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***National Action Plan of Italy
on “Women, Peace and Security”
2010-2013***

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NATIONAL ACTION PLAN OF ITALY ON “WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY” 2010-2013

Introduction

On 31 October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325/2000), “Women, Peace and Security,” the first Security Council resolution to explicitly mention the impact of armed conflicts on women and the contribution of women to conflict resolution and lasting peace. UN Member States will be periodically invited by the Security Council to strengthen their commitment to the implementation of this resolution, including through the adoption of national action plans.

This resolution establishes that: 1. Women and children are the groups most affected by armed conflict; 2. Women play an essential role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peace-building activities; and 3. All UN member states are invited to ensure a broader participation of women in all decision-making processes, particularly in the fields of conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution.

Within this framework, the UN is guided by the principle of zero tolerance in the event of sexual abuse of women and children in conflict areas. This policy applies to soldiers, parties to the conflict, and especially to UN staff, both military and civilian. Such conduct is morally unacceptable, in violation of international norms and punishable by law. In this regard, the Security Council adopted resolution 1820 on 19 June 2008 (S/RES/1820/2008) and the General Assembly approved on 7 March 2008 the “United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel” (A/RES/62/214). The strategy provides for assistance to victims by ensuring medical care, legal counsel, and psychological support. In the case of children born as a result of sexual exploitation or abuse, the UN should work with member states to facilitate the implementation of procedures for paternity recognition.

The Security Council presidential statement of 28 October 2004 calls upon member states to develop national action plans to continue to implement resolution 1325, “including through the development of national action plans.” This is the first mention of such plans in the acts of the Council.

Background

During its two-year tenure on the Security Council, Italy promoted a practical-minded informal group on resolution 1325 and, jointly with other EU members and UN institutions, worked to strengthen women's participation in political processes. Moreover, Italy made a significant contribution to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) on sexual violence in armed conflicts. Italy played a leading role in the negotiations to assure that the connection between international security and sexual violence was finally recognized. The resolution establishes that when sexual violence is used as a war tactic, it can exacerbate conflicts and prevent the restoration of international peace and security.

After the conclusion of its non-permanent membership on the Security Council, Italy remained focused on this issue by working on the follow-up to resolutions 1325 and 1820. The Security Council has shown a growing interest in the protection of the human rights of women and children in armed conflict. This is attested to by its unanimous approval of resolution 1882 (2009), on children and armed conflict, and resolutions 1888 and 1889 (2009) on sexual violence in armed conflict, all of which were co-sponsored by Italy.

In the NATO framework, Italy has repeatedly stressed the importance of recent developments in the implementation of resolution 1325, which the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council has decided to fully integrate into NATO policies and programs.

Moreover, Italy pairs its action at the multilateral level with development cooperation initiatives in various Countries. For instance, in the past three years (2008-2010), Italy has provided approximately three-million Euros in funding for UNIFEM initiatives in Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Sudan pursuant to resolution 1325.

Besides providing a consistent and structured framework for its initiatives, this National Action Plan confirms Italy's strong commitment in this area, in keeping with the EU Document "Comprehensive EU Approach to the Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, on Women, Peace and Security".ⁱ

Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Human Rights Unit, an Interministerial Working Group was set up to draft the National Action Plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 as a way to strengthen and coordinate efforts to protect the human rights of women, children, and the most vulnerable groups in a conflict area. The Working Group consisted of representatives from: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights, General Directorate for Development Cooperation, General Directorate on Political Affairs and Security - Human Rights Unit), the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Health, the General Command of the Carabinieri Corps, the Department of Civil Protection, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy - Office of the National Equality Councilor.

After taking stock of the various initiatives underway or about to be launched, the Working Group defined the targets and main course of action of the National Action Plan.

With the evolving nature of these commitments and projects, the National Action Plan should be considered a strategic framework, which will be fine-tuned to enlist further elements, including from an operational standpoint, in the course of its three-year term.

The UN's three main purposes and Italy's six areas of action

The National Action Plan should ensure that a gender perspective is included in every aspect of peace policy and in every concrete measure to promote peace.

To this end, resolution 1325 set forth three main objectives relating to violence against women in armed conflict, conflict prevention and peace-building, peace missions, and development cooperation:

1. The prevention of violence against women and children, and the protection of the rights of women and children, during and after armed conflict;
2. The growing participation of women in peace processes;
3. The application of a gender-based approach to all projects and programs to promote peace.

Since Italy is already committed to these priorities, the present National Action Plan will give continuity to the course of action indicated in resolution 1325.

The Inter-ministerial Working Group has identified a number of sub-goals. Progress on the achievement of these goals is reported below, together with the further commitments Italy will take at both the national and international levels.

