

*Dalla ricerca all'azione*

## **I Quaderni**

*Per la gestione e mediazione nonviolenta dei conflitti*

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**Luisa Del Turco**

# **20 YEARS OF RESOLUTION 1325**

## **A peace and security perspective**

**Quaderno n.2/2020**

Pubblicazione periodica del Centro Studi Difesa Civile - APS

[www.pacedifesa.org](http://www.pacedifesa.org)

ISSN: 2038-9884

# I Quaderni

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*Si ringrazia Maria Teresa Mammi per il supporto alla revisione del testo.*

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Questo numero è stato chiuso il 15 settembre 2020

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## Abstract

The adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000 marked the introduction of a gender perspective - already consolidated in human rights and development - into peace and security matters.

20 years and 10 resolutions later, its 2020 anniversary represents a precious opportunity to assess what the Women Peace and Security international Agenda looks like after two decades, to identify the main challenges of implementation, and also to look beyond to the place it occupies and can play in the bigger picture.

This paper seeks to trace the development of the WPS Agenda from a peace and security perspective, recalling in parallel the main steps of the evolution of the whole sector over recent decades. It is based on international policy documents and Security Council resolutions, just to offer a brief review of what can be useful to facilitate the reading and understanding of the WPS Agenda.

It can be seen how the main trends and challenges of the international system look amazingly mirrored in the architecture of the Agenda, as well as in the process of Agenda building from the setting of the benchmarks (*lus novum*) to the new approach integrating humanitarian, development and peace actors and action ("triple nexus").

The WPS Agenda looks indeed like a timely and emblematic representation of today's international scenario with its multilevel, multidimensional complexity: centre stage Resolution 1325 there stands as a cornerstone, with its multi-stakeholders and integrated approach, originated by different actors and deep-rooted in multi-sectoral basic pillars (Participation - Protection - Prevention - Relief and Recovery).

Still, its "transformative" potential is partly yet to be voiced. In the conclusions it is suggested that this potential be fully revealed, just pushing the innovative strategy of Resolution 1325 further: putting into the spotlight what has been in the shadows (as it was yesterday for the active role of women in peace processes and can be today for conflict prevention and gender perspective in the implementation process).

20 years later it still seems to be the best way to value Resolution 1325 and the WPS Agenda as a whole, also for the benefit of the peace and security sector and the international cooperation system at large.

## Introduction: The “Women Peace and Security” Agenda from a Peace and Security perspective

“It is hard to think of one resolution that is better known for its name, number, and content”<sup>1</sup>.

What the first ever Global Study stated about Resolution 1325 some years ago is still true, as the number of initiatives organized at all levels to celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary shows. The Resolution’s birthday is today a precious opportunity to assess what the WPS international Agenda looks like after two decades, and where we are in terms of implementation. But also, it is a chance to see what place the Resolution occupies in the bigger picture, explaining its enduring appeal and the high potential it is still able to express.

Today’s common perception is that Resolution 1325 represents a cornerstone in the advancement of women’s rights over the last 20 years, as “a human rights mandate”<sup>2</sup>. As a matter of fact, this Resolution is certainly to be included under the category of the so called “thematic resolutions” which by the end of the second millennium brought some general protection concerns into the Security Council agenda<sup>3</sup>. And indeed, it opened the way to an endless extended family of subsequent resolutions, the latter focusing on women’s protection related issues and equality (women in peacekeeping).

Nevertheless, after two decades, is worth remembering 1325’s early attitude, as related to the Security Council primary function “to maintain international peace and security” in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter<sup>4</sup>.

The independent advocacy coalition of international NGOs formed in 2000<sup>5</sup> as well as the international campaigns and initiatives launched by the end of the ‘90s calling for the adoption of a ground-breaking resolution on this issue, were actually based on the acknowledgment of women’s role and capacities in peacebuilding and peacemaking.

The well-known Global Study itself is part of the threefold 2015 Peace and Security review (WPS, peacekeeping, peacebuilding), and quotes “The Women, Peace and Security agenda is about ending conflict, not about making conflict safer for women”<sup>6</sup>.

The WPS Agenda was born at a crossroads, where different stakeholders converged to face new challenges in the field of Peace and Security. It then developed in multiple directions, as the following paragraphs describe from the very origins and even before.

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<sup>1</sup> Coomaraswamy R., “Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325”, 2015, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 15, “Resolution 1325 is a human rights mandate. It must not be forgotten that resolution 1325 was conceived of and lobbied for as a human rights resolution that would promote the rights of women in conflict situations. Any policy or programme on women, peace and security must be conducted with this in mind”.

<sup>3</sup> In 1999 the Security Council’s first thematic resolution on protection of civilians in armed conflict was adopted (UNSCR 1265/1999 condemning targeting of civilians, calling for respect for international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law and expressing willingness to take measures to ensure compliance and to consider how peacekeeping mandates might better address the negative impact of conflict on civilians).

<sup>4</sup> Article 1: The Purposes of the United Nations are: “To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace”.

<sup>5</sup> The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG). Formed in 2000 to call for a Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

<sup>6</sup> Coomaraswamy R., *cit.*, Chapter 8 dedicated to Prevention, the words are of a participant at the Asia-Pacific regional civil society consultation for the Global Study.

# 1. Setting up the benchmarks: norms and actors of international cooperation and the women's rights perspective

## **Background**

The legal framework emerging after the Second World War designed a multifaced international system based on different sectors, corresponding to different sets of norms: International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights including Refugee Law, *ius contra bellum/ad pacem*. These norms provide the basis respectively for: humanitarian assistance, human rights action/refugee assistance, peace and security maintenance and resolution of disputes.

The oldest part of this extensive corps, nowadays known as International Humanitarian Law (IHL), dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>. The branch once called "droit de Genève" was conceived to protect all non-combatants, originally those who are no longer fighting (i.e., the wounded and sick), today mainly civilians like the vast majority of the casualties in modern warfare<sup>8</sup>.

The new part of this legal framework (*ius novum*) includes human rights, aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights inherent to the human person and pre-existing any written law. It sets up a much higher standard on all different issues (life, health, education, etc.) up to and including the fulfilment of people's full potential in peace time<sup>9</sup>.

Finally, the norms of the *ius contra bellum*, dealing with conflict dynamics from a peace work perspective. They are included in the UN Charter, and based on two different chapters: Chapter VI concerning consensual action<sup>10</sup> and Chapter VII including coercive measures, also implying the use of force<sup>11</sup>.

Despite the inherent connections among all sectors, some features continued to characterize each set of norms (e.g., IHL as always applicable no matter what the reason or the legitimacy of the use of force). Furthermore, field work in each sector has been carried out by different actors, with their own status, mandates and principles, and largely working independently from each other.

In the humanitarian sector, the actors were for a long time almost exclusively identified with the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement components: at national level, sister societies created by law and acting as an auxiliary to public authorities in the humanitarian field; at international level the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with functional international legal personality, its role being explicitly mentioned in the IHL itself<sup>12</sup>; the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), dealing with natural and man-made disasters in non-conflict situations, with the status of consultant at the ECOSOC. All

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<sup>7</sup> It used to be called *ius in bello*. Mainly based on the four Geneva Conventions, it then developed with three additional protocols, (as well as with many other conventional and customary norms to be applied in wartime, with only few exceptions).

<sup>8</sup> A shocking 92% of the casualties are civilians. More data in "Stop bombing towns and cities", an international campaign promoted by the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW, an NGO partnership calling for immediate action to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas).

<sup>9</sup> For a very original, enjoyable representation of the "spirit" and development of the legislation on fundamental rights and freedom, see the musical theatre "*We human rights. Representation of human dignity and peace*", Papisca A., Marsilio, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> UN Charter, Chapter VI "Pacific Settlement of Disputes", art 33 "negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice".

<sup>11</sup> UN Charter, Chapter VII "Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression".

<sup>12</sup> The ICRC has a hybrid legal nature being "at once very Swiss in that it shares the same legal roots as the pillars of Swiss civil society, yet it is set apart by its internationally privileged status other humanitarian organizations do not benefit from". Brühwiler C.F., Egli, P. & Sánchez Y. "The ICRC at a crossroads: Swiss roots—international outlook". *International Journal of Humanitarian Action* 4, 13 (2019).

of them devoted to helping those in need, and inspired by the principles of *humanity, impartiality, and neutrality*<sup>13</sup>.

The actors engaged in protecting the rights and full development of all human beings, have always been represented by dedicated international and national entities as well as by a wide community of committed activists and practitioners of Civil Society. The main principles inspiring CSOs involved in this sector are respect of human dignity, non-discrimination and justice.

Peace work, dealing with conflict dynamics, has always been more complex and multifaced, due to the twofold path produced by its norms (bringing about peace by peaceful means<sup>14</sup>, yet with some provisions including the use of force<sup>15</sup>). As a consequence, peace work was to be implemented from the very origins by two different categories: the diplomats for good offices and mediation (peaceful means) and the military doing the “dirty job” (enforcement) whenever it is too late for political consensual action. Meanwhile, out of the official frame, nonviolent practices developed at the grassroots, implemented by non-state actors (ranging from individuals, to religious and non-profit organisations).

Moving from the legal framework to the political realm, it is worth mentioning another fundamental pillar of the international cooperation system and of the UN action: Development cooperation. Aimed at supporting the promotion of social progress and better standards of life, it is inspired by solidarity, and implemented in practice with a multilevel approach, involving State entities and Civil Society as one of the main actors.

**For decades, the multilateral system has been working combining diplomatic / military, humanitarian / human rights as well as development efforts, implemented by different players with specific mandates and principles of action. Nevertheless, the sectors were not interconnected, and players were acting on their own on the international scenario.**

### ***From a gender perspective***

When it comes to women, the traditional approach of IHL was to provide them protection both as ex-combatants<sup>16</sup> and as specific category of vulnerable people<sup>17</sup> often associated with children. Women have been also protected against specific violence such as rape (originally considered as an “attack on their honour”)<sup>18</sup>. Still the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols relate to the

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<sup>13</sup> “Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement” (adopted by the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross at Geneva in 1986, then amended in 1995 and 2006). For an in-depth understanding of the IHL principles see Pictet J., *The Principles of International Humanitarian Law*, ICRC, 1967.

<sup>14</sup> UN Charter Principles, Chapter I, Art. 2.3 “All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered”; Art. 2.4 “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”.

<sup>15</sup> UN Charter, Chapter VII, Art. 42 “Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations”.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Art 14 of the III Geneva Convention, relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 12 August 1949.

<sup>17</sup> Art. 38 (5) of the IV Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949; Art. 70 (1) of the I Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (8 June 1977).

<sup>18</sup> Art. 27 of the IV Geneva Convention *cit*.

biological differences between men and women, devoid of a real gender perspective. Indeed, most articles related to women deal with pregnant or nursing mothers<sup>19</sup> responding to their basic needs.

In the Human rights domain, gender equality has been a major concern from the very beginning. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “for the first time in the history of international law-making, the document was remarkably lacking in sexist language”<sup>20</sup>, thanks to the prominent role women played in the drafting. First of all, Eleanor Roosevelt but also women from Denmark, Pakistan, the Communist bloc and other countries, including the Indian drafter Hansa Mehta, who objected to Eleanor Roosevelt’s assertion that “men” was understood to include women. As a result, the French phrase “all men are born free and equal” (taken from the *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen*) was turned into “all human beings are born free and equal”.

Concerning *Ius contra bellum*, no gender perspective emerges within the norms regulating peace work. Even though the UN Charter makes reference in its Preamble to equal rights of men and women, and states in article 8 “The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs”.

**The gender dimension was not originally present in the peace and security sector, and peace work for a long while used to be gender blind. Instead, the promotion of women’s rights and protection of women in conflict had already gained some relevance respectively in the human rights and humanitarian norms. Due to the lack of connection among the sectors and the working environment, there was no real chance of mutual contamination among them.**

## **2. The international system way of working: practices and developments in the bipolar and post-bipolar world, before the adoption of Resolution 1325**

### ***Background***

Quite soon the “accident” of peacekeeping occurred<sup>21</sup>.

The UN Security Council decision making process had often been unproductive because of the of Cold War, and the use of the “veto power”. Peacekeeping, not present in the UN Charter, was conceived to break the impasse, through a creative hybridization between Chapter VI and Chapter VII. This new praxis was able to combine *consent*, taken from the former, and *use of force*, coming from the latter. As a result, the armed forces’ role shifted from war to peace maintenance. For the first time an actor, the military, changed its traditional mandate. As in the words of the then UN Secretary-General peacekeeping was “not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it”<sup>22</sup>.

Peacekeepers were initially deployed in the context of inter-state conflicts, after a truce or ceasefire was signed. Soldiers were mainly placed along the borders of the controversial areas for interposition and monitoring, in the first mission even unarmed<sup>23</sup>. Indeed, the peacekeeping of the origins was just focused on parties’ behaviour and aimed at controlling direct violence. Missions would achieve a “negative peace”

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<sup>19</sup> Art. 89 of the IV Geneva Convention *cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet. 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Geneva (6 December 2018).

<sup>21</sup> For a historical overview of this praxis from the very beginning: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>

<sup>22</sup> Quote: Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations from 10 April 1953 until 18 September 1961 when he died in a plane crash while on a peace mission in the Congo.

<sup>23</sup> UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the first ever UN peacekeeping operation – established by the UN Security Council, under Resolution 50/1948 (with some 150 military observers still in place).

(as mere absence of violence) and hopefully give the way to the diplomats for peace-making. The working environment for the other actors (humanitarians, human rights and development workers) remained unchanged. The so-called "first generation" peacekeeping was not so popular and not even well known, unlike the second generation the "golden era" of UN peacekeeping.

The end of the Cold War brought new harmony in the UN Security Council. An increased number of peace agreements were signed, and peacekeeping missions were deployed where internal conflicts had left territory, social structures and institutions devastated. Peacekeeping operations were established also in big countries such as Angola, Cambodia, Namibia and Mozambique (later celebrated as one of the most successful missions).

Since "complex emergencies"<sup>24</sup> required multiagency intervention, peacekeeping operations became multidimensional. Peacekeeping started to become interconnected with human rights and development, addressing the root causes of conflict. Thus, it broadened its function to peacebuilding. Between peacekeeping and long-term peacebuilding, post-conflict measures were put in place (including mine action, humanitarian and refugee assistance, and rehabilitation) in the so-called grey zone.

With such a new approach, all the aspects of conflict dynamics were finally addressed. Peacekeeping, working on behaviour, peace-making on attitudes, and peacebuilding on contradiction<sup>25</sup>. These fundamental tools were defined in the landmark 1992 document "An Agenda for Peace"<sup>26</sup>, by the then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In the document, whose concepts seem to be taken directly from the best peace research<sup>27</sup>, for civilians as central a role as the military was designed<sup>28</sup>. The following "Agenda for Development"<sup>29</sup> and "Agenda for Democratization"<sup>30</sup> setting up complementary tools, enhanced the new approach introduced by "An Agenda for Peace": soon becoming known as the "integrated approach", it promotes *positive* peace<sup>31</sup> (surpassing the *negative* peace) through a wide range of actions and actors. "Agenda for Peace" also marks a key step in the genesis of the concept of *human security*<sup>32</sup>, representing a

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<sup>24</sup> The official definition of a complex emergency is "a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/ or the ongoing United Nations country program." (IASC, December 1994).

<sup>25</sup> For the triadic conflict structure, see Johan Galtung, "Peace by peaceful means", SAGE Publications, 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Boutros-Ghali B., "An Agenda for Peace. Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping" (A/47/277), 1992.

<sup>27</sup> Galtung J., "Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding", PRIO publication, No. 25-9, 1976.

<sup>28</sup> Boutros-Ghali B., "An Agenda for Peace" *cit.* "Increasingly, peace-keeping requires that civilian political officers, human rights monitors, electoral officials, refugee and humanitarian aid specialists and police play as central a role as the military. Police personnel have proved increasingly difficult to obtain in the numbers required. I recommend that arrangements be reviewed and improved for training peace-keeping personnel - civilian, police, or military - using the varied capabilities of Member State Governments, of non-governmental organizations and the facilities of the Secretariat".

<sup>29</sup> Boutros-Ghali B., "An Agenda for Development" (A/48/935), 1994. "Development is a fundamental human right. Development is the most secure basis for peace".

<sup>30</sup> Boutros-Ghali B., "An Agenda for Democratization" (A/51/761), 1996. "The peace-keeping mandates entrusted to the United Nations now often include both the restoration of democracy and the protection of human rights".

<sup>31</sup> Introduced by J. Galtung, it is a much broader concept including not just the absence of direct violence but also relations between genders, races, classes and families, and also include absence of structural violence, the non-intended slow, massive suffering caused by economic and political structures in the form of massive exploitation and repression. And the absence of the cultural violence that legitimizes direct and/or structural violence. Galtung J. "Peace by peaceful means" *cit.*

<sup>32</sup> The UNDP "Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security" was the formal debut of the concept, broadly defined as "freedom from fear and freedom from want". Human security is a human-centric security paradigm addressing root causes of conflict spanning economic, social and political issues.

cornerstone of the UN framework of action in peace and security. Therefore, military peacekeepers and civilian peacebuilders<sup>33</sup> then became “inseparable partners”<sup>34</sup>, giving way to each other in the field.

