

# GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON SECURITY SECTOR REFORM PROCESSES IN WEST AFRICA

## Case Studies of Liberia and Sierra Leone



REPORT OF CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS ORGANISED BY  
WIPSEN-AFRICA AND DCAF

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## About the Implementing Partners

**Women Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-Africa)** is a women-focused, women-led Pan-African Non-Governmental Organization that seeks to promote women's strategic participation and leadership in peace and security governance in Africa. WIPSEN-Africa seeks to institutionalize and mainstream women, peace and security by enhancing women's leadership capacities and promoting constructive, innovative and collaborative approaches to non-violent transformation of conflicts, peacebuilding and human security in Africa. Its objectives are to: 1) Provide a platform for women across all levels of African societies to exchange, share and harmonize strategies for women's leadership and build coalitions to promote peace and security in Africa; 2) Strengthen women's capacities to sustain their active engagement in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, peace support operations and human security at policy, research and praxis levels; 3) Promote the twin approach of mainstreaming gender and women's perspectives in peace and security institutions and mechanisms; while at the same time mainstreaming peace and security in all gender mechanisms, policies and institutions; and 4) Influence policy development and implementation on women, peace and security through rigorous research, strategic advocacy, and documentation.

**The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)** was established by the Swiss Government in October 2000 as an international foundation, and today has 50 member countries. The Centre works with governments, security sector institutions, parliaments and civil society to foster and strengthen the democratic and civilian control of security sector organizations such as police, intelligence agencies, border security services, paramilitary forces, and armed forces. To implement its objectives, the Centre: 1) Conducts research to identify the central challenges in democratic governance of the security sector, and to collect those practices best suited to meet these challenges; and 2) Provides support through advisory programmes and practical work assistance to all interested parties, most commonly to governments, parliaments, military authorities, and international organizations. DCAF's Gender, Children and Security Programme develop research, policy and implementation materials to support the integration of gender and other cross-cutting issues into security sector reform.

## List of Abbreviations

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
ASSN	African Security Sector Network
BIN	Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FSSP	Female Security Sector Personnel
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GC	Governance Commission
KA IPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
LIFLEA	Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association
LNFS	Liberia National Fire Service
LNP	Liberia National Police
ONS	Office of National Security
MAWOPNET	Mano River Union Women Peace Network
MACP	Military Aid to Civil Power
MCP	Monrovia City Police
MESA	Mount Everest Security Agency
MNS	Ministry of National Security
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NFF	National Fire Force
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NSA	National Security Agency
NSC	National Security Coordinator
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSS	Special Security Services
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
WIPSEN-Africa	Women Peace and Security Network Africa
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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## Background

The Women Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-Africa) and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) collaborated with key strategic partners to organize a series of one-day consultative meetings on 'Gender and Security Sector Reform' in Liberia and Sierra Leone from the 24-25 and 27-28 June 2008 respectively.

The consultative meetings which were structured in two parts --one with female security sector personnel, and the second with diverse stakeholders of the national SSR processes-- is a core component of the DCAF-WIPSEN-Africa project intended to strengthen the integration of gender and women's issues in SSR processes and enhance the capacities of female security sector personnel in West Africa.

The one-year pilot project was launched in May 2008 and is currently being implemented in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Its strategic objectives are specifically aimed at:

- 1) Ensuring that there are functional interactive platforms for women in the security sector to mobilize and act as a cohesive group to drive change;
- 2) Enhancing the capacities of key parliamentarians, female armed forces and law enforcement personnel and women's organizations to mainstream gender and women's issues into new security structures and operations; and
- 3) Developing indigenous resources and documenting lessons learned and good practices of integrating gender into SSR processes in West Africa.

### Summary of Needs Assessment

The project commenced with a need assessment in May 2008 targeting SSR

stakeholders, female security sector personnel, civil society organisations and community members. This assessment was crucial for generating detailed background information on existing initiatives, raising awareness on the project and involving target communities in its design to ensure local ownership. It also provided the opportunity to assess the general level of local knowledge on the subject area that was vital to establishing a baseline on current attitudes towards gender, security and security sector reform issues. Further, the assessment facilitated the identification of current gaps, needs and entry points for action on gender and SSR which the project intends to prioritize (for more information please refer to the Project Needs Assessment Report on [www.wipsen-africa.org](http://www.wipsen-africa.org)).