1. Increasing the number of women in the national police and armed forces, and strengthening the inclusion of women in peace operations and the decision-making bodies of peace operations.

Presence of women in armed forces

Women are an essential component of both the Italian police and armed forces.

The State Police has included women since 1959 (in the so called “women’s corps”), making it the first Italian police force to do so. Although their duties were initially limited to the protection of minors, a new public security law adopted in 1981 (121 of 1 April 1981) made official equal opportunities between men and women. This 1981 police reform placed male and female staff on equal footing for career advancements and performance of functions.ⁱⁱ

Women and men thus participate in the same competitions, initial training, specialization and advance training courses. At present, there are women chiefs of police (“questori”), senior police officers at headquarters and on patrol, and directors of educational institutes. Others are helicopter pilots and instructors in target practice, self-defense, operational techniques and driving school. As of February 1, 2009, there was a total of 14,879 women, of whom 13,128 were assigned to patrolling duties (out of 100,035 officers in the State Police) and 1,751 to technical, clerical or managerial duties (14% of the total force: this figure increases to 32% when the managerial and executive level are included).

State police training (including basic training and refresher courses) focuses on assistance to crime victims and to other sensitive issues, such as domestic abuse or violence. Police officers deployed in conflict areas receive training in international human rights law, in particular the protection of vulnerable groups such as women and children.

In terms of the voluntary enlistment of women in the military service, Act 380/1999 (subsequently amended by Legislative Decree 66/2010, which contains the Military Code) grants women access to the armed forces. Legislative Decree 24/2000 provides for the voluntary recruitment, status and career advancement of women in the military. This law was later incorporated into Legislative Decree 198/2006, "Code on Equal Opportunities between Men and Women," and was recently amended by Legislative Decree 66/2010.

Article 1, paragraph 6, of Act 380/1999, established the yearly maximum quotas for the recruitment of women in various roles, bodies, groups, and specializations of each armed force, as decided by the Minister of Defense and proposed by the Chief of the General Staff. Article 26 of Act 29/2006 (subsequently incorporated into Legislative Decree 66/2010) amended this provision, cancelling the above quotas for all roles, bodies, groups, and specializations.

The quota system was intended as a temporary measure to solve immediate logistical problems, since facilities had been designed for male use only. It was followed by the full and seamless integration of women into the system.

Act 380/1999 also provided for the establishment of an Advisory Committee (“Advisory Committee for the inclusion of female volunteer personnel in the Armed Forces and the Corps of the Revenue Guard Corps”), to assist the Chief of the General Staff and the General Commander of the Revenue Guards Corps (*Guardia di Finanza* - customs and excise police) in the planning, coordination and assessment to include and integrate women officers into the Armed Forces, Carabinieri Corps and *Guardia di Finanza*. In June 2000, the Minister of Defense, in consultation with the Ministers of Finance and the Minister of Equal Opportunities, adopted a decree to establish this Committee. In addition to determining its terms, the Decree establishes the composition, subsequently reduced by Presidential Decree (DPR 88 of 14 May 2007) from an initial eleven to seven members. Presidential Decree (DPR 90 of 15 March 2010), containing the Unified Text of the military system regulations, amended the duties, duration and composition of the above Committee.

Approximately 3.5 percent of recruits are women, confirming the consolidation of a female presence in the military system, despite the fact that women have only recently been allowed to join the armed forces (approximately 10 years ago).

Since the early days of recruiting female military personnel, the personnel policies of the armed forces have paid specific attention to the basic principles of gender equality, equal opportunities and equal treatment. In 2002 the Chief of the General Staff issued military ethics guidelines, a professional ethics and conduct code aimed at preventing critical behavior in interpersonal relations. The Guidelines stress that implementation of these principles ensures the proper performance of institutional duties.ⁱⁱⁱ

Regulatory and deployment issues

With regard to employment in international organizations in Italy or abroad, women are eligible for any available post and there are no legislative limits on their deployment. As a matter of procedure, the General Staff communicates all international vacancies to the armed forces, assesses whether candidates meet the individual and professional requirements, and make appointment recommendations to the Minister of Defense pursuant to Act 25 of 18 February 1997 (amended by Legislative Decree 66/2010 and Presidential Decree 556/99, now amended by Presidential Decree 90/2010).

Two military women are currently assigned to international bodies abroad: a Lieutenant Colonel of the Carabinieri Corps is serving as Personal Assistant to the Chairman of the Military Committee of NATO; and an Air Force Captain is currently at the European Space Agency (ESA).