Meanwhile also in development cooperation the need to coordinate short-term (relief) and long-term action (development) emerged; from that point on a new concept, “linking relief - rehabilitation - development” (LRRD)<sup>35</sup>, became a shared mantra.

**The way the international system works in practice became more complex and “integrated”. The shift was harmonious enough, since the principles informing the armed forces’ action at that time were: request/consent of the parties concerned, impartiality, use of force limited to self-defence<sup>36</sup>. And such principles were not too dissimilar to those of the humanitarian and human rights workers. Nevertheless, the different actions, were still considered as separate processes, although interconnected.**

### ***From a gender perspective***

The last three decades of the millennium are deemed crucial. Women have been at the heart of a series of four international Conferences<sup>37</sup> that produced number of significant political commitments. In the ‘90s two major concepts made the difference: empowerment and mainstreaming<sup>38</sup>, the latter able to open concretely the way to the adoption of the gender approach in all policy areas.

The journey of women’s rights marked a decisive step with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)<sup>39</sup>. Adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, and widely known as the international bill of rights for women, the Convention strengthens the legal protection system in a decisive manner in the different aspects of women’s life. A rather serious lack concerning violence against women, was amended by the CEDAW Committee a few years later<sup>40</sup>.

In the humanitarian field the approach remained focused on women’s basic needs, addressing strategic ones. This helped improve women’s condition without challenging the gender roles within the social

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<sup>33</sup> Today including administrators, economists, police officers, legal experts, de-miners, electoral observers, human rights monitors, civil affairs and governance specialists, humanitarian workers, communications and public information experts.

<sup>34</sup> “History has taught that peacekeepers and peacebuilders are inseparable partners in complex operations: while the peacebuilders may not be able to function without the peacekeepers’ support, the peacekeepers have no exit without the peacebuilders’ work.” Brahimi Report, UN Document (A/55/305-S/2000/809), Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, 21 August 2000, p. 5 (para. 28).

<sup>35</sup> The European Commission published a first Communication on LRRD in 1996, conceived as a linear *continuum* sequence. COM (96) 153 on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development.

<sup>36</sup> Principles defined by the UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and Lester Pearson of Canada.

<sup>37</sup> 1975 the International women’s year (the first of the designated UN decade for women); the first UN Conference in Mexico City. 1980, UN Conference in Copenhagen. 1985, UN Conference in Nairobi. 1995, UN Conference in Beijing. Besides: in 1993, in the Human Rights Conference in Vienna, human rights of women and girls-children are recognized as “inalienable, integral, indivisible part” of universal Human Rights.

<sup>38</sup> “The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality”. 1997/2 Agreed Conclusions ECOSOC.

<sup>39</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, New York, 18 December 1979.

<sup>40</sup> CEDAW Committee General Recommendations 12 (1989), 19 (1992), 35 (2017).

structure. Besides, the adoption of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions marked a tangible improvement in women's protection, with rape to be considered ultimately as an offence to dignity<sup>41</sup>.

The concept of "gender" - promoted within the feminist international movement as a strategic means for concrete action and change - was first introduced as operational tool in the development cooperation sector. This produced a shift in the approach, moving from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD)<sup>42</sup>. A number of frameworks<sup>43</sup> were developed with the aim of engendering projects and programmes and concretely translating approaches into field action. A Gender Policy was also adopted in 1999 within the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, by the IFCR, which not being involved in conflict areas was probably less concerned than the ICRC about the issue of neutrality, and as a result more open to the gender perspective.

In terms of peace and security, all the four international Conferences dedicated to Women had emphasized the role of women in the promotion of peace, also underlying the link between peace and women's rights (from Mexico City<sup>44</sup> to Copenhagen and Nairobi<sup>45</sup>). The relation between peace at different levels and the advancement of women was confirmed in 1995<sup>46</sup> in Beijing. The adopted Beijing Platform for Action flagged 12 key areas where urgent action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys. The Critical Area<sup>47</sup> dedicated to "Women and Armed Conflict" seems visionary and advanced, reflecting the atmosphere of the international community in the era of the most successful peacekeeping. The language refers to the essentials of contemporary conflict resolution: including "non-violent forms of conflict resolution", "culture of peace" as well as an ambitious perspective of reducing excessive military expenditures. Nevertheless, all these impressive commitments were rather far from producing the cultural shift in the field of peace and security, needed to translate all these words into concrete operational tools and practices. The engagement of the Security Council was required.

**The "golden age" of peacekeeping was not a sufficient condition to have a gender perspective concretely mainstreamed in the peace and security sector, but still a good starting point. Thanks to the**

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<sup>41</sup> Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977, Art. 4.2(e) "Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault".

<sup>42</sup> In the '70s Women in Development (WID): Women are considered as a homogeneous group and without taking into account their social role and responsibilities. Expanded income opportunities in paid labour frequently resulted in double burden, increasing family stress, malnutrition of children. In the '80s Gender and Development (GAD) acknowledges that development projects affect men and women differently. Gender analysis began to be used in a systematic way, focusing on gender relations rather than women's role. See "Gender in Development Programme Learning & Information Pack", UNDP, 2001.

<sup>43</sup> For the development and tools of the main gender analysis frameworks see "Gender in Development", *cit.*

<sup>44</sup> "Women have a vital role to play in the promotion of peace in all spheres of life: in the family, the community, the nations and the world. As such, women must participate equally with men in the decision-making processes which help to promote peace at all levels". Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace. General Assembly Resolution endorsing the outcome of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, December 1975. (A/RES/3520).

<sup>45</sup> "Women of the entire world should participate in the broadest way in the struggle to strengthen international peace and security (...)", Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen July 1980 (A/CONF.94/35). "Women should participate fully in all efforts to strengthen and maintain international peace and security (...)", Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (A/CONF.116/28/Rev.).

<sup>46</sup> "Local, national, regional and global peace is attainable and is inextricably linked with the advancement of women, who are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels". Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, Critical Area of Concern "Women and Armed Conflict" (E), Strategic objectives 1-4:

- E.1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.
- E.2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.
- E.3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.
- E.4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.

integrated approach, the remarkable progress in the field of women's rights and the adoption of a gender perspective in development cooperation put the basis for the imminent epochal turning point, to be realized in the new millennium.

### 3. At the edge of the new millennium: beyond peacekeeping and the adoption of UNSCR 1325

#### *Background*

Already around the mid-1990s, the UN peacekeeping forces engaged in high-profile operations where there was no peace to keep but huge challenges to deal with. Thus, peacekeeping surpassed the borders of its origins, expanding the mandate to protect safe areas and humanitarian convoys, stretching its principles beyond the logic of peacekeeping. After some failures (e.g., the Rwandan genocide, the withdrawal from Somalia, the fall of Srebrenica) UN peacekeeping came under criticism, and the Security Council limited the number of new peacekeeping missions. A process of UN self-reflection began, with specific inquiries commissioned<sup>48</sup> and *ad hoc* International Criminal Tribunals established under Chapter VII of the Charter for prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of IHL<sup>49</sup>. This produced an impact also at policy level, with the adoption of a Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace", raising *inter alia* the issue of the use of force. The Supplement clearly recognized that success/failure depends on respect for the basic principles and that the logic of peacekeeping is to be considered as an alternative to that including the use of force (i.e., peace enforcement)<sup>50</sup>.

At the end of the millennium, Kosovo marked a further shift from both 1<sup>st</sup> generation peacekeeping and integrated multifunctional peacekeeping. In order to face gross and systematic human rights violations, a new model of missions promoted what came to be known as "humanitarian interventions". A new hybridization occurred, this time not just linking different measures within a sector but combining two different sectors: the protection of human rights became a key purpose for peace interventions. Action, at first taken by a regional organization (NATO), was then provided by a UN mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter<sup>51</sup>. With this new praxis the boundaries between peace operations and military interventions became uncertain.

The issue triggered a critical debate among scholars and practitioners on legitimacy of the use of force while at policy level produced an effort of acknowledgement.

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<sup>48</sup> Independent inquiry (S/1999/1257) into the actions of the UN during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda; comprehensive assessment (A/54/549) on the 1993-1995 events in Srebrenica in the former Yugoslavia; assessment on the circumstances that led to the UN withdrawal from Somalia (S/1995/231).

<sup>49</sup> International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR) were established by UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR 827/1993 and UNSCR 955/1994).

<sup>50</sup> Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" (A/50/60-S/1995/1). Para 33, "(...) the last few years have confirmed that respect for certain basic principles of peace-keeping is essential to its success (...). Analysis of recent successes and failures shows that in all the successes those principles were respected and in most of the less successful operations one or other of them was not". Para 35, "(...) the logic of peace-keeping flows from political and military premises that are quite distinct from those of enforcement; and the dynamics of the latter are incompatible with the political process that peace-keeping is intended to facilitate. To blur the distinction between the two can undermine the viability of the peace-keeping operation and endanger its personnel".

<sup>51</sup> UNSCR 1244/1999 established an international security presence "with substantial North Atlantic Treaty Organization participation".

The UN Secretary-General made clear that IHL is applicable in peace operations to UN forces “when in situations of armed conflict they are actively engaged therein as combatants” (including peacekeeping)<sup>52</sup>. He also deemed important “to define intervention as broadly as possible, to include actions along a wide continuum from the most pacific to the most coercive”<sup>53</sup> and later recognized the option of armed intervention – even as last resort – in case of gross violation of human rights<sup>54</sup>. Besides, the high-level Panel chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi in 2000 revised the original criteria for the use of force, while also questioning the principles of consent and impartiality<sup>55</sup>. Finally, in 2001 the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS)<sup>56</sup> outlined the concept of “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P), able to turn the highly controversial “right to intervene” into the “responsibility to act”<sup>57</sup>. Based on three pillars: prevent, react, rebuild, R2P became a cornerstone in the question of intervention, putting together coercive and non-coercive (preventive and restorative) measures.

This time the change affected the functioning of the actors’ system as a whole.

Balancing the role of the different actors, regional organizations became prominent<sup>58</sup>. In terms of activities, humanitarian action abruptly regained a central role, implemented by old and new players. These included start-ups, as well as military forces able to act in areas affected by severe security issues. The proliferation of humanitarian entities and mandates, already started in the early ‘90s<sup>59</sup>, was then confirmed. The Security Council itself, was involved, officially inaugurating the Protection of Civilians mandate with the first ever dedicated resolution (Res. 1265/1999)<sup>60</sup>. As the relationship between the actors was becoming more and more complex, the line between the actions (Relief - Rehabilitation – Development, once just linked) also

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<sup>52</sup> Secretary-General's Bulletin: Observance by United Nations Forces of International Humanitarian Law, 6 August 1999, ST/SGB/1999/13.

<sup>53</sup> Kofi Annan, presenting his annual report to the UN General Assembly. Press Release SG/SM/7136 GA/9596.

<sup>54</sup> Kofi Annan, Report at the Millennium Assembly, “We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century” (A/54/2000). Para 219: “no legal principle — not even sovereignty — can ever shield crimes against humanity. Where such crimes occur and peaceful attempts to halt them have been exhausted, the Security Council has a moral duty to act on behalf of the international community. The fact that we cannot protect people everywhere is no reason for doing nothing when we can. Armed intervention must always remain the option of last resort, but in the face of mass murder it is an option that cannot be relinquished”.

<sup>55</sup> In 2000 “Brahimi Report” (A/55/305-S/2000/809) para 49 - 50 stated: “United Nations military units must be capable of defending themselves, other mission components and the mission’s mandate. Rules of engagement should not limit contingents to stroke-for-stroke responses but should allow ripostes sufficient to silence a source of deadly fire that is directed at United Nations troops or at the people they are charged to protect and, in particularly dangerous situations, should not force United Nations contingents to cede the initiative to their attackers. Impartiality for such operations must therefore mean adherence to the principles of the Charter and to the objectives of a mandate that is rooted in those Charter principles. Such impartiality is not the same as neutrality or equal treatment of all parties in all cases for all time, which can amount to a policy of appeasement”. The report in November was welcomed by the Security Council, that unanimously adopted a wide-ranging resolution containing recommendations and decisions on peacekeeping operations.

<sup>56</sup> The establishment by the Government of Canada of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) was announced at the General Assembly in September 2000.

<sup>57</sup> According with “The Responsibility to Protect. Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty” ICISS, 2001, Sovereign States have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe – from mass murder and rape, from starvation – but when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of state.

<sup>58</sup> Apart from the NATO initiative, the EU and OSCE played a role as a part of the international civil presence in the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Regional organizations are also key actors in the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect.

<sup>59</sup> Both the dedicated entities in UN and EU architecture – respectively the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO) and UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA, later Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA) - were created in 1992.

<sup>60</sup> The first thematic resolution on Protection of Civilians condemned targeting of civilians, called for respect of IHL, refugee and human rights, and expressed willingness to take measures to ensure compliance and to consider how peacekeeping mandates might better address this issue.

became blurred. The *continuum* approach was abandoned in favour of a *contiguuum* approach<sup>61</sup>, which entails simultaneous and complementary use of different instruments. Due to the risk of functions overlapping and confusion, the issue of actors' identities and relationships became widely discussed in the humanitarian community<sup>62</sup>. Meanwhile the military attempted to further develop interaction with civilians, particularly in the NATO context where interaction between Alliance forces and the civil environment deemed crucial for the success of operations. The Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) doctrine and activities had been actually developed to support the military commanders' plans (providing information on the civil situation, promoting force acceptance, influencing the civil society in the mission area)<sup>63</sup>.

As a reaction, non-military actors strove to redefine their own roles and identities through different strategies. A wave of codification of principles emerged to help reducing mandate overlapping, preserve identities from the risk of misperception, avoid confusion, while supporting the need of effective dialogue and coordination. Besides, codes of conduct supported building accountability and gaining confidence of international donors and beneficiaries. The first reaction came from the humanitarian sector. Its fundamental principles were deeply rooted in the Geneva Conventions and already formally adopted by the Red Cross Movement in 1965 (setting the frame of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality). The same principles have also constituted the basis on which the UN humanitarian system was created in 1991<sup>64</sup>. The same core principles continued to shape new-born humanitarian entities, with some differences among its members<sup>65</sup> and a few exceptions<sup>66</sup>. Although expanded in a galaxy of hundreds of entities worldwide, the humanitarian community proved consistency and unity, sharing dedicated advocacy networks (e.g., *Voice* at EU level<sup>67</sup>) and a virtual home (ReliefWeb<sup>68</sup>). It also showed the ability to safeguard its own identity, a capacity for internal and external dialogue (mainly with human rights NGOs)<sup>69</sup>. A common agenda for advocacy was built, based on protection of the "humanitarian space" and the civilian inner nature of humanitarian action, as well as aimed at contrasting the misuse of "humanitarian" as an adjective for military interventions. Guidelines were adopted to regulate and limit the Use of Military or Armed Escorts for humanitarian convoys<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> The shift to a *contiguuum* strategy is reflected in the second LRRD Communication from the EU Commission, published in 2001. Communication COM (2001) 153 on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) – An assessment.

<sup>62</sup> For more on this issue see Vaux T., "The Selfish Altruist. Relief Work in Famine and War", Routledge, 2001. Rieff D., "A Bed for the Night", Oxford University Press, 2003.

<sup>63</sup> The full details of NATO's policy on Civil-Military Co-operation are outlined in a Military Committee document MC 411/1, following the NATO Strategic Concept (SC 99).

<sup>64</sup> General Assembly Resolution 46/182 created the UN humanitarian system introducing its figures and structures (such as Emergency Relief Coordinator - ERC, Inter-Agency Standing Committee - IASC, Central Emergency Response Fund - CERF).

<sup>65</sup> The major discrepancies are related to "neutrality". It is definitely unconditional in the context of the RC/RC movement, while it can be combined with "particular political or religious opinions" in Non-Governmental Humanitarian Agencies (NGHAs), as stated in the Code of Conduct for the International RC/RC Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief, 1994.

<sup>66</sup> Often in multi-mandate NGOs, where the humanitarian goals are combined with human rights or development mandate.

<sup>67</sup> "Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies" an NGO network promoting effective humanitarian aid worldwide since 1992, and interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid.

<sup>68</sup> ReliefWeb was launched in October 1996 as a humanitarian information service provided by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

<sup>69</sup> "The Challenges of Complementarity", Report of the fourth workshop on protection for human rights and humanitarian organisations, ICRC (2000).

<sup>70</sup> "The Use of Military of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys. Discussion Paper and Non-Binding Guidelines", endorsed by the member of IASC in September 2001.

From another perspective the peacebuilding community too reacted. Even though based on a much narrower legal framework (few norms within the UN Charter, compared to thousands set in the IHL)<sup>71</sup>, also peace work could benefit from a well-defined set of principles with a strong normative reference. Indeed, the UN Charter set peace by peaceful means as a core value (although with sound safeguard exceptions). A long history of experiences from the field offered a solid background of good practices<sup>72</sup>. First conceived in the context of the largest international peace conference in history held by Civil Society (The Hague Appeal for Peace Conference 1999), a global initiative was launched to build a stand-by Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping global force as a “nonviolent peaceforce”<sup>73</sup>. It was based on principles appropriate to dealing with conflict dynamics (nonviolence, non-partisanship, local ownership), supporting the role of civilians in peacekeeping/building a wide range of activities. Following the input of the UN Secretary-General, a platform of NGOs for the prevention of armed conflict<sup>74</sup> was also created. It adopted a global action agenda to be put into practice working at local, regional and global level. Besides, experiences of the Civil Peace Service developed at national level, inspired by the mid '90s ideas of the European Civilian Peace Corps at European level<sup>75</sup> and the “White Helmets” at UN level<sup>76</sup>. These developments were supported by a dedicated civil society advocacy initiative<sup>77</sup>. At an operational level new tools were defined to adopt a “conflict sensitive” approach, to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of intervention on conflict whatever the sector of the intervention<sup>78</sup>.