The findings from the project needs assessment in Liberia and Sierra Leone revealed some similarities in the SSR experiences in both countries, though certain experiences are unique to each country's history. This uniqueness stems from the fact that in one instance, the SSR process in Liberia is an immediate post-conflict requirement of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and is largely driven by diverse actors such as the United States through private military companies (Dyncorp and Pacific Architect Engineers), UNMIL and others that focused on technical aspect of the process and therefore overlooking the oversight and governance elements of SSR, which was introduced by non-state actors (ASSN) through work with the Governance Commission. In the second case, SSR has evolved and is now a core of the security-development nexus in Sierra Leone, resulting in a process that is somewhat more locally owned. Their comparability is largely centered on the general perception, particularly among the general public,

that the process is largely externally driven, non-consultative and narrow in its scope, as it seems to be focused on the army and police.

The needs assessment also revealed that gender and women's issues were not necessarily prioritized nor approached comprehensively within the SSR processes in both countries. Notwithstanding WIPSEN-Africa and DCAF observed that key gains have been made in certain areas --for instance there has been an increase in the number of female enlistments within some institutions like the army and police; integrating gender in certain aspects of the curriculum and training for security personnel e.g. under topics like human rights, sexual exploitation and abuse, and international humanitarian law; and responding to sexual and gender-based violence through institutional structures like the Family Support Units and Women and Children Protection Units within the Sierra Leone and Liberian Police Forces respectively. However, these initiatives have been limited to a few institutions, namely the police and army, and key measures such as institutional policies on gender and sexual harassment are still generally lacking. Additional measures are thus needed to obtain a transformed security sector that is responsive to the special needs of women, men, girls and boys.

## Overview of Consultative Meetings

In order to validate the findings of the needs assessment, and generate additional baseline information from a wider audience, WIPSEN-Africa and DCAF organized a series of consultative meetings on 'gender and security sector reform' with key national actors in Liberia and Sierra Leone. These meetings targeted two broad sets of actors: 1)female security sector personnel and

2)other stakeholders, namely parliamentarians, government ministries, civil society including women groups, traditional leaders, the media, and international and regional organizations such as the UN and ECOWAS.

More specifically, the objectives of the consultative meetings were as follow:

1. To create a platform for female security sector personnel to mobilize and act collectively to ensure their concerns are incorporated, and that they actively participate in SSR processes.
2. To facilitate dialogue between female security sector personnel, civil society women's groups and other actors in the SSR process.
3. To develop a 'women in the security sector' joint agenda and action plans on gender and SSR which outlines existing gaps/needs as well as actions that can be taken to address these needs.

This report gives an account of deliberations during the four (4) consultative meetings organized. The first section highlights discussions with female security sector personnel in Liberia.

The second with female security sector personnel in Sierra Leone.

The third is on the consultations with gender and SSR stakeholders in Liberia; and the fourth with stakeholders in Sierra Leone.

Complimentary views in the discussion with actors in the same categories --female security personnel or broader stakeholders - are also captured for emphasis. Further, participants' recommendations for action are outlined. Given that the substantive part of the meetings was held under the Chatham House Rules, the report does not attribute statements contained herein to any participant.



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<sup>1</sup> The Chatham House Rule is a rule that governs the confidentiality of the source of information received at a meeting



## SECTION ONE: Consultative Meeting with Female Security Personnel in Liberia



Dr. Thomas Jaye, Resource Person to the GC in Liberia

### Opening Session

The meeting with female security personnel in Liberia was organized on 24 June 2008 at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Monrovia. Twenty-seven female security personnel from ten (10) institutions attended the workshop including: Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Ministry of National Security (MNS), Special Security Services (SSS), National Security Agency (NSA), Monrovia City Police (MCP), Liberia National Fire Service (LNFS), Ministry of Defence (MOD), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN), and the Liberia National Police (LNP). There were also representatives from civil society (see the Annex for a full list of participants).

The Inspector General of the Liberia National Police (LNP) Beatrice Munah Sieh presided over the opening ceremony. Also in attendance was her deputy Asatou Bah-Kenneth; the Deputy Commissioner of Immigrations, Aba Williams; and Dr. Thomas Jaye, a resource person to the Governance Commission from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training

Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana. In her opening address, the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police noted the importance of having more women in the security sector. She stated that in her experience female officers are generally perceived to be more committed, trustworthy, honest and sensitive; this tends to increase communities' level of confidence in the police. She however highlighted despite women's involvement in security issues, the sector e.g. the police service is still largely perceived to be a male terrain which she attributed to discriminatory cultural norms and stereotypes. She further noted that women within the sector are faced with a number of challenges, including lack of opportunities for professional advancement; low remuneration and poor welfare packages, such as lack of good medicare; stereotyping; etc. The lack of a functional platform for female personnel to mobilize and act collectively on issues has been a major constraint. In illustrating this she referred to the "old boys' networks" set up by their male counterparts (see annex for the presentation notes).

