

The importance of a gender perspective to successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes

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In many of today's wars, fighters are no longer exclusively adult men. Faced with a dramatically changing demography of fighters in contemporary conflicts, a number of recent open United Nations Security Council meetings on country situations and thematically focused debates, as well as internal UN processes and documents, have identified the need for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes to pay attention to differences among those presenting themselves for DDR.¹ As a result, in addition to men, child soldiers (both boys and girls) are being better catered for. Yet despite a general call for 'gender mainstreaming' in all UN-run operations including DDR processes, women's perspectives, experiences and needs are under-represented in current programmes.² The difficulty is how to move forward from discussions about gender inclusion to a measurable reality in which women are playing visible and powerful roles. In practical terms, what should the inclusion of women in DDR processes look like?

This paper is intended as a means of moving this important conversation forward. In it, I shall review recent DDR processes, drawing both from conversations with DDR field practitioners and planners working within various UN agencies, and from academic accounts of DDR. My focus falls largely on processes that have taken place in Africa, and the recommendations I make are intended to be immediately useful to those involved in the current Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program for the Great Lakes region, which represents the most ambitious and comprehensive DDR planning ever envisaged.³

UN commitment to women's involvement in DDR

Although DDR was not specifically mentioned, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 set the stage for women's needs in conflict and post-conflict zones to be better addressed. The Beijing Platform of Action set the following Strategic Objectives:

- To increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels;
- To protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation;
- To promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations;

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- To promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace;
- To provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.⁴

Several years of campaigning and awareness-raising followed the Platform of Action, including the production and distribution of research about how women and girls experience warfare. The Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action on 'Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective In Multidimensional Peace Support Operations' was produced in May 2000, and the culmination of the activism on the issue of women and girls in wartime is Security Council resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000.⁵ The entire focus of this document is on women caught up in war, and for the first time an explicit recommendation was made that all actors in negotiations to end armed conflict should not only recognize the 'special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for

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rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction,' but involve them explicitly in DDR processes. The suggestion is made that 'all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration [should] consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and ... take into account the needs of their dependants' as an urgent means to make the impact of DDR broader, more comprehensive and more forward-looking as a peace-building platform.

Women's importance for successful DDR is also upheld in the recommendations of the 2002 United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, prepared by a Group of Governmental Experts appointed by the Secretary-General. They observe that:

The successful implementation of peace agreements, including their disarmament and demobilization provisions, requires targeting disarmament and non-proliferation education and training to the specific needs of diverse target groups. Military and security forces as well as leaders at both the local and national levels must be sensitized to these issues. Other measures must meet the special education and training needs of [civilian] women and children, groups that are disproportionately affected by armed conflict.⁶

Why do DDR processes need to be broadened?

Although DDR processes remain primarily military operations, in some war zones a decreasing percentage of those they attend to fit the traditional profile of a soldier, i.e. a male over the age of 18. In several situations, 50% or more of combatants are children (male and female) under the age of 18.⁷ Active efforts have been made to address the special needs of the young, with agencies such as UNICEF, in tandem with organs such as the Office of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, playing a pioneering role.⁸ Special attention is being paid to the needs of girls, although assessments of recent DDR programmes indicate there is still a lot of room for improvement.⁹

In recognition of the multiple roles, as combatants, mothers, wives, caregivers and so on, that women play in conflict situations, the need to include them—particularly in order to enlist their support for the reintegration of ex-fighters—has been identified as a priority. However, there is a tendency in recent agreements—which is also reflected in planning in the field—to focus on civilian women, who are frequently seen as the most useful targets of disarmament and other peace-building education,

while overlooking women who have been active participants, whether coerced or willing, in armed groups. There are many reasons for this situation to have arisen, but significant among them is the fact that women have traditionally been perceived as peaceful and caring, largely because of their status as mothers, and women who do not fit this stereotype are a 'problem' that is difficult to address.¹⁰

Despite continuing ambivalence about how to meet the needs of anomalous women, DDR planners are growing to understand that including women in peace-building work is not only essential to successful and lasting transformation, but also a means to promote women's fuller involvement in other aspects of a post-conflict society. It is increasingly understood that women need and deserve inclusion in DDR processes, it is recognized that women have a great deal to contribute to the planning and execution of weapons collection and reintegration programmes if they are properly educated and trained, and it is acknowledged that such initiatives do not work unless the participation of women is accepted and their knowledge drawn from.