There is a limited number of women in senior positions due to their relatively recent entry into the armed forces or the lack of the requirements to be deployed abroad. At present, the rank of major is the highest level held by a woman in the armed forces, except for the Carabinieri Corps, where there are women, who had originally served in the State Police, at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

NATO's commitment to gender equality began many years ago with the establishment of the Committee on Women in the NATO Forces (CWINF), subsequently renamed the NATO Committee on Gender Perspective (NCGP). Italy has been a regular member of this Committee since before women were allowed to join the Italian Armed Forces. In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the President-Elect shall be an on duty woman official. Italy has two women on the Committee: the Chair (until June 2011), an army captain, and a national delegate.

In the field, where the female component is essential for certain duties, the employment rate for women is approximately 3.3%.^{iv}

In some cases, the role of women is decisive in achieving the mission's objectives, for example, when there is a need to interact with Muslim women in Islamic countries. To respect local cultural and religious traditions, in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq the deployment of women military physicians is crucial to addressing the health-related issues of local women, as is the use of female staff to conduct check-points controls and house searches.

Against this background, **Italy is committed to considering further improvements in legislation** on the recruitment, status and career advancement of women, to further motivate women to join the armed forces. Examples of such incentives are: adopting ministerial decrees that determine which posts are too dangerous, fatiguing or hazardous to the health of pregnant service women or women who have given birth in the past seven months; building kindergartens and child-care centers or using approved external facilities to allow parents, especially mothers, to perform the professional duties with peace of mind.

Improving the living standards and quality of life of its military and their families is a top priority. Italy is thus committed to supporting for families whose members are deployed on international missions. This goal has long been a priority for the armed forces. There are established guidelines on how to support family stability when both parents are in the armed forces. These guidelines are a model that has been adopted by all the other forces. In terms of assistance to staff members and their families, a coordinated network was created across the country for the following purposes: 1. Assistance to the families of a staff member deployed on long-term missions; 2. General assistance to military personnel and their family members; 3. Personal Care Monitoring desks. Assistance to military families is offered at both the local and regional levels. There are special phone numbers for family members of staff deployed abroad and for military staff seeking logistic, economic, social security and health information. The family can also request a direct phone contact for the family member deployed abroad.

The Personal Care Monitoring Desk is a 24-hour service that collects and screens cases to identify the most serious ones, ranging from health emergencies to critical situations at home that may significantly impact the work and quality of life of the service member and his or her family. The Human Resources Office assesses the problems submitted by the affected staff member and seeks for the best solution. Finally, in the event of death of a member of the military Staff on duty, in Italy or abroad, the Human Resources Office sets a direct contact with the families of the military-man/-woman involved, inter alia, by promptly transmitting a list of assistance and social security measures for the family, jointly with the Office's special phone number to be called in case of need (the above procedure will also allow the HRO to monitor and evaluate the implementation of relevant welfare and social security assistance measures).

Italy is committed to ensuring the participation of a woman as a national representative in the NATO Committee on Gender Perspective.

To increase the number of women in the armed forces, State police, peace missions, and other major bodies, **Italy may review, strengthen and broaden the mandate, with additional tasks, of the Advisory Committee of the Chief for Defense Staff and the Commander General of the Revenue Guards Corps**, in order to ensure the correct implementation of the cited Act 380, 1999, as included in Legislative Decree 66 of 2010.

The limited presence of women in the armed forces, particularly at the higher-rank, depends on the recent access of women to the military sector, dating back to approximately ten years ago. Aware that this trend will change in the following years, it is indeed a national interest to facilitate the integration of women in the armed forces, as is the case – since long time – with all the other labor fields, both public and private. To this end, **it is crucial the permanent monitoring by relevant supervisory bodies, so as to check the correctness of the requirements set for the competition notices and to ensure the utmost transparency with regard to both the access to this job sector and the relating career advancement.** Needless to say, the legislation applies to both women and men. On equal footing with men, women have access to all ranks, qualifications and specializations without any sort of distinction. The only difference can be detected in the competition notices for the drafting in the Army, which envisage more favorable minimum physical standards for women when to undertake the physical tests.

From all the above considerations, **Italy deems that it is of the utmost importance to provide for adequate training activities**, to ensure highly professional and specialized staff to be deployed in international teams. Within this framework, Italy is committed to developing specific initiatives at Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU) in Vicenza (Please see Section 3 below).^v

2. Promoting the inclusion of a gender perspective in all Peacekeeping Operations

The entry of women into the armed forces has required the adoption of an ethical code of conduct on respectful behavior toward others. This Code, drafted in cooperation with the Advisory Committee, provides a consolidated standard of ethics to prevent discriminatory conduct among personnel, confirming the importance of the principles of equal opportunity, equality and tolerance as the sole means to guarantee mutual respect and the proper fulfillment of one's duties.