The opening ceremony also featured presentations from WIPSEN-Africa, DCAF and Dr. Thomas Jaye. After the opening statements, participants stated their expectations of the meeting which included:



Participants at the Consultative Meeting for Female Security Personnel in Liberia



L-R: Kristin Valasek (DCAF), Abla Williams (Dep. Commissioner for Immigrations, Beatrice Sieh (Inspector General of Liberia National Police)

- Gaining conceptual clarity on the concepts of sex, gender and SSR, as well as acquire increased understandings of the relationship between gender and SSR.
- The need to build an 'old girls' network that will be instrumental in facilitating networking among female security personnel.
- The need for gender training and capacity building (both local and international).
- The hope that the SSR exercise will be extended to other security institutions aside from the police and armed forces.
- Policy recommendations to ensure women's access to leadership and decision making positions.
- Acquisition of knowledge and information that can be integrated into daily work.
- Exchange of information and experiences e.g. with colleagues from the police and armed forces.

## Mapping Security Sector institutions

Participants mapped security sector

institutions in Liberia. Those identified include: the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), National Security Agency, Fire Service, National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN), Liberia National Police, Seaport Police, Monrovia City Police (MCP), Special Security Services (SSS), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Ministry of Justice, Prisons, and Customs and Immigration. Those with oversight functions, as identified by the participants, include the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, Parliament, media, National Security Council, and civil society including women and human rights organizations.

## Conceptualizing SSR

To provide a conceptual framework for discussing SSR, presentations and discussions provided a definition of SSR, its objectives, processes, actors involved in the sector, as well as the context for SSR process in Liberia. The discussion revealed that there are two dominant contesting views in SSR: one view suggest that the SSR is externally driven, non-consultative and lacking local ownership. Conversely there are views that acknowledge the efforts of groups like the Africa Security Sector Network, the Conflict, Security and development



Cross Section of Participants at FSSP Consultation

Group at King's College, the Africa Security Dialogue and Research and DCAF to encourage involvement by local actors. This has involved nation-wide consultations that evolved the country's national security strategy. The UNDP provided funds for the national consultation process conducted by the GC.

## Gender and SSR

On gender issues within the SSR process, it was noted that the national security strategy document includes recommendations that women and children be safeguarded from violence and crime in this current phase of the consolidation of transition from war to peace, and for gender mainstreaming at every level of security policymaking and

practices. It further recommends that gender awareness and sensitivity be incorporated into the training curricula of security agencies. Though participants had mixed opinions on the inclusive and consultative nature of these processes, there was consensus that a number of opportunities for the integration of gender issues were now available. Following the development of the national security strategy, the process has advanced to the second stage of institutional review and policy making. This development has created opportunities for the integration of gender and women's issues into individual institutional policies, and is also crucial in ensuring that women (particularly those within the sector) are relevant actors in the country's security architecture.

Participants identified some of the existing initiatives taken nationally and locally on gender and SSR. The table

below summarizes the identified initiatives into five (5) sections:

<p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A six (6) hour course on gender has been introduced for police recruits</li> <li>• Gender training is part of the curricula for the Armed Forces</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A national action plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 has just been recently developed (May 2008)</li> <li>• National laws on gender-based violence have been enacted</li> </ul> <p><b>Staffing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% target for women in the police force (currently 5%).</li> <li>• Public awareness campaigns and recruitment drives for female personnel.</li> <li>• Assisting women to gain high school diplomas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Advancement of women in the security sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle and senior management training for women and men in the police.</li> <li>• Armed Forces of Liberia offers leadership classes.</li> </ul>
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- The Liberian Female Law Enforcement Association (LIFLEA) was established to provide a platform for advancing women's issues within the sector.

### Operations

- A Women and Children Protection Unit has been established within the Liberia National Police. The Unit's mandate includes a focus on human trafficking and investigation of Gender-based Violence (GBV).
- A Gender Section now exists in the police service that focuses on gender policy within the service.
- Boards of Inquiry have been established in most institutions where sexual harassment issues could be raised. Also a complaints office in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and an Office of Strategic Initiative.

## Needs and Gaps Analysis

Group exercises identified existing needs and gaps confronting female personnel in the Liberia security sector. All four (4) groups highlighted similar issues. Gaps identified include:

### GAPS

- Under-representation of women in decision making, particularly among the career service personnel. Men currently hold Directorate positions and often do not consider the impact of decision making on women.
- The lack of an effective recruitment and retention strategy that will encourage more women enlist to join the army.
- Lack of training for female security sector personnel. Very few women benefit from training programmes as priority is given to men.
- General low representation of women within the security sector. Lack of incentives for women to join security sector institutions.
- Weak or non-implementation of existing policies and non-commitment to gender equality.
- Poor governance mechanisms within security sector institutions to check issues relating to gender discrimination.
- Lack of initiative and self-confidence among female security personnel.
- Partially functional association for female law enforcement personnel, further resulting in poor cohesion and networking.