**At the edge of the new millennium the international community faced new threats and challenges and was troubled by controversial developments in responding to gross human right violations in conflict areas. Civil society struggled to restore peacekeeping primary principles and approach, pledging for peace action by peaceful means with a central role of civilians. Despite relevant global initiatives, institutionalizing civilian peacekeeping was a partial and incomplete bid, with only few concrete steps undertaken (e.g., the European Civil Peace Corps as well as the “White Helmets” in the UN).**

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<sup>71</sup> Including both international treaties and customary law. For the latter see Customary International Humanitarian Law (CIHL) Study, ICRC, Henckaerts J-M and Doswald-Beck L, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 2005.

<sup>72</sup> E.g. Shanti Sena in India, peace army projects of the '30s, unarmed civilian protection developed from the '80s (Peace Brigades International). More details in “Civilian Peacekeeping: A Barely Tapped Resource”, edited by C. Schweitzer, Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, in cooperation with Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2010.

<sup>73</sup> The idea of a global organized entity was born during The Hague Appeal for Peace Conference (May 11 - 15 1999). A Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study was conducted in 2001 by C. Schweitzer, with support from the United States Institute of Peace. Nonviolent Peaceforce as a global NGO was then constituted in the 2002 Convening Event in Surajkund, India with peace advocates from 49 countries in attendance, including the Italian Civilian Research Study Centre (CSDC).

<sup>74</sup> Kofi Annan released a report on the prevention of armed conflict in 2001, urging NGOs with an interest in conflict prevention to organise an international conference of local, national and international NGOs on their role in conflict prevention and future interaction with the United Nations in this field. The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) was then created, as a global network of civil society organisations (CSOs) actively working on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The GPPAC global agenda was then adopted in 2005.

<sup>75</sup> Idea developed by Alex Langer. European Parliament Recommendation (A4-0047/99) on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps.

<sup>76</sup> “Participation of volunteers, White Helmets, in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development” (A/RES/50/19/1999). See also A/50/203/Add.1/1995, A/52/171/1997.

<sup>77</sup> The European Network for Civil Peace Services (ENCPS) was born at the 1999 Hague Peace Conference, as an international network of NGOs. The common goal was promoting Civil Peace Services (CPS) on a national and European level as an instrument of nonviolent conflict intervention.

<sup>78</sup> Anderson Mary B. “Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - or War”, Paperback 1999, was a milestone in the development of this approach. For further development see “Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) Handbook”, Peacebuilding Centre, Version 4, 2013.

## ***From a gender perspective***

In this evolving scenario - just at the edge of the millennium - momentum rose for a direct involvement in gender matters of the entity holding the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the UN Charter<sup>79</sup>: On 31<sup>st</sup> of October the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 (2000), an historical step that designed a blueprint in the process of mainstreaming gender in international cooperation. Women's protection had been already consolidated in the previous decades - as described in the preceding paragraphs - and was further developed around those years: thanks to the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, innovative provisions on gender-based crimes<sup>80</sup> were codified for the first time ever, and the Millennium Development Goals further expanded the political framework for gender equality and empowerment<sup>81</sup>.

The Security Council was then late in considering the relevance of being a man or woman with a dedicated resolution in 2000 but took advantage from its position to be the last not the least. The structure of the Resolution cuts across the main normative framework (human rights, IHL, *ius contra bellum*) projecting the gender perspective onto the whole picture. 1325 later became known as the "3Ps" Resolution, since it is based on three pillars: Participation, Protection, Prevention, plus Relief and Recover, indeed a model of the integrated/comprehensive approach that was in vogue from the '90s.

The core business relies on the aspects dealing with conflict dynamics, in accordance with the Security Council's mandate recalled in the Preamble.

The most innovative provisions are undoubtedly those related to *Participation*, to which the first four paragraphs are dedicated. These provisions support gender balance in peace and security matters: increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict; women participation at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes; more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on behalf of the UNSG (with a dedicated centralized roster) and in field-based operations (among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel).

*Protection* looks like a less forward-looking pillar, merely calling upon all parties to armed conflict to fully respect the applicable law. It actually refers to the international framework of the rights and protection of women and girls, especially civilians, whose major norms are explicitly mentioned (including the Geneva Conventions, CEDAW, and the ICC Statute)<sup>82</sup>. A couple of operational paragraphs (OP10, OP11) are specifically dedicated to gender-based violence, in particular rape and other forms of sexual abuse, asking the parties to take special measures to protect women and girls. 1325 also holds member States accountable for ending impunity and prosecuting those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls. The paragraph also stresses the need to exclude these crimes from amnesty provisions, although only "where feasible".

Last but not least the *Prevention* pillar. The Preamble acknowledges the "important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding", the first paragraph "urges Member States to

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<sup>79</sup> Chapter V, Article 24. "In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf".

<sup>80</sup> The International Criminal Court Statute established the International Criminal Court (ICC). It was adopted at a diplomatic conference in Rome, Italy on 17 July 1998 and entered into force on 1 July 2002. Art 7 and 8 include a wide range of gender-based crimes as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Article 7 (1) (g) lists rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity as a crime against humanity. Article 8 (2) (b) (xxii) lists rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization or any other form of sexual violence as a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions. Article 8 (e) (vi) lists rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization or any other form of sexual violence as a serious violation of article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions.

<sup>81</sup> Through two Goals in particular: MDG 3, Promote Gender Equality and Empower women; MDG 5, Improve Maternal Health.

<sup>82</sup> UNSCR 1325/2000, OP 9. It also includes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.

ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the *prevention*, management, and resolution of conflict". *Prevention of conflict* was also the inspiring aim of the earlier advocacy effort of civil society with most of the CSOs involved in the first coalition devoted to peacebuilding<sup>83</sup>. Thus, even though the 1325 text does not fully devote any specific item to Prevention, it should not just be intended as a moral instance but an effective provision, to be operationalized through specific actions (besides training and study included in the text, that can also contribute somehow to prevention)<sup>84</sup>. Later on, the indicators<sup>85</sup> and more recently the strategic results framework<sup>86</sup>, helped identify feasible concrete steps to advance implementation of this pillar, as well as identify its meaning: prevention of *conflict* alongside prevention of *gender-based violence*. That is undoubtedly a good match, on the assumption that the pillars are to be considered interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and that women's human rights violation is both cause of conflict and early warning sign. Nevertheless, when it comes to the operational level, the *Prevention* pillar looks the most neglected, and often remains left apart from the WPS Agenda or melts into the Protection pillar<sup>87</sup>.

The "additional" pillar also has a huge potential, particularly if intended not just as an action (*Relief and Recovery*) but more widely as an approach ("Gender Perspective"). The text indicates that a gender perspective is to be incorporated into peacekeeping operations, with the inclusion of a gender component even if only "where appropriate" (OP5). The gender perspective is also to be adopted "when negotiating and implementing peace agreements" by all actors involved (OP 8), regardless if men or women. It means to take into account the special needs of women and girls in specific circumstances<sup>88</sup> and to adopt measures to protect and respect their human rights in different areas<sup>89</sup>. In the same paragraph there is also a very crucial provision that goes even further beyond: it envisages measures to support "local women's peace initiatives", not targeted at women as such, and "indigenous processes for conflict resolution", not just targeted at women<sup>90</sup>. This is a highly significant requirement, that make 1325 a universal tool for gender approach and conflict resolution. The Resolution also calls for women to be involved in all the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements, supporting participation, while in one of the subsequent paragraphs also encourages considering the different needs of female and male ex-combatants<sup>91</sup>, reinforcing the gender perspective.

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<sup>83</sup> The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGO WG) was initially formed by: Amnesty International, International Alert, The Hague Appeal for Peace, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the International Peace Research Association, and the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

<sup>84</sup> UNSCR 1325/2000, OP 6 envisages training on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures; and OP 16 "study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution".

<sup>85</sup> UNSG report S/2010/173 (2010).

<sup>86</sup> UN "Strategic results framework on women, peace and security: 2011–2020" that provides a joint vision for action to advance implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions. In that framework: Goal 1 is related to "Prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations"; Outcome 1.1 refers to "Women contribute to and have access to the full range of conflict prevention systems".

<sup>87</sup> It is the case in the "Training Manual: A Gender Perspective in CSDP", (2006), E.G. Folke Bernadotte Academy (Swedish Agency for Peace, Security and Development, and a point of reference in the global effort to train military and civilians as well for implementing WPS UNSCRs).

<sup>88</sup> UNSCR 1325/2000 OP 8 (a) "During repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction".

<sup>89</sup> UNSCR 1325/2000 OP 8 (c) "Relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary".

<sup>90</sup> UNSCR 1325/2000 OP 8(b).

<sup>91</sup> UNSCR 1325/2000 OP 13 "In the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration".

To properly understand the inner value of all aspects of the Resolution it is useful to go beyond its wording<sup>92</sup> and consider the process of the adoption and the role of different stakeholders standing behind. If 1325 has broken ground on many levels, it is indeed “because of a very effective tripartite relationship between CSOs, the UN and Governments”<sup>93</sup>.

First and foremost, the UN, where the discourse on women and armed conflicts had been carried on after the Beijing conference, among agencies and delegations. But the decisive boost came from a comprehensive Review of gender issues in peacekeeping, organized by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Just a few months before the adoption of 1325 it recognized that “the presence of women do make a positive difference”, in terms of the efficiency of the missions. At that time, the context of peacekeeping missions was characterized by a high level of confrontation and concerns for peacekeepers safety as well as for their behaviour. Then, women’s presence revealed to be “not just fair” but also “beneficial”: to improve access and support for local women; to make male peacekeepers more reflective and responsible; to “broaden the repertoire of skills and styles available within the mission, with the likely effect of reducing conflict and confrontation”<sup>94</sup>.

Even if not explicitly mentioned as such in the text of Resolution 1325<sup>95</sup>, Civil Society played a leading role in the process as “the groundwork, the diplomacy and lobbying, the drafting and the redrafting was almost entirely its work”<sup>96</sup>. CSOs had been advocating for the acknowledgment of the active role of women in peace processes through networking<sup>97</sup> and campaigning<sup>98</sup>, and finally during an informal meeting with Security Council Representatives<sup>99</sup>. A great deal of good practices of non-violent conflict transformation had been collected, that were developed by women at the community level around the globe, outside the official negotiation tables. CSOs finally brought them to the heights of the Security Council, with the goal of promoting the role of women as agents of change alongside a new approach in dealing with conflict dynamics: participatory and inclusive. As a result, the reference to local women’s peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution was included in the text of 1325. This is where most of the “transformative power” of 1325 still lies, even though over time some other provisions of the resolution became prominent, related to women acting as third parties at leadership and field level (among diplomats, peacekeepers, and mediators).

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<sup>92</sup> For a detailed explanation: “Security Council Resolution 1325 Annotated and Explained”, UNIFEM.

<sup>93</sup> S. Anderlini, Conference “Putting Policies into Practice. Monitoring the Implementation of SCR 1325/1820/1888/1889: The Role of Civil Society”, FOKUS, UN-INSTRAW, MoFA. Oslo, Nov 11, 2009.

<sup>94</sup> Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action (S/2000/693). Review panel on “Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations”, Lessons Learned Unit of DPKO, May 2000.

<sup>95</sup> “In 2000 the Security Council was resistant to the term *civil society*”. *The better peace tool*, International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), 2015, pag.11.

<sup>96</sup> *Cit.* in Global Study 2015, p. 30.

<sup>97</sup> The Resolution was adopted thanks to the extensive lobbying of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGO WG). The NGOWG now focuses on implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325/2000 and all subsequent WPS resolutions; provides regular expert policy guidance on WPS; and monitors and holds the Security Council and other relevant actors at UN Headquarters accountable for their obligations under the WPS Agenda.

<sup>98</sup> A couple of the most relevant initiatives: 1. “Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table”, international campaign (with International Alert acting as campaign secretariat) to promote women's role in peacebuilding through partnership and participation of organisations on the ground; impacting policy on a global level; public awareness raising and the award of a Peace Prize for Women; it collected signatures to present to UN Secretary-General. 2. “Women Waging Peace Network”, launched in 1999 by Ambassador Swanee Hunt, to connect women peacemakers from conflict areas around the world with each other and with policy shapers.

<sup>99</sup> On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October civil society and NGOs representatives informally met with Security Council members (known as an Arria Formula meeting).

Some States and figures were also influential, most from the South of the world: Namibia, which presented 1325<sup>100</sup>; Canada which organized the “group of friends of 1325”<sup>101</sup>; Bangladesh<sup>102</sup> and Jamaica which also helped in keeping the process on track.

Finally, the various targets of the Resolution are to be mentioned, due to their relevance in the implementation process. A wide range of actors as various sectors are concerned: The United Nations (including the Secretary-General), Member States, the combatants themselves (traditional target of IHL).

With such a wide perspective, the Resolution was ready to represent not just a historical result, but also a solid basis to build on a solid machinery for implementation. It was progressively set up at different levels with the contribution of: Regional International Organizations (EU<sup>103</sup>, NATO<sup>104</sup>), the ICRC involvement on protection<sup>105</sup>, and of a growing number of CSOs and networks<sup>106</sup>, advocates and practitioners at different levels (from global to local).

**From the very beginning the WPS Agenda looked like a genuine representation of the momentum and characterized by a whole-of-system integrated approach, linking different sectors and different actors with different aims and modes of action.**

**Resolution 1325 is acting as a kaleidoscope: through it, different actors of the international community show up their different identities and concerns, while having to confront and dialogue with each other. The so-called 1325 “transformative power” - the most interesting, shadowy, and powerful aspect of the Resolution - is indeed also to be found in its own structure and function. On the one hand WPS Agenda provisions are targeted to different entities and can be prioritized and adapted to various types of organization, according to their own mandates and principles. On the other hand, WPS Agenda is a catalyst for different actors, and a means for dialogue and cultural mediation among the different stakeholders of the international scenario.**

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<sup>100</sup> On the 24th of October in an official Open Debate of the Security Council, Namibia presented a draft resolution for discussion.

<sup>101</sup> An informal or *ad hoc* group of UN Member States to advocate for the implementation of Resolution 1325.

<sup>102</sup> “As the first International Women’s Day of the new millennium is observed throughout the world, members of the Security Council recognize that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men”. Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, President of the UNSC in early 2000, Statement to the press 8th of March 2000 (SC/6816).

<sup>103</sup> The EU immediately reacted with the adoption of a European Parliament resolution on the participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution (2000/2025(INI)). Then the first dedicated policy was adopted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2008, EU Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the EU Commissioner for External Relations adopted the joint Commission and Council “Comprehensive EU Approach to the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security”. The policy was revised in 2019.

<sup>104</sup> The first formal NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace and Security in December 2007, with a focus on how gender perspectives apply in operational contexts. A first Action Plan to support the implementation of this Policy was endorsed at the Lisbon Summit in 2010, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. The Policy has been updated several times, most recently in 2018.

<sup>105</sup> In the ICRC study on the impact of armed conflict on women “Women facing war” in 2001, C. Lindsey maintained the “focus on women, not gender” explicitly avoiding the use of the term *gender* (p. 35, 36) and maintaining the original IHL approach, specifically focusing on protection and basic needs.

<sup>106</sup> Among the many: Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); International Civil Society Network (ICAN); The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP); Inclusive Security, Women in International Security (WIIS); Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS).

## 4. The war on terror and the new international scenario: new actors, evolving mandates and the WPS agenda towards a protection mandate.

### **Background**

New practices and “emerging rules” shaped new models for intervention and stretched UN peacekeeping to transitional administrations (in Kosovo and East Timor<sup>107</sup>). Complex and large peacekeeping operations were established in number of African Countries (Burundi, DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan), sometimes in uncertain environment and political context, not always with adequate capabilities and resources.

Major challenges had to be grappled with after the fall of the twin towers. A new shift in rules and principles of intervention occurred, with an impact also on the relations between local and international actors.

UN primacy in the maintenance of peace and security – already challenged by the intervention in Kosovo - was further weakened by State initiatives and *ad hoc* coalitions. Nevertheless, the UN and other international players (EU, OSCE, NATO, ECOWAS) were often involved in the stabilization processes. The perspectives turn out to be uncertain in many cases: in Afghanistan, where art. 5 was invoked for the first time in NATO history<sup>108</sup>; in Iraq where a highly controversial military intervention was launched by a narrow international coalition; in Mali with one country acting as driving force and agenda setter<sup>109</sup>; in Libya, where the R2P was first explicitly mentioned in a mission mandate<sup>110</sup>.