In the same line, **documents with instructions on respectful conduct toward others and the protection of the victims in crisis areas** could be circulated. Gender experts on the Committee – whose mandate and duties should be extended – should also be able to advise on these issues.

Moreover, **Italy is committed to including resolution 1325 (and, as appropriate, resolution 1820) in the Defense Ministry's general cooperation agreements**, which refer to the preamble of the United Nations Charter and provides for peace-keeping activities and training program exchanges. This reference would entail: awareness-raising of the Country that has co-signed the agreement; the deployment on international missions of personnel trained in the subject-matter of the resolution, and the adoption of a gender perspective in missions (also through special forms of support for women on peace-keeping missions).

A gender perspective could also be introduced in every stage of peace-support operations through:

- The inclusion of **gender-sensitive research and statistics with gender-disaggregated data and specific research on other forms of discrimination;**
- **Gender-sensitive research in the area of deployment**, bearing in mind the customs and traditions of the women of the host country.

Since the 1990s, Italian Cooperation has prioritized the role of women in crisis areas, at-risk states, and conflict and post-conflict areas by supporting emergency or development actions through bilateral, multi-bilateral, and multilateral funding. It cooperates with a number of UN organizations, such as UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICRI (with specific reference to action against trafficking in human beings) and the intergovernmental organization IDLO on legal empowerment issues.

Having funded specific initiatives for women in conflict and post-conflict situations in the Balkans, particularly in Kosovo, Italy is currently supporting programs in Afghanistan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Somalia and the Sudan on women's empowerment, capacity building, reproductive health, combating violence against women and children, and gender mainstreaming (particularly in the health sector, in order

to improve women's health through better access to health and reproductive healthcare services, and in the reorganization of the judicial system).

Italian Cooperation's 2011-2013 guidelines for gender equality and women's empowerment, adopted in November 2010, provide a reference point for Italy's strategic and operational action (see www.esteri.it). The guidelines are based on the Principles of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness, for the achievement of the Millennium Goals, particularly MDG 3. Italian Cooperation has prioritized the promotion of women's rights and the fight against gender-based violence, in particular, the practice of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C).

Italy intends to strengthen:

- a. Political dialogue with countries and partner agencies to implement the UN Security Council resolutions and the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW);
- b. Prevention and combating of violence against women – which will be considered a cross-cutting issue for every cooperation program – since it represents a violation of basic human rights and bears a heavy impact on society;
- c. Intergovernmental agreements and international initiatives that can accelerate abandonment of the practice of FGM/C and the financing of training programs for NGO staff and public institutions focusing on this issue. In developing countries we will be promoting communications and training programs in the fields of human rights and gender equality.

Moreover, women's empowerment is a cross-cutting priority issue for Italy, whose commitment is attested to in the 2011-2013 guidelines and programs of Italian Development Cooperation

(<http://www.cooperazioneallosviluppo.esteri.it/pdgcs/italiano/LineeGuida/LineeGuida.html>).

The program focuses, particularly in Sub-Saharan and Eastern Africa, on the following objectives:

- a. The implementation of programs for women's empowerment and capacity building of national institutions, inter alia to foster the role of women in reconstruction efforts in countries in conflict (particularly in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories);
- b. The promotion of gender mainstreaming in the areas of food security and the environment to bolster the role of women in poverty eradication programs. Particular importance is given to programs offering women access to the job market and entrepreneurship, also through microcredit and professional training programs;
- c. Strengthening cooperation with multilateral agencies for reproductive health and the fight against all forms of violence against women and children.

Experience has proven the need to intervene during the peace-keeping stage in support of the victims of violence. During the successive post-conflict and reconstruction phases, specific action supporting women's associations is needed to allow women to participate in the planning of actions to benefit their home communities. Italy recently held a "National Conference on the Role of Women in Reconstruction" in Lebanon, bringing together gender policy institutions, women's associations, Lebanese and Italian NGOs, and UN Agencies to draft gender-related national plans. This event is a good practice that can be adopted even in cases where there is weak institutional protection of human rights or limitations due to religious beliefs or tradition.

3. Providing special training for personnel on peace missions, with a focus on resolution 1325

The training institutes of the armed forces and the Carabinieri Corps at all levels (military schools, academies, educational institutes for volunteers with a regular or fixed term of service) include programs on international humanitarian law, for a better knowledge of rules of procedure and conduct.^{vi}

Similar programs are offered by the ISSMI (National Institute of the Joint Staff Command), in courses for army officer training, in courses for legal advisors to the armed forces (which already tackles the issue of the protection of women and child soldiers in situations of armed conflict), and in the civil-military cooperation (COCIM) courses.^{vii}

Against this background, **Italy is committed to adding special modules to the courses of the various educational institutes and bodies** focusing on resolutions 1325 and 1820 and their implications, particularly the identification as a war crime of all forms of sexual violence committed during armed conflict (crimes against humanity or any act that may lead to genocide) and on health issues, such as FGM/C and HIV/AIDS.