Needs identified include, but are not limited to the following:

<p><b>NEEDS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower female security personnel through capacity building initiatives.</li> <li>• Review recruitment policies and introduce incentive packages that will encourage more women to apply.</li> <li>• Promote women's access to leadership and decision making by recruiting qualified women.</li> <li>• Ensure security institutions are well equipped and have the necessary logistical support to facilitate their operations.</li> <li>• Promote networking and synergies between female security personnel.</li> </ul>
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### Prioritizing Gaps and Recommendations

Participants prioritized three core gaps and suggested actionable policy recommendations to address these gaps. These gaps and recommendations are captured in the table below:

<p><b>WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SECTOR DRAFT AGENDA - LIBERIA</b></p>
<p><b>Gap 1. Lack of Skills and Professionalism</b></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal and external training on gender and SSR including in-service capacity building workshops and seminars and training for female security sector personnel on specialized areas. External training should include advanced level courses in various fields of work including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Computer literacy, including use of internet and PowerPoint</li> <li>○ Database development to facilitate intelligence operations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Topics of training should include: gender mainstreaming, security, public speaking and advocacy and negotiation skills, writing and documentation, communications, ICT, management and intelligence gathering.</li> <li>• Scholarships should be provided for female personnel to attend external trainings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gap 2. Absence of Women in Decision-making Positions</b></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revitalize the LIFLEA, the Liberian Female Law Enforcement Association including revision of their bye-laws, to facilitate intra- and inter-sectional dialogue and consultation, as well as mobilize to advocate for the involvement of women in decision making.</li> </ul>

- Strategic engagement of the leadership within the security institutions in the gender equality campaign.
- Lobby legislators and policy advisers within the security institution to enact laws and regulations that guarantee increased involvement of women in decision making.
- Advocate for gender parity in appointments of leaders.
- Carry out open awareness campaigns to encourage more qualified women to apply for recruitment.
- Allot budgets for gender related programmes within the security sector.
- Develop institutional gender policies.
- Ensure sex-disaggregated data/ statistics are available in all security institutions (where one does not already exist) to facilitate gender-responsive planning.
- Conduct sensitization exercised to eradicate existing stereotypes on female security sector personnel, including through use of radio stations and public awareness campaigns.
- Target young women in high school through mentorship programmes e.g showcasing of female security personnel around career day, etc.
- Budget for measures to increase women in decision making.

### **Gap 3: Low Recruitment of Qualified Women in the Security Sector**

#### **Recommendations:**

- Review recruitment processes and set standards for recruitment including aptitude and character tests.
- Transparency - results should be based on merit and not favoritism.
- Motivation including attractive salaries, incentives and good welfare packages such as medical benefits, improved logistics, good insurance and highlighting female role models.
- Launch female volunteer fellowship programmes within security institutions to encourage young women to seek to build careers within the sector.

The meeting culminated with the nomination of ten (10) female personnel who were mandated to present the policy recommendations to participants during the consultative meeting that was to be organized for other stakeholders working on issues relating to gender and security sector reform nationally.

**SECTION TWO:  
Consultative Meeting with Gender and SSR Stakeholders in Liberia**

The consultative meeting for national gender and SSR stakeholders in Liberia took place on 25 June in Monrovia. It brought together thirty-nine (39) participants. Participants included representatives from national defence, security and gender machineries, parliament, female security personnel, ECOWAS, and civil society including traditional leaders, youth groups, non-governmental organizations such as International Alert, as well as community-based organisations, women associations and the media. Dr. Thomas Jaye of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre (KAIPTC) who is currently seconded to the Governance Commission in Liberia served as a resource person for both consultative meetings in Liberia.

