands and Norway;
- The discourse within the Global South will be an opportunity to share ideas and information on trends towards better strategies for gender, peace and security;
- The pervasiveness of gender across development and peace and security realms requires transparent multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue within South Africa to inspire ownership of the process;
- Further research is necessary on themes concerning women's inclusion and transformation of patriarchy in peace and security for the success of the UNSCR 1325 and 2030 Agenda;
- New avenues to disseminate information and promote dialogue amongst multi-stakeholder actors are needed to reinvigorate the women's movement in South Africa;
- For actors involved in South Africa's implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the National Development Plan and the African Union's Agenda 2063 hold equal bearing in the process and must be recognised appropriately;
- South African actors need to consider how to leverage existing global instruments and national legal frameworks in the monitoring and evaluation of gender and peace and security in South Africa;
- A resounding call by South African civil society was for the establishment of a women's CODESA to reinvigorate the women's movement in the country.

The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Brief do not necessarily reflect the view of SALO or any of the donors or conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of SALO, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the donors who provided financial assistance for this policy dialogue session.

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