To ensure the deployment of qualified personnel, the training of men and women deployed on peace-making missions must include courses on gender-related issues and violations of human rights of women and children. Such courses should also be open to senior officers. Specific modules on trafficking in human beings, gender-based violence, and sexual abuse of women during armed conflict could also be organized for peace mission personnel.

International humanitarian law has long been in the curriculum of the Advanced Defense Studies Center with a special training course on UN resolutions 1325 and 1820 and related issues. Other initiatives, such as presentations or conferences, could supplement these courses at individual training institutes of the armed forces and at the General Command of the Carabinieri.

In this regard, understanding the delicate issue at hand and the need to raise awareness and promote prevention, Italy's General Staff of the Navy organized a conference, in 2008, on "Sexual Abuse and the Exploitation of Women in Armed Conflicts" at the Officer Training School in Taranto, Italy - open to senior officials and the public.

Junior courses on "Post-Conflict Rebuilding Management" may also be open to senior officials. These take place annually at the Study Center for Post-Conflict Operations of the "*Scuola di Applicazione e Istituto Studi Militari dell'Esercito*", for the purpose of developing cooperation between public and private organizations operating in crisis areas and providing education in the socio-political context in which they work and the main actors.

A similar course has been introduced into the training and refresher curriculum for General Officers at the Army's Center of Excellence for Post-Conflict Operations to develop synergies between the armed forces and the national and foreign civilian organizations.

The mission of the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU) plays a significant role: to raise awareness and increase global capacities in peace support operations, with a focus on African Countries. For the 2011-2013 period, CoESPU will be expanding its programs and enrollment. There will be new courses for international peace-keepers (military, police and civilian) as a preparation for their deployment in operations mainly under the aegis of the United Nations. A specific course for police staff or other equivalent member of the civil service has been set up for the following purposes:

- Promoting awareness of gender-based violence and its impact on international peace-keeping operations;
- Acquiring capacities to address the ethnic, cultural, political, religious or other diversities in the area of deployment;
- Developing capacities for the application of integrated operational procedures to combat sex crimes;
- Fine-tuning capacities for the investigation of such crimes in the context of a multinational mission, including capacities for assistance to the victims;
- Gaining greater knowledge of the best consolidated methods and procedures from the sector's major international organizations.

Guidelines on measures to implement equality and equal opportunities between men and women in public administration have been issued. Pursuant to these guidelines, training institutes have introduced modules dedicated to gender equality. Conferences on "social gynecology" have also been organized for men and women preparing to assume executive positions.

In this framework, **Italy is committed to expanding and creating in-depth awareness campaigns and training courses at the national level** for all of the relevant stakeholders combating violence against women, implementing the strategy contained in the newly adopted Action Plan on Violence against Women.^{viii} The third section of the Plan is specifically dedicated to ongoing and permanent education for the State police and Public Prosecutors.^{ix} A recurrent event is the "Week against Violence", established in 2009 by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Education, Universities, and Research. During the Week against Violence, all Italian schools organize training and awareness-raising activities on the prevention of physical and psychological violence against women, as well as violence based on any form of discrimination. School principals can plan lessons in cooperation with the Carabinieri Corps, the State police and associations for the protection of minors, women, and gays.

Lectures and seminars on a culture of gender could be organized at military school. Thus a proposal could be submitted to the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research to include such lectures in school curricula at the national level as a review of training programs is already underway.

The General Staff of the Army is studying the possibility of adding a “gender perspective” link on the intranet website of the Armed Forces, which will include the most significant topic-related material and **launching a series of contacts with the academic world**. The General Staff of Defence could include, in its general cooperation agreements on peacekeeping activities, an exchange of training programs with other countries. This would lead to an exchange of experiences and programs pursuant to the resolutions and the organization of lessons, seminars or workshops.

Italy is committed to reviewing the criteria it uses to assess the suitability of persons deployed in peace missions on the basis of resolution 1325. Basic principles have been identified to evaluate and select, during education and training, personnel for deployment on peacekeeping operations.

4. Protecting the human rights of women, children and other vulnerable groups either fleeing armed conflicts or living in conflict and post-conflict areas (including in refugee camps) and strengthening women's participation in peace processes

Violence against women can be defined as an abuse of power and control expressed through physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse.