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Women as primary educators of their families and communities need to participate in decision-making on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and other disarmament and non-proliferation education and training efforts. ... Women have an essential role in helping to create the conditions for the cessation of violent conflict, in such activities as monitoring the peace, dealing with trauma among the victims and perpetrators of violence, collecting and destroying weapons and rebuilding societies.¹¹

The aims of DDR processes

To get a clearer sense of what, in practical terms, the inclusion of women in DDR processes should look like, it is useful to know what DDR actually aims to do. Because of its important role in peace-building, plans for DDR are usually formulated as soon as the peace negotiations begin. These processes have been conceived as a package of logical, sequential steps forming 'a continuum that is itself a part of the entire peace process.'¹² Their aim is, through a process that is symbolic as well as practical, to offer fighters a new identity that is compatible with peaceful development and sustainable growth.

Unsurprisingly, however, the neatness of this formulation does not correspond with the realities of bringing peace, let alone post-conflict reconstruction, to contemporary war zones. Since many of the world's current conflicts are being waged not over ideas, but over resources, the intention of warlords is neither to liberate nor to represent the people over whose bodies and lands they rampage. As has been all too vividly illustrated in recent and ongoing African wars, such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, violent conflict erupts less over ideals than for the purposes of profit and exploitation. The peace processes set in motion to resolve these crises are derailed by considerations of profit, and leaders and warlords pay scant heed to either international humanitarian law or local ethics. Unparalleled harm is inflicted on civilians, including through abducting them into active combat and combat support roles.

The presence of large numbers of women and children in contemporary fighting forces means that new DDR processes cannot proceed according to formulas that were used even as recently as ten years ago. The increasing complexity of the situation facing DDR planners does not, however, diminish the fact that 'DDR is an emergency process', and the extreme volatility of the security situation facing

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DDR planners means that they are often forced to provide a 'quick and dirty' intervention whose focus cannot be wider than the speedy restoration of security.¹³ In such circumstances, disarmament is likely to be ad hoc, with large numbers of weapons remaining in circulation while distrustful communities wait to see whether some kind of security is indeed being put into place. So, while the disarmament phase may still be seen as a first step in the process of turning combatants back into civilians, the prevalence of portable weapons has made it

imperative that this phase be recognized as a symbolic prelude to a much longer and broader series of initiatives designed to convince a post-conflict society to disarm.

Disarmament

Because of the breadth and severity of their impact, and the danger they pose when peace is fragile, a reduction in the number of small arms and light weapons (SALW) that circulate during and after a conflict is a vital accompaniment to peace-building and reconstruction efforts. Although research on this subject is in its infancy, there is clear evidence of gender differences in attitudes to SALW, which means that DDR processes must be designed to take gender into account.¹⁴ Men have traditionally been associated with the use, ownership and promotion of small arms, which is unsurprising as they are overwhelmingly the owners and users of guns (as well as the primary victims of gun violence). Weapons that remain in circulation become the tools by which 'interpersonal violence replaces violence between warring factions, turning neighbourhoods into war zones.'¹⁵ The security implications for women, while they may not be comparable to those faced directly by men, are also enormous. When guns flow freely in community settings, and are not removed after armed conflict ends, women run the risk not only of facing lethal domestic violence, but become more vulnerable while managing their daily workload. Women are also burdened with caring for those who have been injured or disabled by gunfire.

Evidence from the field shows that women own and use small arms in far smaller numbers than do men, and that they generally have attitudes to weapons that differ radically from those of men.¹⁶ According to practitioners of DDR, this difference should be carefully nurtured and exploited both as DDR processes begin, and afterwards as Weapons for Development (WfD) and other disarmament initiatives continue:

In sensitization campaigns, disarmament should be separated from military DDR and women should be the priority target audience because they know the negative side of guns, unlike male users who tend to focus on the upside of gun ownership. So when community disarmament and rebuilding strategies are planned women are better targets. The modalities of execution are still hard so we have to keep increasing our leverage [within communities]: it should be a general policy recommendation that post-DDR disarmament is aimed at women.¹⁷

Involving women

Women have not, to date, been significantly or substantially involved in DDR processes. There is, all the same, some evidence of the value of the recommendation that disarmament knowledge and

practical support should be directed at women. Recently, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) developed a pilot project aimed at increasing women's role in the 'Weapons for Development Programme' (1998–2002) in the Albanian districts of Gramsch, Elbasan and Diber.