**Opening Session**

The opening session featured statements from WIPSEN-Africa, DCAF and the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police who applauded the broad-based representation of institutions and sectors at the consultative meeting. She also emphasized the key role of civil society in providing security and the need to further decentralize the police service. A keynote address was delivered by Elijah Seah, a



**Cross Section of Participants  
at Broader Consultations in Liberia**

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### Needs and Gaps Analysis

The recommendations from the consultative meeting with female security personnel were presented to garner additional inputs on priority gap, needs and actions. Stakeholders identified the following as additional gaps:

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Building Women, Building Peace

### Implementing Draft Agenda for Security Personnel

Participants discussed the prospect of implementing the draft agenda for security personnel. To facilitate cross sectoral input, government, civil society organizations and parliaments worked in small group formations. Each group had a representation from the security sector. The table below outlines the feedback from the groups:



Group Exercise to Identify Gaps



## Additional Input to the Draft Agenda for Female Security Sector Personnel in Liberia

### Parliament

- **Training:** Parliaments should adopt policies on gender training, hold public hearings on the issue, enact laws that promote gender equality and ensure that training are gender-balanced, strengthen existing laws, sustain advocacy and awareness-raising on the implementation of these laws. They should undergo gender training so they are better equipped to formulate gender-sensitive legislation/policies.
- **Women's access to decision-making:** female parliamentarians should form a collaborative network with female security personnel. Female security personnel should also interface with the parliamentary committee on defence and security. Parliament should institute an enforcement mechanism, including monitoring and evaluation, to ensure there is compliance with the quota on recruitment of women. Special attention should be placed on gender budgeting and the development of sex-disaggregated statistics.
- **Recruitment of qualified women:** parliament should legislate on recruitment criteria, including a minimum percentage of women/men in security sector institutions, and ensure gender parity in appointments. They should also monitor the implementation of laws through enforcing the constitution, dialogue with female security sector personnel, status reports on gender main streaming in the security sector and sex-disaggregated statistics. These initiatives should be factored into budgets.

### Civil Society

- **Training:** civil society organizations have the wherewithal to organize capacity building training programmes for the heads of security institutions, submit project proposals on developing training to NGOs and INGOs for funding, and conduct sensitization through media, drama, civic education, workshops, etc. CSOs can also organize a forum/working group on SSR and gender.
- **Women's access to decision-making:** civil society organizations can play leading roles in advocating for increased involvement of women in leadership and access to decision making.
- **Recruitment of qualified women:** civil society should collaborate with female security personnel in advocating for equal opportunities. During recruitment processes, CSOs can also lead in community awareness campaigns aimed at encouraging qualified women to join the sector.

### Government Institutions

- **Training:** government institutions with particularly oversight responsibility are called upon to ensure benchmarks of minimum 30% female participation; mainstream gender and particularly women's issues into institutional policies,

programming, training and impact assessments; increase budgetary allocations for staff development and ensure that women benefit from such opportunities. Conduct gender training for those actors within the security sector and related sectors to increase the recruitment of female personnel and improve their skills – through both local and international trainings. For example, the deputy heads of government ministries can convene a group discussion on gender and SSR; and liaise with CSOs in this regard.

- **Women's access to decision-making:** develop institutional gender policies to increase the participation of women in decision-making, empower women in the security sector through training based on qualifications and functions.
- **Recruitment of qualified women:** structural changes should be made in order to ensure increased enlistment of women into security sector institutions. For instance a woman's department or gender unit can be established; joint awareness raising activities can be implemented in collaboration with civil society; senior female security personnel should be encouraged to liaise with civil society groups on career day to raise awareness aimed at encouraging more young girls to enroll. Also, attractive remuneration and welfare packages should be provided for security personnel as an incentive to increase interest in the institution; a volunteer or internship programme for young girls can be institutionalized within security institutions; the budget for recruitment should be increased in order that special measures can be taken to reach out to more women; the budget for staff training and education opportunities should be made available to women.

## SECTION THREE:

### Consultative Meeting with Gender and SSR Stakeholders in Sierra Leone

#### Opening Session

The opening ceremony of the Consultative Meeting with Gender and SSR Stakeholders in Freetown, Sierra Leone brought together sixty-six (66) participants, including: the Chairperson and a member of the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Defence and Security, Rtd Major Abdul Rahman Kamara and Rtd Brigadier K.E.S. Boyah. Representatives of the security sector --including private security companies, civil society --including women and youth groups, non-governmental organizations, community based groups, the media, traditional and opinion leaders including paramount chiefs, UNIOSIL, national defence and gender machineries, and government institutions were also in attendance.

The Minister for Defence Rtd. Major Pallo Conteh and the Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Musu Kandeh, made presentations which recognized that gender and women issues are not fully integrated in the security sector reform process. a main reason for this was the under-representation of women in the "top echelon and decision-making level of the security sector".

In reiterating the government's commitment to the empowerment of women in all spheres, including in the promotion of their participation in the SSR process, examples were cited that illustrated a shift in government's policies beyond rhetoric to action. Such actions include the enforcement of higher standards of discipline, professionalism and morale among troops; the appointment of a female Chief Justice; improved civil-military relations; and increased recruitment of women into the military.