According to the World Health Organization, the physical and psychological consequences of sexual violence include temporary and permanent disabilities, unwanted pregnancies, abortion, sexually-transmitted diseases, urogenital dysfunction, infertility, rape trauma syndrome, post-traumatic stress syndrome, gastrointestinal diseases, cardiovascular diseases, asthma, depression, phobias, anxiety, drug abuse, eating disorders, and self-injurious behaviors. In addition, a victim's perception of the gravity of the sexual violence, apart from the physical violence, does not diminish with time. Violence against women can thus be considered a public health problem, and health-care providers should be involved in both its prevention and treatment.

Italy is committed to addressing some of these issues, also in conflict situations.

At the domestic level, the legislation on sexual violence (Act 66/99) introduced important new measures, such as including sexually-related offenses in the category of crimes against the individual, increasing prison sentences, and introducing the crime of gang rape. At the international level, in light of resolution 1820, **Italy is about to adopt Legislative Decree (A.S. 2099), on the newly-drafted "Code for Military Missions Abroad" (approved by the Council of Ministers in March 2010), which fully implements Article 8 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court.**

Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting is a practice that compromises the physical and psychological integrity of women, especially girls and teenagers, in many African countries as well as in some Asian countries. According to statistics, the percentage of women who are victims of FGM is 98% in Somalia, 25%, in Yemen, and 5% in Congo, just to mention three of over 35 Countries, in which FGM/C is practiced to varying degrees.

Italy is committed to fighting this practice by adopting Guidelines for health-care workers on the provision of assistance to women victims of this crime, who are often unaware of the related consequences^x.

By Act 7/2006, Italy introduced to the Criminal Code Article 583-bis, which establishes a four to twelve year prison sentence for anyone who practices FGM without therapeutic cause.^{xi} In accordance with the extra-territoriality principle, this provision also applies when the conduct takes place abroad on the part of either an Italian citizen or

a foreigner residing in Italy, or if committed to the detriment of an Italian citizen or a foreigner residing in Italy. In such cases, the Minister of Justice may request application of this sentence to the culprit. Article 583-*ter* also provides for a three- to ten-year professional suspension for a health-care worker, who commits one of these crimes.

In this framework, Italy re-established by a decree of June 9, 2009 the Commission on Female Genital Mutilation, whose mandate is to draft programs to prevent and fight FGM/C practices.

In 2009, the Ministry of Health helped to draft guidelines on “Global health: Guiding Principles of Italian Cooperation” which included principles to be applied in crisis management. In recent years, Italian Cooperation has developed various projects in conflict areas, including assistance to people affected by post-traumatic stress syndrome (for example, in the Balkans). Since 2006, Italian Civil Protection, a leader in national and international emergency management, has adopted general criteria for psycho-social actions to be implemented in emergency situations and natural disasters. In response to the same issue, the Ministry of Health launched a national collaboration with Italian Civil Protection shortly after the earthquake in the city of L’Aquila (April 2009). In 2010 the Disease Monitoring Centre designed a project to evaluate the medium-term impact of the earthquake on public health. With regard to training in emergency psychology, in recent years the Ministry of Health has accredited a growing number of events for healthcare professionals.

At the international level, in the framework of Italian-Israeli healthcare cooperation, and in collaboration with the Region of Lombardy, in March 2009 a two-week residential course on crisis management was organized in Israel that also addressed the consequences of post-traumatic stress syndrome.

In addition to women, boys and girls are among the primary victims of armed conflicts. They can be seriously injured by landmines or afflicted by grave deformities, and are admitted to Italian hospitals. But this form of assistance has never been provided to women and girls who are victims of other forms of violence. To change this situation, women need to be more involved in the drafting of security measures at every stage of post-conflict operations (e.g. prevention and care measures in camp management).

It is in this framework that a number of good practices have been developed in Afghanistan, with the support of teams consisting only of women, to effectively involve the local female population in activities that have resumed in the post-war period. These include: a course in obstetrics and first aid for Afghan women for safe childbirth; and a first aid course for remote locations that have no specialized healthcare facilities.^{xii}

In this context, Armed Forces personnel in the field, especially female staff, will work closely with women’s representatives and local leaders to support the creation of local facilities or to provide their own medical personnel to assist local experts in their activities.

Given the involvement in armed conflict areas of auxiliary bodies, such as the Volunteer Nurses Corps of the National Red Cross, whose job is mainly to provide first aid and emergency care, the possibility has been considered of collaborating with organizations operating in the conflict area in the provision of support and assistance (gynecology, psycho-therapy, psychology, etc.) to women who are abuse victims and traumatized by the conflict. Such organizations work in multi-ethnic treatment centres established in post-conflict areas through healthcare teams or specially-trained experts.

In this framework, it is essential to assure peace mission personnel's compliance with the codes of conduct relating to the content of SC resolution 1325, to protect human rights of women in conflict areas, where women are among the most vulnerable subjects. Mission personnel should thus be prepared to address the difficult post-conflict situations in which women are the designated victims.