A number of initiatives were developed in order to restore the collective security system. A High-level Panel on “Threats, Challenges and Change” was created in 2003. One year later, the Panel report called for a broader, more comprehensive concept of collective security, and for comprehensive strategies. It specifically advocates for an effective and principled counter-terrorism strategy to be developed by the UN. Basic criteria for a legitimate use of force were also identified (proper purpose; last resort; proportional means; balance of consequences)<sup>111</sup>. In response, in 2005 the UN Secretary-General report “In larger freedom” reiterated the need for an integrated approach, including development, security and human rights (freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom to live in dignity). Reaffirming the imperative of collective action and the central role of the Security Council in the area of peace and security, the report recommended the adoption of a Security Council resolution setting out specific principles<sup>112</sup> to authorize or endorse the use of military force, particularly in the case of preventive action (seriousness of the threat; proper purpose; proportionality; chances of success also of other means). However, only a few months later, the 2005 World Summit, one of the largest gatherings of world leaders in history, was a missed opportunity to better define collective action addressing the scourge of terrorism. It instead<sup>113</sup> succeeded in pushing the agenda forward

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<sup>107</sup> United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established by the Security Council in 1999. In East Timor the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) provided an interim civil administration in the territory, from October 1999.

<sup>108</sup> So did the USA as reaction to the 11/9 terrorist attacks.

<sup>109</sup> France, driving force besides western and EU engagement.

<sup>110</sup> UNSCR 1970/2011.

<sup>111</sup> “A more secure world: our shared responsibility. Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change” (A/59/565) published in December 2004.

<sup>112</sup> “In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all” (A/59/2005). Para 126 “The task is not to find alternatives to the Security Council as a source of authority but to make it work better. When considering whether to authorize or endorse the use of military force, the Council should come to a common view on how to weigh the seriousness of the threat; the proper purpose of the proposed military action; whether means short of the use of force might plausibly succeed in stopping the threat; whether the military option is proportional to the threat at hand; and whether there is a reasonable chance of success”.

<sup>113</sup> According to the ICISS even if developed to address different situations the precautionary principles outlined for the R2P are relevant to military operations, multilateral and unilateral, against terrorism.

in the field of human protection with the codification of the “Responsibility to Protect”<sup>114</sup> as possible action to be taken when “peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”. The Summit marks an important step in the broad peace agenda since it establishes the Peacebuilding Commission, an advisory body supporting and coordinating peace efforts in conflict affected countries. The new Peacebuilding entities (including the Commission, and related Fund and Support Office) will contribute to fill the gap with the protection sector and the humanitarian machinery already expanding for more than a decade.

The new trends were echoed at the operational level. Peacekeeping principles and guidelines were re-defined in the “Capstone Doctrine” in 2008. Recalling the “robust” version of peacekeeping - already introduced in the 2000 Brahimi report - the use of force, although limited to the tactical level, surpassed the limit of self-defence, becoming a means of protecting not just the peacekeeping troops but also the peacekeeping mission’s mandate<sup>115</sup>.

The UN commitment in the protection sector was later confirmed with studies<sup>116</sup> and operational dedicated tools, while the Security Council was increasing the number of resolutions dedicated to the Protection of Civilians<sup>117</sup>. Humanitarian action was further organized in 2006 with a new “cluster” approach, grouping humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN<sup>118</sup>.

In a such changing scenario, particularly in situations where there is little or no peace to keep, the divergence of principles and mandates of the different entities involved progressively widen, both within the UN and outside<sup>119</sup>. Even the traditional dialogue and complementarity between the humanitarian and human rights communities - based on the common goal of protection - looks quite tricky in the context of the R2P<sup>120</sup>, where the responsibility to react tends to prevail on the other two key elements (responsibilities to prevent and to rebuild)<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> 2005 World Summit outcome document (A/RES/60/1), para 138 – 140 “Responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”.

<sup>115</sup> “United Nations military units must be capable of defending themselves, other mission components and the mission’s mandate. Rules of engagement should not limit contingents to stroke-for-stroke responses but should allow ripostes sufficient to silence a source of deadly fire that is directed at United Nations troops or at the people they are charged to protect and, in particularly dangerous situations, should not force United Nations contingents to cede the initiative to their attackers”. Capstone Doctrine, “United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines”, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), 2008, p.34. See also footnote 55 on “Brahimi Report”.

<sup>116</sup> Independent study “To stay and deliver. Good practice for humanitarians in complex security environments”, commissioned by the OCHA in 2011. The annex 4 “normative basis related to operations in complex security environment” includes, before UNSC dedicated resolutions, selected norms of IHL, HRL, refugee law, international criminal law.

<sup>117</sup> Reinforcing the first one already mentioned (1265 /1999), many other PoC resolutions were adopted, reaffirming the R2P 1674(2006) and also concerning specific categories such as children, humanitarian personnel, journalists, care workers, persons with disabilities in conflict including UNSCR 1296(2000),1502(2003), 1738(2006), 1894 (2009), 2175(2014), UNSCR 2222(2015), UNSCR 2286(2016), 2417 (2018), 2474 (2019), 2475 (2019).

<sup>118</sup> A Humanitarian Reform Agenda in 2006 then introduces the “Cluster Approach”, grouping humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action (e.g. water, health and logistics) under the coordination of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

<sup>119</sup> “In situation where there is little or no peace to keep integration may create difficulties for humanitarian and development partners, particularly if they are perceived to be too closely linked to the political and security objectives of the peacekeeping mission”. “Capstone Doctrine” *cit.* p.54.

<sup>120</sup> See “Human Rights and Humanitarian Action: a review of the issues”, a background paper prepared for the workshop on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action convened by the IASC Sub-Working Group and co-hosted by UNICEF, the UN High Commission for Human Rights and International Council of Voluntary Agencies, Geneva, April 2004.

<sup>121</sup> In 2012 UN General Assembly Resolution underlined that “Human security” is a concept distinct from the R2P, which does not entail the threat or the use of force or coercive measures being “people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-

Nevertheless, the need for integrated action increases for all actors, although with different mix of reasons behind, from coherence to efficiency, leadership and legitimacy. The “integrated/comprehensive approach”, already experienced in the field in the previous phase, then became a global trend in the International Community policies, with the adoption of dedicated official documents and the use of dedicated, analogous structures and tools in the field<sup>122</sup>. Some differences in terminology, meaning and interpretation<sup>123</sup> somehow recall the different identities and interests of each player. Thus, in 2010, to fight against terrorism, to protect stability and to respond to hybrid threats, NATO adopted a “comprehensive approach”<sup>124</sup> involving not only military but also political and civilian instruments. At EU level, a “comprehensive approach” to external conflict and crisis was defined in 2013<sup>125</sup>. In the OSCE - where cross dimensional activities are connected with the inner structure based on three baskets (politico-military; economic-environmental; human dimension) an integrated approach to security was outlined as “cooperative security” in 2003<sup>126</sup>. The AU also followed the trend and adopted the UN terminology (i.e., Integrated approach).

These policy frameworks support the development of the integrated approach and related tools in different meaning and dimensions.

In the narrow meaning, “integrated approach” means civil-military coordination. That is particularly relevant where there is a lack of or limited deployable civilian capabilities, as in NATO where CIMIC was first defined. The UN speaks the same language in this endeavour (UN CIMIC), yet with dissimilar meaning: UN CIMIC is “not intelligence, nor winning hearts and minds strategy”<sup>127</sup> and is to maximize the advantage of “all the actors” in the mission area<sup>128</sup>. Moreover, the UN has a double structure dedicated to interaction between civilian and military actors<sup>129</sup>, including one that is just aimed at protecting and promoting humanitarian principles (UN CMCoord). The UN also cautiously regulates civil-military interaction in the context of complex emergencies with dedicated guidelines<sup>130</sup> (allowing no direct assistance in combat missions)<sup>131</sup>. Also in the EU context CIMIC is used and modelled on the NATO concept, besides the European Concept of Civil-

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oriented”. It indeed strengthens the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities; and recognizes the interlinkages between peace, development and human rights (A/RES/66/290).

<sup>122</sup> Cécile Wendling, “The Comprehensive Approach to Civil-Military Crisis Management: A Critical Analysis and Perspective” (2010).

<sup>123</sup> E. g. according to the NATO CIMIC Handbook “NATO decided to not develop and publish any definition on what comprehensive approach exactly is, not to claim ownership. Rather, NATO encourages all responders to a crisis to participate within a comprehensive approach for improving the overall success of the international community’s mission. Thus, comprehensive approach is a mind-set aiming for synergies by coordinating or at least de-conflicting political, humanitarian, development and security efforts”.

<sup>124</sup> NATO’s new Strategic Concept was adopted at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010.

<sup>125</sup> European Parliament and the Council Joint Communication “The EU’s comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises”, (JOIN/2013/030 final), 11 December 2013.

<sup>126</sup> “OSCE Strategy to Address Threat to Security and Stability in the Twenty – First Century”, 2003.

<sup>127</sup> United Nations Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CIMIC) Specialized Training Materials, 2014.

<sup>128</sup> “Civil military Coordination in UN integrated Peacekeeping Missions (UN-CIMIC)”, DPKO DFS Policy, 2010, revised 2013.

<sup>129</sup> UN CMCoord is to promote and protect humanitarian principles and pursue common goals only when appropriate. UN CIMIC is instead the military staff function and a mission coordination tool.

<sup>130</sup> “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies” (March 2003). They complement the first one adopted in the ‘90s related to disasters: the Oslo guidelines (Guidelines on The Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief) released in May 1994 and revised in 2007. Country specific guidelines on interaction between military and civilian actors were also developed, e.g. for Afghanistan (2002), Iraq (2003), Liberia (2006).

<sup>131</sup> The main concern is to ensure a clear distinction between the roles of the military and humanitarian actors and to modulate the coordination system with criteria varying from cooperation to coexistence as the intensity of the military operation increases towards combat.

Military Coordination (CMCO) related to the political and strategic level<sup>132</sup>. In order to stabilize the area and find an often-difficult exit strategy also Civilian capacities<sup>133</sup> and Civil Affairs<sup>134</sup> are also broadly used, both at UN and State level.

"Integrated approach" also means integration of international and local actors, and so Quick Impact Projects (QIP), as small scale rapidly implementable projects to establish and build confidence of the local population in the mission area, are in use both within the UN system and outside<sup>135</sup> (as in Afghanistan in the context of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams - PRT).

The "integrated approach" is also commonly used as "interagency approach", namely integrated planning within the organization. Policies and tools to reorganize political, development and humanitarian action are so developed in this field, starting from the UN, the organization with the longest experience<sup>136</sup> and capacity<sup>137</sup>.

In the broader sense "integrated approach" implies better harmonization and coordination of all actors. The UN peacekeeping reform for the new decade<sup>138</sup> and the internal debate<sup>139</sup> reaffirm UN peacekeeping as a "unique global partnership" with a shared agenda. Among all the players involved, the CSOs are considered as an integral part of the system, a strategic partner for military actors as well. They also get ready for the new dynamics, adopting specific guidelines to regulate the interaction with the military component<sup>140</sup> and formulating specific recommendations<sup>141</sup> to protect their identities and modes of action. The Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement also adopted its own internal guidance, taking into account the auxiliary role of National Societies<sup>142</sup> as well as the presence of military components in some of them<sup>143</sup>.

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<sup>132</sup> CIMIC is used to deal with operational and tactic support, CMCO concerns the civil-military links on the political and strategic level. Council of the EU "Civil-Military Coordination" (CMCO), Brussels, November 2003.

<sup>133</sup> "Civilian capacities in the aftermath of conflict", Report of the Secretary-General, (A/66/311–S/2011/527).

<sup>134</sup> Civil Affairs Policy directive, UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, 2008. See also dedicated Handbook, UN Department of Field Support, 2012.

<sup>135</sup> Policy on Quick Impact Projects, UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, 2013.

<sup>136</sup> E.g. In Kosovo, where UNMIK was governed by four pillar structure, with the UN in charge of civil administration, UNHCR in control of the humanitarian aid programme, the OSCE responsible for democratization and institution building, EU for economic reconstruction.

<sup>137</sup> The Brahimi report had already envisaged the creation of an Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF) in 2000. Further developments in "Integrated Assessment and Planning" (2013).

<sup>138</sup> In 2006 the Department of Peacekeeping Operations prepared a reform strategy entitled "Peace operations 2010" that would set out the policies and procedures necessary to enable it to support peacekeeping over the next decade (key areas: personnel; doctrine; partnerships; resources; organization).

<sup>139</sup> "A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping" is an internal document prepared as part of the "New Horizon" paper, which was released to Member States and peacekeeping partners in July 2009.

<sup>140</sup> E.g.: Caritas Internationalis, "Relations with the Military" (2006); Interaction, "Guidelines for Relations between U.S. Armed Forces and Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organisations in Hostile or Potentially Hostile Environments" (2007); Oxfam International, "Multi-Dimensional Military Missions and Humanitarian Assistance" (2008); CARE International, "Policy Framework for CARE International's Relations with Military Forces" (2009); Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, "Position paper on humanitarian-military relations" (2010).

<sup>141</sup> E.g.: "Humanitarian aid and the EU Comprehensive approach: Recommendations", VOICE (Voluntary Organization in Cooperation in Emergencies), General Assembly Resolution, May 2003.

<sup>142</sup> For an in-depth analysis see 30<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent, November 2007, Resolution 2 and annex background document "The specific nature of the RC/RC Movement in action and partnerships and the role of National Societies as auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field".

<sup>143</sup> Council of Delegates 2005: Resolution 7, "Guidance document on relations between the components of the Movement and military bodies".

To face the new challenges and different kinds of threats of the new millennium (particularly the scourge of terrorism), the international community developed new forms of military intervention, with a tendency towards unilateralism. Nevertheless, comprehensiveness and integration, within and outside the organizations, is a common trend in policies at the global and regional level, involving a wide spectrum of instruments and actors (including CSO).

Thus, while civil-military cooperation evolves with new structures and tools, boundaries in identities and roles of different entities and actors are reinforced with the adoption of specific operational guidelines (particularly regarding civil-military relations).

The Security Council itself, endorsing the importance of the multidimensional approach to peacekeeping, underlines the relevance of “clarity on roles and responsibilities of United Nations peacekeeping operations, United Nations country teams and other relevant actors”<sup>144</sup>.

### *From a gender perspective*

The predominance of protection in the international action for peace and security is reflected in the broadening of the WPS Agenda: in 2008 a new resolution was adopted which targeted conflict-related sexual violence (UNSCR 1820/2008), acknowledging that sexual violence when “used or commissioned” as a tactic of war to target civilians can be a threat to international peace and security. This time decisive support was offered by new players from the western side of the globe, with the United States taking the lead also in this endeavour. 1820 strengthens the WPS framework, establishing the exclusion of sexual violence from amnesty provisions (in 1325 excluded only “when feasible”)<sup>145</sup>. It also includes relevant new provisions, such as *zero tolerance* of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations, a serious misconduct previously addressed only in code of conduct for peacekeepers and in a Secretary-General’s dedicated Bulletin<sup>146</sup>. Referral to the Peacebuilding Commission<sup>147</sup>, the role of UNAction<sup>148</sup>, the use of sanctions<sup>149</sup> are reinforcing the framework. Overall, and despite the focus on protection, 1820 is unquestionably a WPS resolution: in the first paragraph, it puts sexual violence within the framework of international peace and security; then, it makes an explicit push for the equal and full participation of women in decision-making processes in prevention, resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding<sup>150</sup>. Also, the way the Resolution tackles violence goes beyond the traditional approach: it addresses the root causes asking all parties to conflict to take measures that could include *inter alia* “debunking myths that fuel sexual violence”<sup>151</sup>, and it puts emphasis on prevention also with awareness and training activities and guidelines on the matter.

The more the complexity of the scenario developed, the more the framework of WPS became multifaceted, including new resolutions and turning into a comprehensive international Agenda.

In the field of *protection*: UNSC Resolution 1888/2009, strengthening 1820, established figures and structures dedicated to responding to conflict-related sexual violence (a dedicated Secretary-General

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<sup>144</sup> UNSCR 2086 /2013.

<sup>145</sup> UNSCR 1820/2008, OP 4.

<sup>146</sup> “Ten rules. Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets”, 1998; “Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse” (ST/SGB/2003/13).

<sup>147</sup> Indeed 1325 had no reference to the Peacebuilding Commission, which was established in 2005.

<sup>148</sup> Interagency group chaired by UNDP which brings together the work of 12 agencies in preventing gender-based violence in conflict.

<sup>149</sup> In 1325 there was no mention of sanctions for perpetrators, but only the impact of sanctions on women.

<sup>150</sup> UNSCR 1820, OP 12.

<sup>151</sup> UNSCR 1820, OP 3.

Special Representative, Teams of judicial Experts, Women Protection Advisers in peacekeeping). Then, UNSC Resolution 1960/2010 provided the system with monitoring analysis and a reporting instrument (MARA), including Secretary-General specific annual reports with a naming and shaming mechanism. Later on, UNSC Resolution 2106/2013 added up advanced elements of gender approach and intersectionality, *inter alia* noting that sexual violence affects also men and boys and recognizing the importance of timely assistance to survivors (including sexual and reproductive health) and the specific needs of women with disabilities<sup>152</sup>. A reference to disarmament and the Arms Trade Treaty as well as the role of the CSO networks in this field are also included. Despite a constant referral to participation<sup>153</sup>, WPS Resolutions focusing on protection finally prevailed over time.