Rtd. Major Pallo Conteh,  
Hon. Minister for Defence, Sierra Leone

The role of women in advocating for full and effective participation in these processes was highlighted as crucial to attaining the goal of empowering women and promoting gender equality. Women were urged to support the SSR process, as well as the WIPSEN-Africa-DCAF initiative to ensure adequate transformation of the security sector in a manner that meets the special security and justice needs of women.

Presentations on gender and security sector reform revealed very few women are in the infantry battalion of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces and none of these battalions are headed by a female. A cursory look at the composition of the military shows that the highest rank a female has thus far attained within the Sierra Leone military establishment is that of 'Colonel'. Thus while the SSR process is necessary for rebuilding trust in the country and for professionalizing the sector including improved training and recruitment procedures for the Sierra Leone Police, local police

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Cross Section of Participants at Broader Consultations in Sierra Leone

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- The involvement of women's groups in District and Provincial Security Committees.

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- Policy on sexual harassment under development, or developed, within the police.

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- Civil society organizations engaged in border security management.

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## Gaps and Needs Analysis

### GAPS

- The lack of monitoring and evaluation of existing security structures with regards to gender issues, including statistics on the number and position of male and female staff. ONS monitors security sector institutions but lacks a gender lens.
- Discrimination, cultural stereotypes and stigmatization against women within security sector institutions
- Lack of structures such as women's associations within the security sector or a woman's commission, as recommended in the TRC.
- Lack of formal and informal education of women leads to a low level of education of female security personnel (resulting in the perception that females in the security sector are school drop-outs and fear of stigmatization).
- Stagnation of promotions within the military for the past 9 years has led to demotivation.
- Very low percentage of female staff within the security sector.
- Limited in-service training to enhance professional development of women – for instance in-service training for prisons staff only benefited men.
- Poor conditions of service.
- Inadequate knowledge and understanding of gender issues
- Inadequate information on existing gender policies.
- National gender machineries are not inputting into the national security committee. Absence of special consideration for 'lactating mothers' and mothers in general, within the security sector. Infringement on women's reproductive rights due to the absence of institutional gender policy. For

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Identified needs revolved around capacity building and empowerment and in addition included: provision of child-care facilities; incorporation of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children in the National Security Committee and increased involvement of the Ministry in SSR issues; improvement of conditions of service; development of institutional gender policies (where one does not exist); mechanisms to ensure the retention of female security personnel; increased representation of women in decision making within the sector; networking among female security personnel; etc.



Watta Kamanda, ONS

Participants brain stormed on possible actions to be undertaken by key institutions to facilitate the main-

streaming of gender into SSR. Institutions highlighted were: traditional leaders and local governance structures; parliament; government ministries; media and civil society.

## Recommendations

Recommended Actions for Key Institutions
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### **Media**

- Advocate for the main streaming of gender in SSR.
- Apply gender sensitivity in reportage on SSR initiatives.
- Showcase female security sector personnel with a view to encouraging more female enrolment.

### **Civil Society**

- Involve female security personnel in specialized training programmes.
- Facilitate linkages and networking between female security and civil society groups.
- Engage in the review of national security policies.
- Advocate for gender parity in the National Security Council.

### **Traditional Leaders/Local Governance Structures**

- Involve women in security committees at the community level.
- Raise awareness on gender and SSR issues, including to specifically increase the recruitment rate of female security sector personnel.

### **Government Ministries/Agencies**

- The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs should be represented in the National Security Council and linked to ONS.
- Identify and appoint gender focal persons to security institutions.
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs take the lead in advocacy to ensure that all sectoral policies link to UNSCR 1325.
- Ensure that all Government policies and strategies mainstream gender and prioritize women's issues
- Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs should set up an SSR and/or incorporate security issues in its programmes and activities.
- Government Ministries especially the defence and gender machineries should allocate and mobilize resources to support initiatives on gender and security.

## SECTION FOUR: Consultative Meeting for Female Security Personnel in Sierra Leone

### Opening Session

The consultative meeting for female security sector personnel was organized on 28 June 2008 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The meeting brought together twenty-seven (27) female security personnel from following institutions --Police, Armed Forces, Prison Services, National Fire Force (NFF), Mount Everest Security Agency (MESA), Group 4 Securicom security company, the Office of National security (ONS), and Bureau of Immigration-- as well as representatives from civil society, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs and the justice sector.