Finally **Italy is committed to increasing the presence of women in reconstruction programmes**, where they are often at a competitive disadvantage, for example, in access to microcredit.

5. Civil Society's commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325

Italy will work to enhance the initiatives of civil society and decentralized organization since, through their work, they highlight the importance of the territorial dimension and the grass-roots level, with the aim of offering women greater opportunities to express their views and show their capabilities in the fields of economy, environmental protection, and in the political and governmental decision-making processes. Women's associations and networks should also be involved, whereas, given the role of NGOs in this field, it is important to highlight the contribution which NGOs can make to the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data in assessing the impact of conflicts and the actual job opportunities available to women in the areas where peace-building operations are set up.

Considering the widespread presence of NGOs in the various international territories and their contribution to strengthening dialogue between the parties to a conflict, the support they offer to a women's culture could be strengthened through specific advocacy campaigns or support for women's employment in post-war reconstruction processes. **Italy is committed to launching a constructive dialogue with the thematic working group on gender policies that was set up in 2006. In this framework, the Italian Development Cooperation will conduct regular consultations with the Inter-ministerial Committee on Human Rights (CIDU), in its capacity of national focal point on resolution 1325 (see below).**

6. Monitoring and Follow-up Activities

I. At the national level, Italy is committed to:

1. Determining the national focal point of the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights; as a focal point:

1.1. The Committee will monitor the activities described in the Plan;

1.2. The Committee will promote regular meetings with the institutions involved – which took part in drafting the Plan – and with civil society;

1.3. The Committee will disseminate the Plan, also throughout the Parliament, and will include the Plan in its annual report to the Parliament;

1.4. The Committee will bring to the attention of the Parliamentary Observatory on human rights the following Plan, to guarantee thorough and systematic visibility.

II. At the international level, Italy is committed to:

2. Promoting the issue “Women, Peace and Security” through its Embassies (Somalia, Iraq, Lebanon, etc.) and at the relevant bilateral and multilateral meetings. A Memo will be circulated to the Embassies in this regard.

3. Introducing the issue “Women, Peace, and Security” as a priority question to be raised during the Universal Periodic Review of UN Human Rights Council, when addressing the human rights situation of member states under consideration.

ⁱ The following documents are also referenced: “10 points on 10 years of UNSCR 1325 in Europe” (CSO Position Paper on Europe-wide Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325); UNDP’s “Eight Points Agenda: Practical, positive outcomes for girls and women in crisis”; and “Civil Society, Recommendations on the Implementation of UN SCR 1325 in Europe.” (“Pangea”, one of Italy’s most important associations, participated actively in drafting the latter, http://expert.care.at/downloads/careexpert/CS_Recommendations_1325inEurope.pdf)

ⁱⁱ See also Legislative Decree 66, of 15 March 2010, entitled Code of the Military System.

ⁱⁱⁱ The same general terms of recruitment, legal status and career advancement are applied to women as to men, in compliance with the equal opportunities principle. Female staff have access to the various ranks, qualifications and specializations on an equal basis with men without exception.

The rights of female staff are protected by Decree 198/2006 (“Code of equal opportunities between men and women”), which prohibits discrimination between women and men in the military careers by introducing additional protections for female staff during their training period.

Parenthood is protected by the Armed Forces’ full implementation of Legislative Decree 151/2001, except for measures incompatible with the unique nature of the Armed Forces, which are provide for by Legislative Decree 165/2001. Pregnancy and both maternity and paternity leave therefore receive comprehensive protection. Presidential Decree 171/2007 (the most recent significant measure concerning Armed Forces personnel) introduced, through Article 14, a series of regulations to improve the above-mentioned protection measures for parents working in the Armed Forces.

^{iv} These statistics are reported by the Ministry of Defense as of 1 July 2010. Italian female military personnel (excluding 144 military chaplains):

Armed Forces	Officers	NCOs	Troop	Total	Headcount Total Force	% Women compared to stock Forces
Army	236	69	6637	6942	106.785	6,50%
Navy	227 (CEMM) / 86 (CP)	116 (CEMM) / 29 (CP)	733 (CEMM) / 542 (CP)	1076 (CEMM) / 657 (CP)	43910 (32986 CEMM and 10924 CP)	3,95%
Air Force	154	74	581	809	43148	1,87%
Carabinieri	192	398	727	1317	108642	1,21%
Total				10551	303440	3,48%

^v On 1 March 2005, pursuant to Italy’s commitments at the G8 Sea Island Summit of 2004, which adopted the Action Plan “Strengthening Global Capacity for Peace Support Operations (PSO)”, the Carabinieri Corps, using its expertise as a military police force enlisted in the service of public safety and with the contribution of the U.S. State Department, established at the “Chinotto” barracks in Vicenza the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU). The purpose of CoESPU is to increase global skills for peace support operations, with particular attention to the African countries. The Action Plan aims to train, by 2010, 75,000 international peacekeepers, of whom 10% will be “carabinieri/gendarmerie” specialized in the management of transition processes from a post-crisis situation to a more stable reconstruction context. Of the 7,500 police units, 3,000 will be trained at CoESPU following the “training the trainers” approach. The remaining 4,500 will be trained in stages in their countries of origin.