In the field of *participation*: other new resolutions focusing on women's active and effective *participation* in peace and security matters were adopted, presented by new countries. UNSC Resolution 1889/2009, presented by Vietnam, categorically reaffirmed the need to focus not only on protection of women but also on their empowerment in peacebuilding, and to contrast the tendency to consider women as victims rather than actors in addressing and resolving situations of armed conflicts. It specifically requested the formulation of a strategy to increase women's participation in conflict resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding. The Resolution did not introduce new concepts, but it is important because - also in view of the upcoming 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the stocktaking that would be taking place - it asked for specific tools that would prove relevant to implementation and accountability: the indicators. Provisions concerning consultation of civil society and support for women's organization, as well as countering negative societal attitudes about women's capacity to participate equally, made the language of this Resolution absolutely progressive<sup>154</sup>. Some years later UNSC Resolution 2122/2013, presented by Azerbaijan, reiterated the request for a "consistent" implementation of 1325 starting from monitoring. In this regard, the last part of the Resolution invited the UN Secretary-General to commission a global study to identify gaps and challenges, in the perspective of the 2015 peace and security review. The Resolution asked for more attention on women's leadership and participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The UNSC committed to pay attention to WPS issues in its own work, also in the establishment of renewal of UN missions. It assigned a relevant role to civil society, acknowledging its "crucial contribution", in conflict prevention/resolution and maintenance of peace and security and post- conflict peacebuilding. 2122 marks a decisive step in this regard envisaging: consultation and interactive meetings with civil society, including with local women and women's organization, with leaders as well as with socially and /or economically excluded groups of women; a funding mechanism to support the work and capacities of organizations that support women's leadership and participation<sup>155</sup>. The Resolution also refers to protection-related issues (impunity and reparations): local civil society networks are to be supported also to provide sustainable assistance to women and girls affected by conflict<sup>156</sup>. Combining participation with protection, the Resolution confirms what its preamble stated, according to a general trend of the international community: sustainable peace requires an integrated approach.

Concerning the actors: in all the new resolutions the role of local women and civil society organizations, including women's organizations, was acknowledged and explicitly mentioned<sup>157</sup>, progressively becoming structural part of the implementation mechanism. Encouraged by the Security Council<sup>158</sup>, Member States

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<sup>152</sup> UNSCR 2106, OP 19.

<sup>153</sup> UNSCR 1820, OP 12; UNSCR 1888, OP 16; UNSCR 2106, OP 5. In the subsequent Resolution 2467/2019, OP 20, 23.

<sup>154</sup> UNSCR 1889, OP1.

<sup>155</sup> UNSCR 2122, OP 7 (a, b).

<sup>156</sup> UNSCR 2122, OP 11.

<sup>157</sup> See UNSCR on WPS: 1820, OP10; 1888, OP 4,14,26; 1889, OP 6,9,10,11; 1960, OP8; 2106, OP 11,12,19,20, 21; 2122, OP 2c), 6, 7,11.; 2242, OP 1-3, 5, 11-13,15,16; 2467, OP 13, 19, 21, 35.; 2493 OP 4,5.

<sup>158</sup> Presidential Statement S/PRST/2004/40.

also became key: from 2005 when Denmark adopted the first ever National Action Plan (NAP), until today with more than 80 NAPs in place around the globe<sup>159</sup>. NAPs turned out to play a vital role also as an important playground of dialogue among all stakeholders at a national level: triggers of a “living process” where “political leadership, line ministries, the armed forces, the police and civil society become connected, and should continue to partner on monitoring and implementation”<sup>160</sup>.

**Years after the adoption of 1325, additional resolutions on WPS were adopted with a rapid rate (in 2009 and 2013 two in the same year). The building of the international WPS Agenda is based on the basic structure on 1325 (3Ps) and developed in accordance with the international community policies and trends: focus on protection, integration among sectors and actors.**

**The key role of civil society in the general multi-stakeholder dynamic is also confirmed in the new UNSC Resolutions on WPS, where CSOs are finally explicitly mentioned as such and become a standard reference over time. Also, the centrality of States in peace and security matters is reflected in WPS agenda, with the crucial role of National Action Plans in implementation.**

## 5. The UN and WPS agenda: recent developments and today’s challenges

### *Background*

The more the conflict dynamics develop and change, the more the international cooperation system shows a high level of complexity and fragmentation. The international community is facing new and old threats, from the spread of violent extremism as international phenomenon to the new rise of local and regional conflicts. Besides, the challenge of unsolved crisis persists. Acts of terrorism cause loss of lives and destruction, and wide areas fall under the threat or the control of extremist organizations and groups (e.g., Daesh). Even the notions of inter-state and intra-state conflict have blurred.

Old and new actors are involved. States are playing a leading role with even the definition of “terrorism” and “violent extremism” left to their prerogative. Counter-terrorism activities are defined and implemented by fluid coalitions and bilateral cooperation. Security measures based on traditional national law enforcement and security agencies are employed. Massive intelligence and strategic communication are used as well as unmanned vehicles and drones. Armed non-state actors are entering and animating the scenario, with private security companies and foreign fighters increasingly engaged.

The UN is indeed “not well placed to play an active operational role” in this context, neither to suppress terrorist groups, nor to pre-empt specific terrorist strikes, also due to the lack of intelligence capacities<sup>161</sup>. Still its action proved crucial in many ways: to promote collective efforts<sup>162</sup>; to underscore the importance of prevention<sup>163</sup>; to monitor that any measures taken by Member States to prevent and combat terrorism fully comply with the UN Charter and are consistent with their obligations under human rights law (already jeopardized by the extremist groups themselves). The UN approach to counterterrorism entails a crucial

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<sup>159</sup> As of August 2020, 86 UN Member States (45% of all UN Member States) have UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans (NAPs). For updates see [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org), the Women, Peace and Security Programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

<sup>160</sup> Mary Robinson, Foreword “Putting policy into practice: Monitoring the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security”, Gwendolyn Beetham and Nicola Popovic, UN-INSTRAW, Working Paper Series, 2010.

<sup>161</sup> Report of the Policy Working Group on the UN and Terrorism, (A/57/273) – S/2002/875.

<sup>162</sup> The General Assembly has taken a practical approach to counterterrorism through the adoption by consensus of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288) in 2006. Number of UNSCR are also relevant in this field, from UNSCR 1373(2001) to UNSCR 2178 (2014) on foreign fighters.

<sup>163</sup> “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism” (A/70/674) adopted in 2015.

broadening of the Peace and Security Agenda including not just women but also the youth, leading to the adoption of the first ever Security Council Resolution on “Youth, Peace and Security”<sup>164</sup>.

In 2015 the UN engaged in a three-fold review of the peace and security sector, based on independent analysis (on peace operations; peacebuilding architecture; women, peace and security). The Report of the High-Level Independent Panel of Peace Operations (the so-called HIPPO report)<sup>165</sup> reaffirmed that politics must drive the design and implementation of what it seeks to be broadly called “peace operations”. In line with the comprehensive approach, the report called for a stronger, more inclusive peace and security partnership and for peace operations to be more people-centred. It also confirmed the trend of recent decades, putting new emphasis on the protection of civilians (PoC). A very innovative passage acknowledges the importance of “unarmed strategies” that also non-governmental actors put in place and asked missions to make every effort “to harness or leverage the non-violent practices and capabilities of local communities and non-governmental organizations to support the creation of a protective environment”<sup>166</sup> (unfortunately only related to PoC, and later missing in the UNSG’s report reply)<sup>167</sup>. Besides, the report affirmed that to protect civilians and UN personnel when facing asymmetric threats in the mission area, pre-emptive and preventive posture as well as willingness to use force could be used. Flexibility and progressive interpretation of principles were also allowed, in a volatile setting. The other two pillars of the review more decisively bolstered the civilian perspectives. The report of the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE Report) in charge for the review of the Peacebuilding Architecture reinforced the idea of alternative options to forms of militarized responses and short-term security, in order to achieve a “sustainable peace”<sup>168</sup>: a new concept addressing the root causes of conflict with a holistic approach with the involvement of a variety of stakeholders, including the civil society and specifically women and the youth<sup>169</sup>. In the other report, the so called “Global Study on WPS”, the title itself foreshadowed the approach, that is definitely conflict prevention and transformation oriented<sup>170</sup>. Among the key messages of the impressive inquiry<sup>171</sup> of more than four hundred pages, two are emblematic: women’s engagement in peace processes is conducive of shift in dynamics and a broadening of the issue discussed (increasing the chances of community-buy in and addressing root causes); the WPS Agenda “is about ending conflict not making conflict safer for women”. The Global Study also makes explicit mention of UCP (Unarmed Civilian Protection) as a methodology that has grown in practice and recognition and that has especially proven its effectiveness to protect women and girls<sup>172</sup>.

The primacy of politics, with peacekeeping in a supporting role, and a renewed attention to civil society and local populations are more recently confirmed in Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), a new initiative aimed at

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<sup>164</sup> UNSCR 2250/2015, then followed by UNSCR 2419/2018 and UNSCR 2535/2020.

<sup>165</sup> “Uniting our Strengths for Peace. Politics, Partnership and People: Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations”, 16 June 2015, United Nations (A/70/95-S/2015/446).

<sup>166</sup> *Idem*, *cit.* para 87.

<sup>167</sup> Noted by Mel Duncan in a symposium held in Bonn (Germany), on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2010 on “Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping”. Organized by *Bund für Soziale Verteidigung* (Federation for Social Defence).

<sup>168</sup> “The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture”, 2015, para 121 (A/69/968 - S/2015/490).

<sup>169</sup> See also 2016 twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282).

<sup>170</sup> “Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325” *cit.* p. 191 ff “The world has lost sight of some of the key demands of the women’s movement while advocating for the adoption of resolution 1325: reducing military expenditures, controlling the availability of armaments, promoting non-violent forms of conflict resolution, and fostering a culture of peace” (S/2015/716).

<sup>171</sup> 60 Member States, regional organizations and UN entities responded to requests for submissions, and 47 civil society organizations, academics and research institutions provided inputs via a public website. A survey of civil society organizations managed by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, Cordaid, and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security generated responses from 317 organizations in 71 countries.

<sup>172</sup> Global Study *cit.*, p. 157.

renewing mutual political commitment to peace operations. Although calling for strong collective action for advancing political solutions to conflict, also this time the UN proves quite weak in establishing clear rules for the use of force<sup>173</sup>, allowing “all necessary means when required” to implement the mandate. More recently, in the context of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, the Secretary-General set up priorities for 2020 stating that prevention must orient all actions across the peace continuum, as well as the need to focus on the roots of crisis and upheaval. Besides, it is reaffirmed that, when there is no peace to keep, the need is to create the conditions for effective and funded peace enforcement and counter-terrorism operations by regional partners<sup>174</sup>. The UN compromise attitude and language persisting in recent documents reveal that the longstanding debate about the use of force is not yet over. Even though the challenge of a political solution persists, the reform of the UN peace and security infrastructure – bringing together the former Department of Political Affairs and the Peacebuilding Support Office<sup>175</sup> - seems to pave the way towards a more coherent enhanced action in this direction.

The international community shows indeed great commitment and more alignment in humanitarian affairs. In 2016 the first ever World Humanitarian Summit was held in Istanbul<sup>176</sup>. Political leadership and the prevention of armed conflict was in the forefront of the five core responsibilities adopted in the “Agenda for Humanity”<sup>177</sup>, but of course the agenda essentially focuses on humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability, with the aim to increase efficiency and effectiveness. The “tyranny of the emergency” is today also instigated by the climate change’s dangerous effects, and more recently by the COVID-19 pandemic. Disaster risk management is a global priority with a worldwide commitment to developing international, regional and domestic legal instruments and framework of action<sup>178</sup>. Also, in this area little attention has been devoted to the political aspects and implications<sup>179</sup>, as well as the fact that less progress has been made in addressing the impact on international peace and security (as for the UN Secretary-General’s Appeal for Global Ceasefire of March 2020, finally enclosed in a SC Resolution that still remains unheard)<sup>180</sup>. Regarding actors, the World Humanitarian Summit assigns a major role to local humanitarian ones. Moreover, the Summit marks a significant additional step towards integration, launching the “New Way of Working”. This innovative approach initially bridged the humanitarian-development divide, and later extended, thanks to

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<sup>173</sup> Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operation (para10), 2018. See also Sherman J., “Action for Peacekeeping: Will Political Consensus Lead to Change in Practice?”, International Peace Institute, September 2018.

<sup>174</sup> “Prevention must orient all we do as we engage across the peace continuum. We must strengthen our mediation capacity and our tools for sustaining peace, leading to long-term development. Our Action for Peacekeeping initiative is enhancing performance and safety. We are becoming more effective in the protection of civilians, and we have more female peacekeepers than ever before. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security is also an opportunity to further match words with deeds. At the same time, we know peacekeeping is not enough where there is no peace to keep. We need to create the conditions for effective peace enforcement and counter-terrorism operations by our regional partners, under chapter VII of the Charter and with predictable funding”. Guterres A., Remarks to the General Assembly on the Secretary-General’s priorities for 2020, 22 January 2020.

<sup>175</sup> The Department was established on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019. DPA and the former Department of Peacekeeping Operations (now the Department of Peace Operations, or DPO) also merged their previously parallel regional divisions to create a single structure.

<sup>176</sup> In Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016. It brought together some 9,000 participants representing 180 Member States, over 700 local and international NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders.

<sup>177</sup> Annex to the Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit (A/70/709, 2 February 2016).

<sup>178</sup> International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) 1999; Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015); Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030); UN framework Convention on climate change, and subsequent Paris agreement (2015). An emerging area of international law - International Disaster Relief Law (IDRL) - is specifically designed to improve the humanitarian response to natural disasters.

<sup>179</sup> “(...) less progress has been made in addressing the risk of social and political instability, insecurity and conflict that arise from the interaction of climate change and social economic demographic and political factors”, concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “addressing the impact of climate-related disaster on international peace and security” of 25 January 2019. The Security Council met the first time to discuss climate change in April 2007.

<sup>180</sup> UNSCR 2532/2020.

the newly elected Secretary-General Guterres, to a third leg “sustainable peace”, becoming the very topical “triple nexus” with the ambitious perspective of “collective outcomes”<sup>181</sup>. The inclusion on equal footing of peace in the overarching picture is the ground-breaking aspect and major challenge.

Also, in the centre stage 2030 Agenda<sup>182</sup>, renewing the Development Agenda, peace and justice are fully included (SDG 16)<sup>183</sup>, besides the more traditional issues (poverty, inequality, women’s empowerment) and along with the new concerns (climate change, environmental degradation). To implement such a comprehensive agenda, inclusive partnerships are foreseen with all major stakeholders, including governments, the private sector and civil society (SDG 17). Even the most conventional humanitarian entity, the ICRC, is now exploring the connection of humanitarian action to broader objectives like peace, development, and human rights<sup>184</sup>. Also in the CSO community, the number of multi-mandate organizations is increasing: complementary of action in different policy areas (humanitarian, development, peacebuilding) may make them easier to relate more quickly, fully and realistically to people’s needs, to fit with the donor request and to work in operational environment of uncertain classification (post emergency - post conflict – transition - stabilization), even when the reality on the ground is not fully consistent with the political definition of the situation<sup>185</sup>.

The overall trend is confirmed: peace and security, humanitarian, development new frameworks show a system highly interconnected. Comprehensive/integrated approach continues to be endorsed<sup>186</sup> by different actors from the global (UN<sup>187</sup>) to regional (EU<sup>188</sup>, NATO<sup>189</sup>) level. The new policies envisaging cooperation among all actors of the international community now include new entities, such as private business and media. Also, a common concern on the differences of the various mandates, roles, aims, and legal framework of the stakeholders involved is confirmed, particularly relating to action in conflict areas<sup>190</sup>. Today the issue of inconsistency of mandates, modes of actions and principles is also part of the internal debate in organizations of civil society with multiple mandates.

In terms of actors’ dynamics, after civil-military cooperation, the hybridization of public and private entities is indeed the new trend. Private business is playing an increasingly relevant role in development<sup>191</sup>, as well

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<sup>181</sup> The New Way of Working can be described, in short, as working over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system, towards collective outcomes. Wherever possible, those efforts should reinforce and strengthen the capacities that already exist at national and local level (OCHA 2017).

<sup>182</sup> “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (A/RES/70/1), October 2015.

<sup>183</sup> “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies” coupled with “access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

<sup>184</sup> Maurer P., “The Contribution of Humanitarian Action to Peace”, IPS, Stockholm, May 2019.

<sup>185</sup> Slim H., Bradley M., “Principled Humanitarian Action & Ethical Tensions in Multi-Mandate Organizations in Armed Conflict”, World Vision, March 2013.

<sup>186</sup> For a comparative analysis, see also Loes Debuysere & Steven Blockmans “Crisis Responders: Comparing Policy Approaches of the EU, the UN, NATO and OSCE with Experiences in the Field”, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Volume 24, no.3 (2019).