The opening session commenced with welcome remarks by the representative of the Deputy Minister for Social Welfare Gender and Children Affairs, Ms. Jeneh Kandeh. She highlighted the low-level participation of women within the security sector, in the national security sector reform process, as well as emphasized the urgent need to ensure gender issues are integrated in the SSR process. The Deputy Minister for Finance and Development, Dr. Richard Konteh, who gave the opening remark, highlighted the context for security sector reform in Sierra Leone. He outlined the country's civil war experiences and the breakdown of all public and societal fabrics, which further necessitates the need for reforms in the current post-conflict era.

### Summary of Presentations

Mr. Lawrence Bassie, Chief of Staff in the Office of National Security (ONS) provided a historical analysis of the context for security sector reform in Sierra Leone. He noted that prior to the civil war; the armed forces had a self-accounting



L-R: Ecoma Alaga (WIPSEW-Ghana),  
Larry Bassie (ONS)

system with little or no civilian oversight. There was a high level of corruption within the armed forces and police. These, did not adequately deliver security to civilians and the prison service collapsed. A comprehensive SSR process commenced immediately after the DDR programme in 2000 which among others emphasized the need to restructure the security sector. The SSR programme was supported by the British Government through its Department for International Development (DFID) and the Defence Advisory Team (DAT). This led to the launch of a security sector review project that resulted in the formation of a working group --the



Cross Section of Participants at FSSP  
Consultation in Sierra Leone



National Security Council Coordination Group-- composed of security sector institutions and, ministries within the ONS.

The security sector review process involved extensive consultations on “strategic environmental analyses” aimed at identifying security threats and developing an institutional response framework. Threats identified included lack of political will, youth unemployment, corruption, public order problems and poor governance. Institutional capacities were assessed to ascertain their abilities to deal with identified threats. Significant gaps were observed in the process such as the concentration of most security institutions such as the Fire Services in the metropolis. There was a bloated security apparatus, etc.

The recommendations of the security review process were factored into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Pillar One (1) on Security. These include professionalizing the security sector. This is currently being implemented by the ONS and has recorded significant progress. The Army for instance was restructured and its size modified. A formidable programme was also launched to reintegrate officers affected by the downsizing.

The presentation acknowledged that a focus on gender issues has been lacking and women's groups have been called

upon to champion advocacy aimed towards the effective main streaming of gender and women's issues in the SSR processes.

## Conceptualizing Gender and Security Sector Reform

Following the presentations, an exercise was conducted to gauge participants' level of understanding of gender and security sector reform. Knowledge levels on both concepts were varied – with quite a few lacking substantial understanding of the concepts. This led to the identification of security sector actors, as well as institutions with oversight responsibility. Identified institutions included Sierra Leone Police, Military, Fire Force, Prisons Service, Immigrations and Customs, Private security agencies, Judiciary/ justice system, and Anti-drug Enforcement Agency. Institutions with oversight responsibility include the Police Council, Parliament, National Security Council, National Security Council Coordinating Group, ONS, Ombudsman and civil society.

## Gender Initiatives within the SSR Process

Within the framework of the Sierra Leone SSR process, participants brain stormed on existing actions on gender and SSR. This revolves mainly around policy



L-R: Cecilia Kaikai (Sierra Leone Prisons Service), Zainab (Sierra Leone Police)



Cross - Section of Participants

review, training and capacity building, sensitization and awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation, consultations with stakeholders to develop standard work plans for the security sector, the provision of financial support, the establishment of Family Support Units as well as the Community Policing and Military Aid to Civil Power (MACP) initiatives which has boosted confidence in the Police Force. While the absence of

an umbrella association for female security personnel was highlighted as a major constraint, it was also acknowledged that a female staff association exists within the police service and a prison women's association (comprising of wives of prison personnel and female personnel) has been in existence for six years. An exercise followed to identify gaps, needs, as well as opportunities.

### Gaps and Needs Analysis

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## Identified needs included the following:

### NEEDS:

- Gender awareness raising, including training.
- Capacity building training for female security personnel on specialized fields.
- Provision of adequate logistics support to enhance performance and productivity.
- Democratic and good governance of the security sector.
- Special initiatives to develop confidence and self-esteem of female security sector personnel.
- Creation of strong network bases among female security personnel.
- Gender-sensitive planning and impact assessment.
- Access to information and other resources.
- Develop institutional gender policies and enforce gender budgeting.

A consensus was reached on four priority areas for action, namely, 1) training and education, 2) gender policies, 3) networking, and 4) gender budgeting. Recommendations for action were also made accordingly. These are highlighted in the box below.