The training center is designed to handle courses lasting 4-6 weeks, in English, with at least one course per year in French, for Senior Officers and NCOs, divided by professional profile and foreseeable employment functions. The countries that have sent officers are: Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Egypt, Gabon, Jordan,

Indonesia, Kenya, India, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Ukraine, Togo, USA and Bangladesh.

In 2010, in the framework of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) project - TACTIK (Training and Awareness on Counter-Trafficking for peacekeepers), funded by the U.S. Department of State, and carried out in cooperation with the IOM, the CoESPU hosted a trainers training course for Carabinieri trainers and officials deployed to theaters of operation. The purpose of the course was to make peacekeepers more aware of the issue of trafficking in human beings and improve their contributions to the efforts of host countries in fighting this phenomenon at every level. The curriculum for this course was included in all the Senior and Middle Management courses. In late January 2011, Carabinieri and IOM experts will go to the International Peace Support Training Center of Kenya, to act as trainers in a "Trainers Training" course on the issue of trafficking in human beings. The course are being offered to the staff at the African peacekeeping training centers. The Center's training program includes units on vulnerable groups, assistance to victims of human trafficking, and techniques for combating this phenomenon, particularly in actual theaters of operation.

^{vi} E. g. the United Nations Charter; the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols; the applicability of armed conflict law to peacekeeping operations; the ban on the use of force and self-defense in the UN Charter and in international practice; human rights protection, from the Universal Declaration to the repression of international crimes; war crimes and the repression of gross violations of humanitarian law; and the jurisdiction of international courts, with particular reference to the International Criminal Court.

^{vii} Elements of humanitarian law and armed conflict law are included in the lesson plans of basic educational modules. This issue is also addressed in lectures given during training sessions.

^{viii} This Plan has been approved by the so-called State-Regions Conference on October 28, 2010 and the last step for its final administrative implementation is soon expected. Some relevant training courses have been launched in 2010. In particular following the ad hoc agreement between the Carabinieri Corps and Department for Equal Opportunities, it has started the training course on the crime of stalking, being carried out by the so-called "Stalking" Unit of the "Scientific Investigation Groups."

^{ix} "3a) Preparation of specific training courses for law enforcement officials, by using behavioral and organizational models as already tested on the territory (as was the case with the Prosecutor's Office of the municipality of Cosenza, the Police Headquarters in Catania and Verona) through ad hoc Protocols, namely SARA (standing for "Spousal Assault Risk Assessment"), SILVA (standing for "Stalking victims and risk assessment") and EVA (standing for "Examination of Violent Acts).

3b) Awareness-raising campaigns for the entire judiciary to be better trained in this field (Department of Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Justice).

3c) Awareness-raising of the above-mentioned Stalking Unit, as laid down in the MoU signed by the General Command of the Carabinieri Corps and the Department for Equal Opportunity."

^x Approximately 15% victims of FGM suffered infibulation, and consequently have to undergo defibulation so that they can give birth to children vaginally. Defibulation has to be carried out in the initial three-month term of the pregnancy or during childbirth. Needless to say, the Guidelines widely stress the need to define this decision with the woman concerned, also by stressing to both parents the impossibility of re-infibulated after the birth.

^{xi} The practice of female genital mutilation includes clitoridectomy, excision, infibulation, and any other practice that has similar effects. The same law provides for a three to seven year prison sentence for anyone who causes damage to the female genital organs other than those listed in the first paragraph, absent therapeutic need, in order to diminish sexual function, which may give rise to physical or mental disease. The penalty is increased by one third when the practices are perpetrated against a child or if the act is committed for profit.

^{xii} Other examples are the “teacher woman project”, which has seen young teachers teach in schools for Afghan girls, and the opening, in October 2010, of the “Women Social Center”. The latter is a center where women from the city of Herat can start to run small business activities, professional training courses and attend social and recreational development programs, in addition to receiving assistance. The building, made from Italian Provincial Reconstruction Team in Herat, was financed by the Ministry of Defense. It arises over four floors with thirty-six shops, an entertainment room with gym equipment, a meeting room and clinic, where will be freely provided psychological counseling and legal advice.