<sup>187</sup> Partnership is the last point of A4P initiative: see “Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations” *cit.*

<sup>188</sup> “Conclusions on the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises” adopted by the Council of 22 January 2018. It marks the evolution of the Comprehensive Approach into the Integrated Approach, that is the multilevel, multiphase, multilateral framework approach for a more coherent and holistic engagement by the EU.

<sup>189</sup> NATO reviewed the tasks of its 2011 Comprehensive Approach Action Plan in December 2017, validating the importance of civilian-military interaction and cooperation with other actors. These tasks are being implemented by a dedicated civilian-military task force that involves all relevant NATO bodies and commands.

<sup>190</sup> E.g.: in the “EU Integrated Approach to external conflict and crises” *cit.* the Council “respect and reaffirm” these differences, and EU humanitarian aid is ‘In-But-Out’ with regard to the Integrated Approach.

<sup>191</sup> <https://business.globalgoals.org>

as in human rights<sup>192</sup>. When it comes to conflict areas, private business deemed relevant not just for the presence of private security companies, but also for many other reasons including the respect of International Humanitarian Law<sup>193</sup>, humanitarian action<sup>194</sup>, and peacebuilding as well<sup>195</sup>. Financial institutions as the World Bank also recently entered this arena<sup>196</sup>. Media influence – huge already for decades with the so called “CNN effect” – has become much more relevant, both in propaganda messages of violent extremism and in “strategic communication”, a crucial element of most counter–terrorism policies and strategies.

The space of traditional civil society organizations is instead “shrinking” as captured and co-opted by other actors<sup>197</sup> and due to unfavourable legislation. Civil society action is today increasingly tough in the human rights sector, with the protection of human rights defenders becoming a more and more critical issue. In order to face a more hostile environment and gain official acceptance and support, CSOs working on conflict tend to shift their focus - or just frame their activities - under the auspicious but narrow umbrella of “protection” (as in the case of UCP originally meant as Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping, today becoming Unarmed Civilian Protection). A general trend is also to focus on *technical* peacebuilding (up to and including the so-called “peace industry”), turning away from its core *transformative* values (carried by social movements)<sup>198</sup>.

**Facing the new threats coming from terrorist acts and groups and from territories that have fallen under the control of extremist organizations, States take the lead in counterterrorism security measures. The focus then shifts onto human rights violations both in terrorist practices and international response.**

**Priority is officially given to conflict prevention and political settlement, but practices and policy developments show a critical level of uncertainty concerning the use of force. This happens while the humanitarian sector further enhances also due to emergencies caused by natural disasters and the ongoing pandemic.**

**A strong tendency towards integration of sectors and partnership persists, also with the new formula of “new way of working”, along with the critical challenge of harmonization of principles and modes of action. In terms of actor balance, the space for civil society is shrinking, while private business’ is expanding.**

### ***From a gender perspective***

Reference to WPS has become rather standard in all international cooperation policies areas.

The 2030 Agenda introduces peace among the 17 Goals, and also decisively strengthens the gender equality international framework of action<sup>199</sup>. If it missed the chance to have the two items explicitly combined, yet

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<sup>192</sup> “Guiding principles on business and human rights”, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011.

<sup>193</sup> “Business and international humanitarian law. An introduction to the rights and obligations of business enterprises under international humanitarian law”, ICRC, 2020.

<sup>194</sup> IKEA’s flat-packed refugee housing solution (UNHCR and the IKEA Foundation), the “Better Shelter,” is the winner of the Beazley Design of the Year 2016. Nearly 65 million of the shelters have since been distributed worldwide.

<sup>195</sup> For an updated comprehensive analysis and empirical reflection see “Business, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development”, edited by Miklian J., Alluri Rina M., Elias Katsos J., Routledge, 2019.

<sup>196</sup> “Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict”, a joint United Nations–World Bank Group study, 2018.

<sup>197</sup> Including the so-called *Bingo* and *Gongo* reflecting respectively interest groups and governmental positions. See VV. AA. “On <shrinking space> a framing paper”, Transnational Institute, 2017.

<sup>198</sup> Fisher M., Zimina L. “Just wasting our time? Provocative thoughts for peacebuilders”, in Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series, No. 7/2009.

<sup>199</sup> SDG 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

it states that “gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across *all* the SDGs and targets”, also claiming for systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in its implementation<sup>200</sup>. But it was indeed the trifacta review of peace and security that marked a turning point for a decisive step in support for the WPS Agenda. The HIPPO report (and later A4P) made reference to and supported the implementation of the WPS Agenda; the peacebuilding architecture review underscored the importance of women’s leadership and participation, increased representation in decision-making processes in this field and the consideration of gender-related issues in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding<sup>201</sup>; the Global Study explored all the aspects of the WPS Agenda in detail, starting from the very origin to the plurality of actors involved in the implementation system (including the media), also reporting very powerful field experiences.

In December 2015, a new Security Council Resolution (2242/2015) took up the gender recommendations made by the three reports of the 2015 peace and security review including the Global Study. The Resolution considers some of the other most relevant current global challenges: the rise of violent extremism, terrorism, increased numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, the impact of climate change, and a very forward-looking reference to the global nature of health pandemics. It notably addresses women’s roles in countering violent extremism and terrorism and urges to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women’s organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism. A key element is the adoption of a genuine gender approach: women, peace and security is seen as a cross-cutting subject in all relevant thematic areas of work on the UN agenda, with gender perspective to be adopted in the work of the relevant UN entities (DPA, DPKO, PBSO) and in those devoted to Counter terrorism alike (CTC, CTED, CTITF). It also looks at men and boys as possible partners in promoting women’s participation in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict, peacebuilding and post-conflict situations. The resolution also crucially improved the Council’s working methods with its intention to convene meetings of relevant Security Council experts as part of an Informal Experts Group (IEG) on WPS and to strengthen the role of CSOs envisaging women’s organizations’ participation in briefing in country-specific considerations and relevant thematic areas<sup>202</sup>. Acknowledgement and support for the work of CSOs to be involved also in international and regional peace and security meetings (even donor conferences) is another key feature, that makes Resolution 2242 a milestone in the WPS Agenda landscape.

A few years later, a subsequent resolution turned the agenda over again to protection, although explicitly recalling the link between protection and participation, as inextricable and mutually reinforcing. This resolution (2467/2019) supports the protection of sexual violence, thus pushing forward the nexus with the broader gender equality agenda. In doing so, it uses a human rights language, unusual in a Security Council setting<sup>203</sup>, including unprecedented level of detail to strengthen the legislation and to enhance investigation and prosecution of sexual violence. With its 37 Operational Paragraphs, it is definitely the longest and most articulated of all the WPS resolutions. For the first time also the situation of mothers of children born of sexual violence and their children is considered, with a detailed list of the multiple challenges they face, as well as an explicit request to the Secretary-General to provide a report on the issue. Many other paragraphs reiterate previous provisions (e.g., the demand for a complete immediate cessation of all acts of sexual violence, and the deployment of gender advisers in field missions<sup>204</sup>). The approach sounds quite progressive: survivor-centred, including reference to survivors’ organizations; inclusive, speaking about

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<sup>200</sup> A/RES/70/1, OP 20.

<sup>201</sup> A/RES/70/262 *cit.*, OP 21.

<sup>202</sup> UNSCR 2242/ 2015, OP5 a), b).

<sup>203</sup> It promotes “gender equality and the empowerment of women” in conflict and post – conflict situations (to be included in the missions’ mandate). It calls on Member States to provide care to survivors “without any discrimination”, to “condemn acts of sexual discrimination, harassment and violence against civil society and journalists”.

<sup>204</sup> UNSCR 2467, respectively OP1 and OP 23.

groups that are particularly vulnerable<sup>205</sup>; integrated, claiming justice, socio-economic reintegration, reparations, health and psychosocial care, legal aid; gender based, including violence against men and boys<sup>206</sup>; comprehensive, addressing the root causes of violence; mainstreaming, in the different sectors including conflict analysis, counter terrorism, sanctions, peacekeeping, DDR, IDPs, and SSR. Concerning the CSOs' role, the resolution sounds very promising, envisaging "interactive" meetings with local women, making explicit reference to the IEG, and also mentioning one of the biggest concerns for the CSO community (the "shrinking space"). This significant further step towards a human rights mandate affects the work of the Security Council: for the first time it was not able to vote unanimously on WPS matters<sup>207</sup>, even though on the most divisive issue the text remains quite vague (sexual and reproductive health are addressed with only implicit reference)<sup>208</sup>. The reaction among the stakeholders was plural: criticism was raised by the CSO community, as already in the first attempt to adopt a resolution focusing on protection<sup>209</sup>. This time the CSO concern was due to the unfavourable climate within the Security Council, with the risk of a weak resolution<sup>210</sup>.

The more the UNSCR WPS's mandate turns human rights, the more Member States are concerned, and called to act at national level. A national WPS focal point network was launched in 2016, and today it counts a large number of members<sup>211</sup>. Also, regional developments have proved relevant. NATO shows a complex gender architecture (focal points, advisors, a dedicated task force), and has recently revised its WPS policy and related action plan<sup>212</sup>. Based on the assumption that the inclusion of women's voices in all aspects of NATO's work in "an essential factor in the success of peace and security", the newly endorsed policy builds on an original framework (3 I's: Integration, Inclusiveness, Integrity) and includes a code of conduct. NATO confirms itself as an important implementer both within its internal structure and in external action, including through partnerships. It has developed a programme that enhances cooperation and dialogue with all partners - including civil society organizations - based on scientific research, innovation, and knowledge exchange<sup>213</sup>. Moreover, a Civil Society Advisory Panel is in place since 2016, as a channel for dialogue and civil society feedback on the implementation of the WPS agenda<sup>214</sup>. The EU, too, has recently

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<sup>205</sup> Idem, OP 16.

<sup>206</sup> Idem, OP 28, 32.

<sup>207</sup> Due to the abstention of Russia and China.

<sup>208</sup> UNSCR 2467/2019, OP 18.

<sup>209</sup> Cook S., "Security Council Resolution 1820: On Militarism, Flashlights, Raincoats, and Rooms with Doors - A Political Perspective on Where it Came from and What it Adds", Emory Int'l L. Rev. 125 (2009), footnote 13.

<sup>210</sup> "German government treading on dangerous ground in the UN Security Council planned new resolution threatens to weaken the *Women, Peace and Security* agenda", Joint statement of some ten CSOs backed by a UN national entity Berlin, March 2019.

<sup>211</sup> The Network was initiated by Spain in 2015 during the high-level review of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, serves as a cross-regional forum to exchange experiences and best practices to advance the implementation of the UN Agenda on Women, Peace and Security, and to improve coordination of funding and assistance to programmes.

<sup>212</sup> The "Revised Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1 on Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspective into the Command Structure" including measures for protection during armed conflict updated and endorsed at the Brussels summit in 2018. See also NATO/EAPC policy for implementing UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and its related Resolutions, that underlines the commitment of NATO and its Partners to promoting and strengthening their efforts to achieve a more robust and effective implementation of the goals of the Resolutions.

<sup>213</sup> "The Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme is a policy tool. The SPS Programme provides funding, expert advice, and support to security-relevant activities jointly developed by a scientist from a NATO member and a partner country.

<sup>214</sup> The CSAP is made up of representatives from civil society organisations and networks working with conflict prevention and resolution, as well as human rights advocates, community leaders and academics. The annual meetings are facilitated by an external facilitator, the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). The CSAP liaises on a regular basis with the office of the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for WPS.

revised its WPS policy<sup>215</sup> and related action plan<sup>216</sup> through a participatory approach<sup>217</sup> leading to decisive improvements. The process included civil society organizations and a network<sup>218</sup>, that warmly welcomed the final text. The new EU WPS policy (Strategic Approach) underlines the importance of conflict prevention, gender and conflict analysis, warning that exclusive focus on protection could reinforce the perception of women as victims<sup>219</sup>. It includes full support (political and financial) to civil society organizations from local to international level, grassroots activists and women's rights organizations<sup>220</sup>. It also engages men and boys as positive agents for change, and promotes their protection as well as "positive, gender-equitable, non-violent masculinity", to challenge gender stereotypes<sup>221</sup> and foster peaceful inclusive societies. It proves very forward-looking also for mentioning the need to invest in youth peacebuilding work. Again, at regional level: the African Union is also playing its part with a Gender, Peace and Security Programme<sup>222</sup>; the OSCE as well, which also offers indirect valuable support for national developments<sup>223</sup>, and ASEAN too<sup>224</sup>. The next feasible regional initiative will develop in the MENA region. All the main regional organizations have today specific dedicated roles and figures: NATO, with the third Secretary-General Special Representative on WPS (position created in 2012) actually in charge<sup>225</sup>; the AU with the first Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security appointed in 2014<sup>226</sup>; the EU, where the first Principal Advisor on Gender and on UNSCR 1325 has been in place in the EEAS (European External Action Service) since 2015<sup>227</sup>.

Recently also the local level has become more and more relevant. According to the latest UN Secretary-General's Report, several countries - including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Liberia, Serbia and Uganda - have adopted action plans on WPS at the state, zone, local or county levels (with 19 such plans adopted in Nigeria, 18 in Ukraine and 11 in Liberia). Some countries have integrated the WPS Agenda into local and community development plans and policies<sup>228</sup>.

Beyond institutions, within the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement, the unique mandate and the issue of principles excludes the ICRC from complete direct involvement in the WPS Agenda as such. Still ICRC plays a key role in protection worldwide and plays leadership in women's protection related activities, including

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<sup>215</sup> On 10 December 2018, the Council of the EU adopted Conclusions on women, peace and security (WPS). This includes a new policy, the EU Strategic Approach to WPS, that replaces the 2008 EU Comprehensive Approach to WPS.

<sup>216</sup> The EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2019-2024. EEAS (2019) 747.

<sup>217</sup> Including Commission services, academia, gender advisors from CSDP missions and operations regional partners, civil society (para11).

<sup>218</sup> The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) with the Gender Peace and Security Working Group (GPSWG) was closely involved in the draft process.

<sup>219</sup> EU Strategic Approach, *cit.*, para 10.

<sup>220</sup> *Idem*, para 12.

<sup>221</sup> *Idem*, See "key objective and requirements" (para 14 and 16 l, j, p), "protection" (para 35).

<sup>222</sup> Within the African Peace and Security Architecture, the Peace and Security Department has launched the Gender, Peace and Security Programme (2015-2020).

<sup>223</sup> Myrtilinen H., Shepherd L. J., Wright H., "Implementing the WPS Agenda in the OSCE region", OSCE, 2020.

<sup>224</sup> "Joint statement on promoting women, peace and security in ASEAN", November 2017, Manila, the Philippines.

<sup>225</sup> Mari Skåre was appointed in 2012 as the first NATO Secretary-General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security. Ambassador Marriët Schuurman in October 2014. Clare Hutchinson took office in January 2018.

<sup>226</sup> Bineta Diop, Founder and President of *Femmes Africa Solidarité* (FAS).

<sup>227</sup> Ambassador Mara Marinaki.

<sup>228</sup> Mavic Cabrera-Balleza and Agnieszka Fal Dutra Santos, "From Best Practice to Standard Practice: A Toolkit on the Localization of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and Peace and Security", New York, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, 2018.

protection from sexual violence<sup>229</sup>. Besides, the 2020 Gender and Diversity Policy of the International Federation (IFRC) guarantees a strong commitment in gender mainstreaming of National Societies, often involved in conflict and post-conflict areas while playing their auxiliary role.

At CSO level, the professionalization of peacebuilding is reflected in WPS, with the most experienced and knowledgeable practitioners and advocates included in specialized roster and database and involved in university research programmes and initiatives. This is also due to the mounting interest of the University environment and think-tanks in this field leading to significant scientific production<sup>230</sup>.

Despite all contributions and achievements, “moving from commitments to accomplishments” remains a challenge. The 2019 open debate on this issue finally led to the adoption of the tenth WPS resolution<sup>231</sup>. In Resolution 2493 the Security Council, expressing its concern for the persisting barriers to the full implementation of Resolution 1325, urges Member States to fully implement the provisions of the whole WPS Agenda reinforcing their effort in this regard. This resolution marks modest advances in the areas of women’s participation. The new trend towards right-based approach to women’s participation is confirmed: in the introduction the envisaged participation is defined “equal”<sup>232</sup> and not just “meaningful” as it used to; there is also an indirect reference to the protection of human rights defenders, a new urgent concern for the UN<sup>233</sup>. This time, despite some disagreements during the negotiations, the text was finally approved unanimously.

**Recent developments in the WPS Agenda reflect the new general trends: focus on counterterrorism with also the involvement of the youth and increasing relevance of human rights dimension. The shift of the Agenda from a *peace and security* to a *human rights* mandate is pushed forward, also with reference to women Human Rights Defenders (even though often indirect).**

**Relevant improvements are recorded in WPS policies also at regional (UE, NATO, OSCE, UA, ASEAN) and country level, with significant experiences at the local level as well.**

**Still the challenge of implementation is a top priority for the Security Council approaching the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Resolution 1325, leading to the adoption of the tenth resolution of the WPS pantheon.**

## 6. Where we stand. Lights, shadows, perspectives of the WPS Agenda

Already in the 2018 WPS report, the Secretary-General admitted to being “concerned by the lack of progress across the most fundamental commitments to peace and security, human rights and gender equality”, despite close to two decades of policies and programming options directly contributing to the prevention of conflict and crisis. An independent assessment had been commissioned the same year on the implementations of the 30 gender-specific recommendations contained in the threefold peace and security

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<sup>229</sup> In 2011, the 31st International Conference of the RC/RC adopted a four-year action plan, urging States and components of the International RC/RC Movement to take specific action enhancing protection for women in armed conflict. The ICRC’s specific work on sexual violence is founded on a Sexual Violence Strategy (2018–2022). The ICRC’s Institutional Strategy 2019–2022 also reiterates the organization’s commitment to tackling the issue of sexual violence as an institutional priority.