## Prioritizing Gaps and Needs

### WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SECTOR DRAFT AGENDA – SIERRA LEONE

#### Gap 1: Lack of Skills and Low Education Level

##### Recommendations:

- Provide female security personnel with training opportunities to build and/or strengthen their professional capacity.
- Percentage of budget allocated for career development for women.
- Advocate for professional training for women in the security sector.
- Introduce quota systems for international training in order to benefit women in the sector. So far, only women in the medical units of the RSLAF have benefited from overseas training. Female personnel in the combat unit hardly benefit from such training opportunities.

#### Gap 2: Absence of Institutional Gender Policies

##### Recommendations:

- Review existing policies on gender main streaming and the advancement of women.
- Ensure gender budgeting.

- Ensure gender parity in decision making structures within the sector.
- Implement affirmative action for 30% representation of women in the security sector.
- Develop gender-sensitive institutional human resource policies.

### **Gap 3: Poor Networking amongst Women in the Security Sector**

#### **Recommendations:**

- Establish an association for female security personnel with clearly defined vision, mission, objectives and expected outcomes.
- Identify personnel within each security institution to serve as liaison with women from other institutions.
- Compile a directory of women in the security sector.

### **Gap 4: Lack of Skills in Gender Budgeting**

#### **Recommendations:**

- Review budget allocation system.
- Advocate through Parliament for 50/50 quota system in budget.
- Facilitate collaboration between security sector and civil society women's groups working on gender budgeting issues.
- Lobby for female representation in budget oversight committees.

Building Women, Building Peace

## Outcomes and Evaluation of the Consultations

To evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the consultative meetings, an “on-site” evaluation was conducted with participants at the end of each day (see Annex for an example of the questionnaire and full summary of responses).

### Questionnaire Feedback:

- 94% of respondents stated that the meetings had good or excellent relevance to the SSR process.
- 98% of respondents stated that the meetings were good or excellent in meeting its stated objectives.
- 95% of respondents thought that the meetings were good or excellent in identifying the gaps and needs of the security sector vis-à-vis female security sector personnel.

In specific response to the three objectives of the consultation:

*Objective 1: To create a platform for female security sector personnel to mobilize and act collectively to ensure their concerns are incorporated, and that they actively participate in SSR processes.*

The one day consultative meetings with female security sector stakeholders resulted in the creation of a nascent association of female security sector personnel in Sierra Leone, which to date has had two meetings. In Liberia, momentum was generated to revive a female association under the umbrella of the Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association (LIFLEA).

*Objective 2: To facilitate dialogue between female security sector personnel, civil society women's groups and other actors in the SSR process.*

93% of respondents thought that the meetings had been good or excellent in effectively creating the space for interactions between stakeholders. The consultations were successful in gathering a broad range of participants from different security sector institutions, including female security sector personnel, civil society, government representatives and parliamentarians. See list of participants for more detail.

*Objective 3: To develop a 'women in the security sector' joint agenda and action plans on gender and SSR.*

An agenda consisting of key priorities for gender and SSR was developed in each meeting through a participatory small-group discussion process. See the draft joint agenda included in this document.

## Conclusion

The four meetings were imperative to establish a baseline of existing knowledge on gender and SSR as well as identify existing good practices as well as gaps and needs. Each meeting had unique aspects; however a common thread underlined all of them. The fact that gender and women's issues remain to be fully integrated into the security sector in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Fully acknowledging that certain initiatives have already been taken to address gender issues in SSR, six (6) key gaps were highlighted in all the consultations:

1. Low level of female personnel within security sector institutions.
2. Lack of women in decision-making positions in security sector institutions and within SSR decision-making processes.
3. Need for training of female security sector personnel as well as increased training on gender and SSR issues.
4. Lack of gender policies within security sector institutions.
5. No networking between female security sector personnel and women's civil society organisations; between female security sector personnel and parliamentarians; between security and defence machineries, women/gender machineries; and between civil society organizations and security and defence decision-makers.
6. Need to increase funds to support initiatives to mainstream gender issues into SSR and

increase the recruitment of women and their participation in decision-making.

Based upon the identified gaps WIPSEN-Africa and DCAF will review their project planning to incorporate targeted activities to address the areas prioritized by the project beneficiaries. In this regard, potential activities include training on gender and SSR for key stakeholders, revitalisation of LIFLEA in Liberia, support for the establishment of an association of female security sector personnel in Sierra Leone and activities to encourage intra and inter sectional dialogue and consultation. This will assist female security sector personnel in becoming a powerful force of change from within the organization as well as raise awareness on gender issues amongst key security decision-makers. In addition, a key gap identified is the lack of information and awareness on existing gender initiatives – as such, WIPSEN-Africa and DCAF plan on commissioning a series of short case studies on how security sector institutions have addressed gender issues. Finally, avenues are being explored to see how best to support the elaboration of institutional gender policies within the security sector.



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