In a concrete example of how gender mainstreaming can impact on peace-building processes, women's support for the project contributed to its success, since their involvement increased the number of weapons collected. Women in the pilot project reported an increase in their knowledge of disarmament and therefore their capacity to assist the authorities in accessing and collecting weapons, and commented that they understand disarmament from a more comprehensive perspective, not just as a means to reduce criminality, but also as a means for communities to make political, social and economic progress. They also felt that their participation in family decision-making processes had been improved because their preparation gave them a more authoritative opinion on family and community security decisions. Some women commented that they could now deal more effectively with local authorities, including police, which may contribute to greater community cooperation in other areas. Finally, the beginning of a new culture of resistance to arms proliferation was reported, with women providing a previously unappreciated capacity to support a comprehensive disarmament and peace-building process.¹⁸

While we do not yet have enough examples on which to base policy recommendations, early experiences indicate that assisting women to become experts in areas that are not traditionally associated with women's peace-building can help improve their social and political position. Disarmament education may allow women to become more assertive and involved in family decision-making processes. It also assists them in dealing with the authorities and helps them to gain more access to paid work, a transition from the private to the public sphere which adds value to efforts to promote women's political participation.

Recent failures

While Albania is a good start, offering some insights into the potential breadth of impact of disarmament education, some of its aims were only partially achieved. Because the Albanian project did not take place within a broader DDR process, but was a weapons collection programme in its own right, it is also difficult to judge whether it can be replicated in war-torn societies.

One question that arises from the project is whether an exclusive focus on civilian women as assets in peace-building is as empowering as it sounds. It may, in fact, stem from a stereotypical image of women as nurturers, innocents and victims in situations of armed conflict. The assumption might be made that women have an innate understanding of and ability to do disarmament work without needing to be trained; and stemming from this, there is a danger that the work of disarmament will be added to women's already heavy burden without much thought for how they will cope.

For women to become full partners in disarmament initiatives, it is necessary to recognize the differences among them. Like men, women occupy multiple spaces and identities in wartime as in peacetime, and not all women are innately peaceful or opposed to the use of armed force to achieve their social or political goals. Disarmament that focuses only on utilizing civilians marginalizes another group of women—those who fought in armed combat and voluntarily or forcibly supported combatants as nurses, cooks or sex-workers. This is a group that may have very different attitudes to the possession and use of weapons; and precisely because it does not

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fit social stereotypes of what makes a 'good woman', attracts the greatest social opprobrium in the reintegration and reconstruction period. This group of women is most likely to slip through the cracks of DDR processes and become either social outcasts who barely survive on the margins of society, or an increased security threat in the months and years to come.¹⁹

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The difficulties experienced by women associated with fighting forces are generally exacerbated, not alleviated, by DDR initiatives as they are now implemented. Despite the recommendations of UN instruments and the stated intentions of DDR planners, reports and analyses of DDR efforts

recently completed and currently underway suggest that there remains a significant gap between broad policy commitment to the inclusion of gender perspectives and specific actions on the ground.

At base, the ongoing exclusion of women from leadership positions in arenas of political influence detracts from the benefits that DDR is intended to bring. The problem is threefold:

- Despite public commitments within the UN and other international organizations to promote women into positions of power, 'there aren't many women at the leadership level in international organizations dealing with DDR';²⁰
- Women, especially in receiving communities, are involved in reintegration, 'but disarmament and demobilization are still run by men because they're seen as military problems—and there are no women in leadership positions in the military';²¹ and
- Although the need for DDR is usually recognized from the very beginning of a peace-making process, women in the country under reconstruction are rarely ready or able to insist on their inclusion in leadership, decision-making and other forms of public influence at that stage.²²