<sup>230</sup> Among the many: The London School of Economics and Political Science - Centre for Women, Peace and Security; Georgetown University’s - Institute for Women, Peace & Security; Columbia University - Earth Institute’s Women, Peace and Security Program; Monash University – Centre for Gender, Peace and Security; PRIO - Centre on Gender, Peace and Security; International Peace Institute - Women, Peace, and Security Program.

<sup>231</sup> UNSCR 2493/2019. The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the continuing and full implementation, in a mutually reinforcing manner, of WPS resolutions.

<sup>232</sup> *Idem*, OP 3.

<sup>233</sup> General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/144 adopting the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

2015 Reviews<sup>234</sup>. The assessment showed that 50% of the recommendations need further implementation, while 50% are going backwards or are inconsistent, and only two have been fully implemented<sup>235</sup>.

Taking stock of what has been done so far, it is worth considering progress and challenges related to each of the three pillars.

**Participation** is widely considered the core business of 1325, and the most innovative among the pillars.

A lot has been done so far when it comes to the field level for the presence in UN peace missions of gender advisors and women head / deputy head of missions, as well as for women's presence in the military and police field staff (the ratio, initially very low, has now increased up to 4.2 and 12.8% respectively). Besides, only two women have held the position of Force Commander of a United Nations peacekeeping force. Relevant improvements can be produced based on the "Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy" (2018-2028)<sup>236</sup>. Meanwhile, a reason of serious concern - also for the UNSG - is a lack of progress in increasing the number of women at all levels of civilian staff in peace operations. To address the gap, in 2018 the UNSG requested the senior leadership to form a working group on emergency measures to achieve gender parity in peace operations by a target date of 2028<sup>237</sup>. A promising perspective is to be found in a recent Security Council resolution, put forward by Indonesia, marking the end of its Council Presidency in August. Resolution 2538/2020 encourages women's participation in the UN peacekeeping force, promoting the role of women as "peace agents" under the UN peacekeeping force: it calls on UN Member States, the UN Secretariat and regional organizations to promote the full, effective, and meaningful participation of both uniformed and civilian women in peacekeeping operations at all levels and in all positions, including in senior leadership.

More severe and persistent challenges are related to peacemaking, with the ratio of women mediators still very limited, particularly in terms of women as lead mediators. Despite the fact that today all UN mediation teams include women and that in the UN advisory board on mediation half the members are women, women's presence in negotiating delegations has not improved. Still, the international community commitment in this endeavour is relevant: several initiatives at different levels are devoted to supporting women representation in mediation processes; field perspectives, academic studies, and dedicated operational guidance have recently been adopted<sup>238</sup>. One of the most evident efforts in this regard is related to the creation of networks of regional women mediators. A Global Alliance was launched in September 2019 with founding members: Femwise-Africa, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the Nordic Women Mediators Network, and the Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth<sup>239</sup>. The imminent launch of a new network in south Asia<sup>240</sup>, with very promising innovative perspectives<sup>241</sup>, shows the vitality of this area of interest. Stronger emphasis on internal mediators and local actors can help bring women to the peace tables, a field where there is still much to be done: despite 20 years of implementation of 1325, the

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<sup>234</sup> Allen L., Policy Brief: "Mapping of the Gender Recommendations from the 2015 Reviews", June 2019. Commissioned by UN – Women.

<sup>235</sup> The two recommendations fully implemented are: the establishment of the Informal Expert Group on WPS; the integration of gender perspectives and commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit 2016.

<sup>236</sup> Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018-2028), UN Department of Peace Operations, 2018.

<sup>237</sup> The group has been working on a range of measures, including enforcing existing policies on temporary special measures, increasing the number of women on rosters.

<sup>238</sup> Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies, DPA, 2017. See also Enhancing Gender-Responsive Mediation, OSCE, 2013.

<sup>239</sup> For an overview and critical analysis on the networks of women's mediators: Rachel Gasser "Peace Mediation Perspectives: Women Mediators' Networks, CSS Blog, 20 July 2018.

<sup>240</sup> The establishment of the South-East Asian Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators (SEA Women Peace Network) is planned to be launched in the second half of 2020.

<sup>241</sup> "The role of women negotiators and mediators in the maintenance of regional peace and security", organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia 1,2 July 2020 (video record available online).

strategic OP 8 b) on mainstreaming gender perspective in peace agreement, enhancing support for local women's peace initiatives, is still a challenge (with little progress often due to a combination of individual commitment and last-minute advocacy). To enrich the legitimacy of peacemaking and mediation processes with the inclusion of women and women's civil society organizations, "Women's Advisory Groups" are supported by the DPPA in the context of Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

In the area of peacebuilding, a dedicated UN Secretary - General Report acknowledged back in 2010 that "women's participation in peacebuilding is not only a matter of women's and girls' rights" and that women are "crucial partners in shoring up three pillars of lasting peace" (i.e., economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy). Annex to the Report, the UNSG "7 – Point Action Plan on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding", referred to the major commitments in the main areas, including conflict resolution and post-conflict measures and involving both civilian capacities and CSO<sup>242</sup>. Then the 2016 Peacebuilding Commission's Gender Strategy defined a number of useful elements and tools, including: a definition of "gender-responsive peacebuilding", a forward-looking full-fledged strategy, a reference to the Review of the peacebuilding architecture and to the Agenda 2030, and guiding principles (diversity, national ownership, inclusivity and inclusive participation, coherence), all very specific and pertinent to the peacebuilding sector. More recently the Women, Peace and Security Policy (2019) of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) set up priorities for the implementation of the WPS Agenda in its work, from Gender sensitive political and conflict analysis to accountability, monitoring and tracking of progress (with 15 DPPA commitments to track implementation of UNSCR 1325/2000 annexed).

**Protection:** the most relevant results have been achieved at policy level, with a growing number of initiatives and tools, particularly concerning conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Protection from sexual and gender-based violence in conflict benefits from: enhanced general women's rights framework (adoption of the Istanbul Convention<sup>243</sup>; CEDAW Committee dedicated General Recommendations<sup>244</sup>); increased visibility, also thanks to the institution of a specific dedicated International Day (19 June day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict)<sup>245</sup>; regular specific updated data and recommendations available in the Secretary-General annual reports<sup>246</sup>, including annex list of the parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence<sup>247</sup>. An increasing number of dedicated figures, structures and initiatives are also in place, with more than 20 Women's protection advisors deployed in UN peace operations<sup>248</sup>, teams of Experts at work contributing to addressing impunity and supporting victims, and the Office of Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in place for already a decade<sup>249</sup>. A number of initiatives have been taken in the

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<sup>242</sup> "7 – Point Action Plan on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding", tracking the Progress of the "UN Secretary- General Report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding" (A/65/354–S/2010/466).

<sup>243</sup> Istanbul Convention on "Preventing and Combating violence against women and domestic violence". Adopted in 2011 by the Council of Europe, concerning violence occurring in both peace and war times.

<sup>244</sup> The CEDAW Committee complemented the Convention provision shortcomings on violence against women with specific General Recommendations (including n. 35/2017 updating n. 19/1992).

<sup>245</sup> On 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 19 June (A/RES/69/293) to commemorate the adoption of UNSCR 1820/2008.

<sup>246</sup> Pursuant to UNSCR 2106/2013 where the UNSG is requested to report annually on the implementation of Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1860, and recommend strategic action.

<sup>247</sup> More than 50 in 10 countries listed in the annex including both state and non-state actors.

<sup>248</sup> 21 deployed in seven UN peace operations according to the latest UNSG dedicated report (S/2009/280).

<sup>249</sup> Pramila Patten is the current UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, she was appointed on 12 April 2017.

international community at large, promoted by States<sup>250</sup> or multi-stakeholders (e.g., Call to Action Initiative<sup>251</sup>, Oslo Conference<sup>252</sup>). Operational guidance has been adopted on integrating Gender Based Violence interventions in humanitarian action<sup>253</sup> and on addressing conflict-related sexual violence in ceasefire and peace agreements in mediation activities<sup>254</sup>. Preventing and responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence is also the aim of a number of policies adopted at regional level<sup>255</sup>. Violence against women is also a typical concern in codes of conduct, ruling the behaviour on the ground<sup>256</sup>, largely adopted by all actors over the last few decades. Recently, protection has become topical particularly responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)<sup>257</sup>. A remarkable architecture for management of reports and allegations involving UN personnel in peacekeeping and special political missions is now in place<sup>258</sup>. NATO also recently adopted a specific policy on the issue<sup>259</sup>.

Women's Protection finally benefits from the humanitarian sector growth in the new millennium. The "Agenda for Humanity" includes significant commitments concerning gender equality and empowerment, and the fulfilment of women's and girls' human rights in humanitarian and development action<sup>260</sup>.

Still several challenges persist when it comes to implementation. Despite some significant progress (e.g., nonjudicial mechanism established in Iraq, Myanmar, and South Sudan) accountability remains elusive and impunity for the perpetrators continues to be the norm. Reporting, access to justice, survivor-centred processes, reparation and services, are old and enduring challenges. New ones are related to protection of women human rights defenders (HRDs), often under threat for their commitment to protecting the environment and access to land and natural resources (so finally to foster peace, addressing the structural causes of conflicts), sometimes also due to national counter-terrorism legislation. HRDs nowadays are

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<sup>250</sup> "Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative" founded in 2012 and lead by the United Kingdom; "Declaration on preventing sexual violence in conflict" adopted in London on 11 April 2013; "Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict" on 10-13 June 2014 in London, one of the largest gathering ever brought together on the subject.

<sup>251</sup> The "Call to Action on protection from gender-based violence in emergencies" was launched in 2013 by the United Kingdom and Sweden, and is a multi-stakeholder initiative to fundamentally transform the way gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian emergencies.

<sup>252</sup> In May 2019 the Governments of Norway, Iraq, Somalia and the United Arab Emirates, with the OCHA, UNFPA and the ICRC, co-hosted the conference on ending sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian crises. More than 100 member States participated. Also many women's CSOs got involved.

<sup>253</sup> "Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action", Inter-agency Standing Committee, 2015.

<sup>254</sup> "Guidance for Mediators: Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ceasefire and Peace Agreements". UN Department of Political Affairs, 2012.

<sup>255</sup> Policy "United Nations Field Missions: Preventing and responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence" adopted in January 2020 by DPO/DPPA/OHCHR/OSRSG-SVC; See also NATO Military Guidelines on Prevention of and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (MCM-0009-2015), and dedicated policy 2020.

<sup>256</sup> E.g. the UN "Ten Rules/Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets", 1998. See also NATO Code of Conduct, Annex 2 of ON (2013) 0078, NATO building integrity code of conduct ON (2017)0026.

<sup>257</sup> From the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse", to the dedicated Security Council Resolution 2272/2016 *cit.*

<sup>258</sup> For an overview at a glance:

[https://conduct.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/infographic\\_v10-revisedoct2017-v2\\_o.pdf](https://conduct.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/infographic_v10-revisedoct2017-v2_o.pdf)

<sup>259</sup> Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, adopted by NATO Foreign Ministers in 2019.

<sup>260</sup> World Humanitarian Summit *cit.*, core responsibility 3 (leave no one behind) "Empower and protect women and girls".

particularly at risk, just like women peacebuilders, when engaging with the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies<sup>261</sup>.

Overall, the strength/vitality of the legal and operational framework of Protection is a promising basis for concrete results in all sectors, and certainly valuable per se. Still sometimes the increased attention dedicated to SGBV in particular and the use of sensationalism in media coverage makes the Protection pillar prevail over the others.

**Prevention:** there is not necessarily a dichotomy between being a *victim* of sexual violence and *agent*<sup>262</sup>, so the general trend of focusing on Protection might not affect Participation. But it has for sure provoked a shift in the meaning of Prevention, nowadays often intended in the narrower meaning of prevention of SGBV. This is reflected in the tendency to put Protection and Prevention in a single outcome in National Action Plans (as in the second Iraqi NAP<sup>263</sup>), with the latter eclipsed by the former. In rare cases national plans instead have a dedicated and strong prevention pillar (like in Lebanon, with advanced provision dedicated to “prevention of conflicts”<sup>264</sup>).

But Prevention is in the DNA of 1325<sup>265</sup> and inherent also to WPS resolutions focused on protection. Differently from the traditional IHL approach, the WPS Agenda addresses the issue of violence against women as a matter of international peace and security, both as consequence and as a root cause and trigger of conflict. All aspects of the Agenda are mutually reinforcing, so conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is to be addressed with a preventive approach. Also, women’s rights are critical to conflict prevention, as in the United Nations and the World Bank’s recent study<sup>266</sup>.

Nevertheless case studies show a weakness in bringing together the peace and security dimensions and socio-economic ones of women’s participation at field level<sup>267</sup>. Furthermore, the framing of WPS as a women’s rights mandate, put the whole Agenda in danger of marginalization and reduction. Emblematically within the framework of the celebrations for the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing platform - “the most progressive blueprint for achieving gender equality”<sup>268</sup> and one of the most visionary regarding women in

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<sup>261</sup> See on this issue Women and Peace and Security, Report of the UN Secretary-General 2019 (S/2019/800) p.11; and 21 February 2020 Arria Formula on “Reprisals against women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders who engage with the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies”.

<sup>262</sup> Cook S., “Security Council Resolution 1820: On Militarism, Flashlights, Raincoats, and Rooms with Doors - A Political Perspective on Where it Came from and What it Adds”, Emory Int’l L. Rev. 125 (2009).

<sup>263</sup> See also the report of the National Civil Society Conference “Renewing the draft in Iraq second National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 on WPS”, 3-4 February 2020 in Erbil.

<sup>264</sup> The pillar contains forward looking provisions such as: the inclusion of a gender sensitive curriculum on peace education and human and women’s rights in universities and schools; capacity building for national stakeholders; awareness raising at community and individual level on peacebuilding, targeted to girls, men and boys as well; capacity building for women to form early warning networks at community level. Lebanon National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2019-2022).

<sup>265</sup> “When women took their demands for a women, peace and security (WPS) agenda to the Security Council in 2000, they were demanding that prevention of war be a key aspect of the Security Council’s agenda along with a recognition of the capacities of half the world’s population to resolve the complex challenges of global peace and security”. Global Study *cit.* p. 190.

<sup>266</sup> “Pathways for Peace” *cit.* calls for the monitoring of gender equality developments as part of broader preventive measures.

<sup>267</sup> “The case studies for this review tended to reveal a weakness in bringing together the peace and security dimensions and the socio-economic ones of women’s participation. Mission components tended to concentrate on narrow but important questions of political participation and the prevention of conflict-associated sexual and gender-based violence, while the UNCTs worked on gender-sensitive approaches to economic recovery and inclusion without always bringing a *peacebuilding lens* fully to bear”. “The challenge of sustaining peace” *cit.* p. 33.

<sup>268</sup> The Beijing+25 Global Youth Task Force - Women’s Major Group; opening statement UNECE Regional Review Meeting (29 October 2019).

armed conflicts - the issue WPS itself at first was not even included<sup>269</sup>. Last but not least some difficulties persist to operationalize Prevention in the meaning of Prevention of conflict also in the indicators (already in the UN framework a decade ago, and today in the EU's it has very limited or no mention)<sup>270</sup>.

Relevant opportunities for advancing the prevention dimension might anyway be found in General Recommendation n.30 of the CEDAW, dedicated to "Women in conflict prevention and post conflict situations"<sup>271</sup>, and more recently the Peacebuilding Architecture Review Report introducing the concept of "sustaining peace" encompassing efforts to prevent a lapse into conflict in the first place<sup>272</sup>.

**Relief and Recovery** is the additional pillar, and sometimes the most overlooked. Still, it is critically important and influential, particularly if intended not just as addressing the specific needs of women and girls in relief and recovery specific measures (e. rehabilitation, reintegration, DDR) but also as "Gender Perspective", that is mainstreaming gender throughout the whole conflict circle and all endeavours (peace processes, peace operations, peacebuilding). This pillar today offers tangible support for a genuine gender and conflict analysis, with pivotal experiences in transitioning contexts (Haiti, Liberia, and Darfur) and conflict areas (Central Africa Republic)<sup>273</sup>.

In the field of peacekeeping the gender dimension has been systematically integrated into peace operations, also thanks to the adoption of specific guidelines and policies<sup>274</sup> to guide peacekeeping operations on operationalizing the women, peace and security mandates through gender mainstreaming (e.g., requiring gender analysis in selection of Quick Impact Projects).

But when it comes to peace processes also recent data are not favourable: only a low percentage (19.7) of the peace agreements contains gender provisions, and even where there are, it is difficult to implement (e.g., in the Colombia peace agreement, where more than 50 % of the 130 provisions have not yet been initiated).

An extremely high potential is in the area of peacebuilding. In line with the original mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission to integrate gender perspective into all its work, the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs has adopted a mainstreaming approach and has - since 2016 (as the Department for Political Affairs) - a Gender, Peace and Security Unit (GPS) in charge of overseeing the Department's implementation of the WPS Agenda<sup>275</sup>.

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<sup>269</sup> The Generation Equality Forum, global gathering for gender equality, convened by UN Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico, in partnership with civil society, was organized 25 years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and 20 years after the landmark 1325 Resolution. In early 2020, six thematic action coalitions were formed however, women, peace and security as a theme was not included. Women peace activists from around the world have been pointing out this absence and from June 2000 there is a Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.

<sup>270</sup> In the UN indicators "prevention" is to be referred only to the rights and needs of women and girls (annex S/2010/498). In the EU Action Plan (annex 1 EEAS 2019 747), only one among the 30 indicators (n. 11) refers to Objective 4 (Prevention).

<sup>271</sup> It strengthened and made clear the applicability of the Convention to a diverse range of settings affected by conflict and political crises also with a long-term perspective.

<sup>272</sup> The concept is "encompassing effort to prevent not only effort to prevent relapse into conflict but also to prevent laps into conflict in the first place" and "liberating peacebuilding from the strict limitation to post-conflict context". See AGE Report *cit.* p. 17.

<sup>273</sup> Report of the Secretary – General on Women and Peace and Security 2018 (S/2018/900), p. 5.

<sup>274</sup> The most recent: Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations DPKO-DFS, 2018.

<sup>275</sup> The Department's approach to implementing the WPS agenda is gender mainstreaming in all of its work, which means that this work is not only the responsibility of gender advisers, but the responsibility of every single DPPA staff member, from the team assistants to the Under-Secretary General. The GPS Unit has the responsibility for developing policies, building the capacity of women involved in peacebuilding and supporting the DPPA's mission and headquarters staff in implementing Security Council resolutions on WPS and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

Gender mainstreaming is also expanding in other sectors, in strategy and policies for Disaster Reduction<sup>276</sup>, and in the response to the current pandemic of COVID-19, with States and civil society entities committed to assessing<sup>277</sup> and addressing the specific impact on women, including in conflict situations<sup>278</sup>.

## Conclusions – The WPS Agenda: just a mirror or a powerful tool for transformation? Moving the shadowed into the spotlight

The previous pages show the international Peace and Security system's key aspects and trends over the last two decades as mirrored in the WPS "norm bundle"<sup>279</sup>, and point out the main challenges in implementation within the different pillars of the Agenda. Finally, it may be worth taking stock, considering the overall picture and trying to look a bit ahead.

Major efforts in policies, frameworks and programming have been devoted on one hand to *Participation*, always considered the most innovative aspect of the WPS paradigm, and on the other hand to *Protection*, more and more often deemed the most imperative. Also the debate on the WPS Agenda has been focusing on these two pillars and their relationship, be it confrontational or complementary. Still when it comes to reality - some ten resolutions later - there is still a long way to go to fill the gap between norms and practices even for *Participation* and *Protection*.

To overcome the stall in implementation, it would be helpful to think outside the box, stepping to the side of this binary vision. 20 years after the adoption of the first resolution on WPS it can be worth getting back to it, and being inspired by its strategy. 1325 was "ground-breaking" since it put what had been in the shadows into the spotlight: the active role of women in peace processes. Using the same approach, today we could take out of the shadows the two neglected pillars, namely *Prevention* and *Relief and Recovery* (Gender Perspective). Activating their full potential can trigger multiple positive impacts, including both endogenous effects on the WPS Agenda and exogenous effects on the overall system.

Let us just imagine the most evident for each of them.

**Prevention**, if intended in the broader original meaning of conflict prevention, is undoubtedly the only effective means to prevent violence of any kind, including gender based (from the domestic level to war rape). Nevertheless, within the context of norms affected by a high degree of contestation such as those of the WPS Agenda, it is maybe the most contested in practice<sup>280</sup>. Therefore, there is no real need for policy developments: prevention stands out to be widely accepted as priority in all sectors of the global agenda on peace and security (Agenda for Humanity, Sustaining Peace Resolutions, Action for Peacekeeping), and can be further be prioritized (e.g., in the context of the Responsibility to Protect, where the responsibility to react tends to prevail).

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<sup>276</sup> E.g. Hyogo Framework for Action, *cit.*, section A13(d) "A gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management, and education and training".

<sup>277</sup> "Gender alert for COVID-19 outbreak. Taking into account the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys makes humanitarian response more effective and accountable to all affected populations", IASC and UNWOMEN, 2020; "Gender implications of covid-19 outbreaks in development and humanitarian settings", CARE, 2020.

<sup>278</sup> "Policy brief 19. Covid-19 and conflict: advancing women's meaningful participation in ceasefires and peace processes", DPPA, UNWOMEN, 2020.

<sup>279</sup> "WPS is not just any normative agenda but a *norm bundle*". J. True, A. Wiener, "Everyone Wants (a) Peace: The Dynamics of Rhetoric and Practice on 'Women, Peace and Security'", *International Affairs*, 2019, p.553.

<sup>280</sup> See J. True, A. Wiener *cit.* for a mapping exercise that compiles a comprehensive "contestation repertoire" in relation to the WPS Agenda.

The effort should then be directed at better operationalizing and strengthening peacebuilding action and structures, as it is already in place for participation and protection. Based on lessons learned it would be worth also building a sound political will and an effective accountability system, as well as backing all that with a decisive culture change, already fostered when the WPS Agenda was born in the International Year of the Culture of Peace<sup>281</sup>. The ongoing peace and security reform with the UN system with its new structures (DPPA and DPO), figures (Under-Secretary General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and for Peace Operations), strategies (joint vision statement 2019 prioritizing politics as the promotion of political solution to conflict), seems to be pushing the system forward in the right direction<sup>282</sup>. At policy level, focusing on prevention would help reconcile the two terms of the binomial “peace and security” (first conceived as inseparable, a single character), overcoming the risk of divorce between the two in recent decades. Decisive support can come from civil society whose agenda can strongly help to prioritize conflict prevention<sup>283</sup>. For the promotion of a culture of peace, peace education initiatives at all levels and peace studies can play a crucial role, also in the context of the momentum of WPS training and research.

Beyond the Peace and Security sector, prioritizing prevention and peace by peaceful means would make the whole-of-pillars approach work properly. The “nexus” between different policy areas (humanitarian-development – peace) is definitely a key word in today’s international discourse and triggers a resounding call for greater coherence among all of them (including human rights and disarmament and counter-terrorism entities and work). The recent inclusion of peace into the frame is very good news and the greatest challenge. The traditional concern about the inconsistency of principles - raised among practitioners primarily by humanitarian actors – is now extreme: a precious opportunity to deal with this critical issue once and for all. To take a decisive step towards “collective outcomes” without provoking a clash of principles and approaches, Prevention must be prioritized, and the use of its specific tools and expertise widespread (e.g., on conflict analysis). The success of the comprehensive approach of “sustaining peace” leading from conflict prevention through peacemaking, peacekeeping and recovery/reconstruction also relies on that emphasis that will be put on the former<sup>284</sup>. Indeed, also partnership must be considered from this perspective<sup>285</sup>, while the Peacebuilding function and entities look likely to play a key role for harmonization in the “new way of working”.

Prioritizing Prevention will be an added value also for the WPS Agenda as a whole. Some of the most frequent criticisms raised towards it actually relate more to the practices of the international community in conflict areas rather than to the provisions of the Agenda itself (particularly UNSCR 1325 which only makes reference to peacekeeping as such). Among the most common criticisms there is the instrumental use of the Agenda to support or even legitimize “security practices post 9/11 moment”, “postcolonial interventions”, “war on terror”<sup>286</sup>. An international action that is multilateral, principled, legitimate (fully consistent with the new international law)<sup>287</sup> and timely (based on prevention) would be useful to remove these concerns.

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<sup>281</sup> “Declaration on a Culture of Peace” Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 53/243 A on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1999.

<sup>282</sup> Report of the Secretary-General “Review of the implementation of the peace and security reform”, July 2020 (A/75/202).

<sup>283</sup> “2020 Civil Society Roadmap on Women, Peace and Security” where the NGOWG dedicates the first one of five key areas in advance of the 20th anniversary of the Resolution 1325 adoption to “Prevention of conflict. Take decisive action to prevent conflict, end violence and avert crisis, including by addressing gendered drivers of conflict and instability”.

<sup>284</sup> “The challenge of sustaining peace” cit. p. 8.

<sup>285</sup> For instance of regional and sub - organizations that “may also be indirectly involved in the conflict”. A lesson learned the UN must better define the scope, content and rules that framed the partnership with other major stakeholders (be they global, regional, local, private or public). *Idem*, p. 36.

<sup>286</sup> See Nicola Pratt & Sophie Richter-Devro “Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 2011, 13:4, 489-503.

<sup>287</sup> “The prohibition of war set forth in the UN Charter in conjunction with international human rights law norms eradicates the *raison d’être* of *ius ad bellum*. Owing to international human rights law (art. 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), the ownership of *ius ad pacem* moves up to the original subjects of the fundamental rights of the person as this *ius* is connected to the supreme right to life. The consequence for states is that the *officium pacis* – the duty of building peace: *ne nationes ad arma venient, ut cives*

Moreover, prioritizing Prevention will put into a suitable perspective the feminist argument of limited attention in the WPS Agenda to women's rights (including sexual and reproductive health) and empowerment (including economic<sup>288</sup>). The Security Council's core business being international peace and security, the WPS Agenda is not the appropriate frame for setting new norms on women's rights or on gender crimes or violence *per se*. Still the UNSC takes note of the international law developments in this regard and considers the interconnections and impact with conflict dynamics: the human rights of women and prosecution of gender crimes are indeed crucial means and tools as part of a holistic approach to sustainable peace<sup>289</sup>, and perfectly consistent with a human security approach.

The same arguments and logic can be utilized in the debate engaged by countries denying the possibility for the Security Council to approach Human Rights issues.

**Relief and Recovery.** It could become crucial if intended in the operational meaning of "gender perspective" to be mainstreamed in all activities related to peace and security, including but not just limited to those mentioned in specific provisions.

Assuming gender as the basic approach could help to better tailor action to the specific situations and context. Gender mainstreaming can also avoid the essentialist paradigm and related assumptions on women's being by nature more prone to peace<sup>290</sup> or able with their mere presence to make men more responsible or peace agreement more likely<sup>291</sup>. From this perspective, the reference to "local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution" among the provisions of 1325 looks paradigmatic. Engendered conflict analysis<sup>292</sup> can indeed make it easier to identify peace constituencies where they can be found effectively, avoiding rhetoric and prejudices (even positive), debunking the myths of women peacemakers by nature and just victims of violence. This approach will uncover the predominance of man as war victims, men's possible contribution to peacebuilding, recurrent among veterans<sup>293</sup> who are predominantly men, as well as men's crucial contribution in prevention of violent extremism and in promotion of gender equality through models of positive masculinity. It also can help also consider the specific needs of different gender identities (including LGBTQI). Furthermore, it opens the way to intersectionality, which can help us to step out of clichés (e.g., "the myth of women's solidarity")<sup>294</sup> and include multiple elements for analysis (also based on race, nationality, age, today considered in international markers)<sup>295</sup>. A genuine gender perspective can trigger the transformative potential of 1325 if based not on an "add women and stir" approach, but on an inclusive and sustainable one (gender-relational approach)<sup>296</sup>.

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*vivant* – becomes part and parcel of their constitutive essence". See A. Papisca 'Active Neutrality with the New International Law. Reflections from a Politics of Law Perspective', *Peace Human Rights Governance*, 1(3), 395-404 (2017).

<sup>288</sup> "Women Peace and Security - Reloaded" Civil Society Alternative Report on Women, Peace and Security", Swisspeace, 2013.

<sup>289</sup> See the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security "Promoting the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Sustaining Peace Through Women's Political and Economic Empowerment", October 2018.

<sup>290</sup> According to the best peace research, and to say it with the words of the most widely known peace researcher (J. Galtung) women are likely to be "better mediators/facilitators of conflict transformation than men, more compassionate and holistic, less aggressive in their verbal and body language". Galtung J. "Peace by peaceful means" *cit.* p. 197.

<sup>291</sup> On the real impact of women's presence in peacekeeping operations see "Women's participation in UN peacekeeping operations: agents of change or stranded symbols?" Kathleen M. Jennings, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, *Noref report*, September 2011.

<sup>292</sup> "Gender & Conflict analysis. Toolkit for peacebuilders", Conciliation Resources, 2012.

<sup>293</sup> This is the case of the Lebanese "Fighters for Peace" organization.

<sup>294</sup> "Gender in peacebuilding. Taking stock", *International Alert* (2012), p. 14.

<sup>295</sup> "Gender and age marker", IASC, 2018.

<sup>296</sup> As promoted by the twin resolutions on peacebuilding architecture, and in the Peacebuilding Commission Gender Strategy 2016 *cit.* Also one of the first advocate of 1325, *International Alert* 2012, is now promoting a gender-relational approach, that keep distinct

In this perspective wider fruitful synergies could be built with the most recent analogous agenda dedicated to Youth, Peace and Security<sup>297</sup>.

Besides, some other reasons for criticism of the WPS Agenda remain unresolved, such as those based on a rigorous antimilitarist position (due to the provisions regarding women in military peacekeeping) and those concerning the effectiveness discourse (considering the presence of women instrumental to strategic communication and to the efficiency of peace operations). These aspects are actually related to the inner nature of the Agenda, that was built on different stakeholders' perspectives on peace and security with peacekeeping concerns at the forefront<sup>298</sup>. These motivations are confirmed in the recent resolution on peacekeeping, where women's role is deemed "indispensable in increasing the overall performance and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations"<sup>299</sup>. Without this dynamic, gender issues would probably have never reached the Security Council 20 years ago. So, dialogue among actors may sometimes look confrontational, with advocates, practitioners, institutions and civil society on different even distanced positions. But it also makes the WPS Agenda a unique opportunity for dialogue and confidence-building among them<sup>300</sup>, that the increasing involvement of academics might facilitate<sup>301</sup>.

The WPS Agenda offers a privileged point of view over the international scenario, that looks mirrored in its multilevel, multidimensional complexity, with all the sectors and actors involved. Just like in the overall picture, in the WPS Agenda lights and shadows cohabit, but are also a crucial opportunity to see peace work acknowledged as a structural part in the bigger picture on an equal basis. The challenge will be then to avoid the risk of seeing it *de facto* diluted or eclipsed by the other sectors. The major threat is of course the magnetism of the humanitarian perspective, turning crises and emergencies into the wishy-washy category of "humanitarian crises", even when they are deeply rooted in complex and often interrelated conflict dynamics (such as armed conflicts, terrorism, climate change, migration, and even pandemics), and women in conflict back to victims. Also the reduction of WPS to a mere women's rights/gender equality issue is a concrete risk, due to the momentum of feminist foreign policies (Sweden, Canada and Mexico) and the prevalence of women's and gender studies based on a feminist approach over peace studies in academic studies and in University departments.

To preserve the full meaning of the WPS Agenda with its original inspiration there is then a need to move from an episodic and formal approach to a more substantial and systematic understanding and use of peacebuilding and conflict prevention tools and culture, acknowledging and preserving its political nature as well.

Resolution 1325 seen under this light still seems a precious resource to disclose the full potential of the WPS Agenda as a whole, for the benefit of the peace and security sector as well, and for the international system at large.

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from the one of Resolution 1325. The report was followed by "Rethinking gender in peacebuilding" (2014), also calling for a more nuanced understanding of the role gender plays in peacebuilding.

<sup>297</sup> Born with the adoption of 2250 /2015 it now includes three dedicated UNSCRs *cit.*

<sup>298</sup> According to K. M. Jennings "There is no contradiction in selling women's participation in one way to one audience and in another way to another audience". See "Women's participation in UN peacekeeping operations: agents of change or stranded symbols?", Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, Noref Report, September 2011.

<sup>299</sup> Also, the arguments are substantially the same of 20 years ago, consisting in: greater credibility among the population, more effective community engagement, and enhanced protection responses. See Preamble of UNRCS 2538/2020.

<sup>300</sup> A crucial aspect for a sustainable peace. See also "Gender perspectives and confidence building for inclusive peace: Getting parties to a shared negotiation table through trust", UNWOMEN 2020.

<sup>301</sup> EEAS organised the first-ever High-Level Academic Roundtable on Women, Peace and Security to initiate a fruitful exchange with renowned scholars from around the world on WPS-related research in June 2019. See also "The Role of Academia in Realising the Promise of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: learning from the past to improve the future" 8 September 2020, LSE Hosted by the Centre for Women, Peace and Security (event available online).

To conclude, simply addressing these issues and asking for accountability is not enough anymore: there is a need for a bigger change. And as always, as far as conflict is concerned, we should look at reality from new perspectives and should put what used to be marginalized right at the centre of the picture. That was the original strategy that in 2000 some very committed women (and men) used to make this Agenda become a reality. Getting back to the aim and strategy of two decades ago is crucial to identifying the way ahead. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary can be a watershed, a chance to turn the persistent obstacles into steps to look forward to a new, comprehensive, more fruitful direction.

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