A host of recent agreements, resolutions and reports have agreed on the necessity of including women in formal peace negotiations and the peace-building processes they set in place. Yet all the same, even recent peace agreements, such as the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra Agreements of 2003 (Côte d'Ivoire), or the Lomé Accord of 1999 (Sierra Leone), have failed to include significant numbers of women in negotiations or to encourage their participation in the planning and execution of 'military' processes such as DDR. In the Côte d'Ivoire talks, one woman was present. In Sierra Leone, no women were present at the first peace talks in 1996 which led to the abortive Abidjan Peace Accord. By the time of the Lomé Peace Accord three years later, two women representatives had been included. Despite some language that aimed at recognizing women's specific needs, the accord was, in the end, very narrow in scope and stereotypical in its understanding of women's experience of armed violence. It appears to make no space for women who were not only victims but also combatants, who in some estimations constituted about 12% of all fighters.²³

More importantly, the attempt at inclusive language did not manifest itself in concrete action: in the end, no women formed part of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace under which the National Commission on DDR (NCDDR) fell. So, while the Sierra Leone DDR process was initially regarded as the most successful to date, from a gender perspective it was not substantially different from anything that had gone before. It is clear that women's absence, from the planning through to the implementation stages of the process, had a critical impact on the extent to which women's (and girls') particular needs could be anticipated and catered for. Ultimately, having failed to plan for them in the Lomé Accord, the government's own assessment of the process 'acknowledged that there is a problem in terms of DDR and women soldiers in Sierra Leone.' Gender programming, it was observed, 'has been largely absent in the NCDDR's work, and not enough attention has been paid to the challenges faced by women ex-combatants'.²⁴

The challenges ahead

As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, another DDR process is unfolding in Africa right now, the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) for the Great Lakes region.²⁵ Early reports on these processes indicate that they are already falling short of achieving the goals of gender mainstreaming.²⁶

In Angola, in a programme jointly run by the Government of Angola and the World Bank, one area of difficulty is manifest in the way assistance packages are being delivered to ex-combatants within the framework of the World Bank's policy of instituting a short-term payment scheme during the reinsertion phase. The World Bank articulates this approach as one that provides 'a transitional safety net [for combatants] to cover their families' basic material needs'.²⁷ However,

assistance [given] to 100,000 UNITA and 33,000 government soldiers ... excludes 'wives' and abducted girls from guaranteed direct assistance. The proposed assistance package, which includes a generous supply kit, US\$100 and, most importantly, six months of literacy, vocational training opportunities and access to micro-credit and employment, is targeted to male ex-combatants.²⁸

In this formulation, women in the company of male combatants are seen only as dependents, regardless of whether they bore arms or engaged in violence. If they were, in fact, fighters, they appear to be unable to claim DDR assistance. Moreover, the structure of the proposed assistance package runs counter to a recommendation made in research commissioned by the World Bank itself, which suggests that such an approach will not facilitate the well-being of an ex-combatant's dependants:

So far, the majority of [demobilization and reintegration processes] have treated families as secondary beneficiaries. This means that it is up to the soldier to share benefits with the household, even though the soldier might misuse these benefits. Giving some benefits directly to families might solve this problem. This option however might be more expensive and difficult to implement because family members must be identified and registered. Another suggestion is to conduct an intra-household analysis to evaluate how benefits might be shared and also carry out an assessment of the male ex-combatant's acceptance in the case of benefits given directly to families. A strong sensitization campaign targeting ex-combatants and communities could trigger community pressure on the recipient of benefits to use them fairly and wisely.²⁹

Angolan women are already experiencing the effects of World Bank thinking on reinsertion: a UNITA social affairs officer commented, 'We have found that women have been extremely vulnerable following the peace agreement. And from talking to our women supporters in the camps we find that they feel betrayed. The government assistance to soldiers has been, broadly, quite insufficient. It is as if women have been completely forgotten.'³⁰

Cumulative evidence from the field has proven that women and families tend to benefit very little from payment schemes such as the one in place in Angola, since recently demobilized men will not necessarily feel obliged to use their pay in the best interest of their dependants. Women and children suffer not only the short-term consequences when men spend their money recklessly, in the form of continued hunger or drug and alcohol-induced abuse, but also the longer-term impact, such as the danger that a man might become infected with HIV in the heady days after receiving his demobilization pay.

Such a payment scheme may also have the effect of trapping women who have been forcibly married to soldiers but wish to start their lives anew. Allowing them to access resources only through a male partner will discourage some women from exercising their right to leave, and exacerbate the vulnerability of those who have the courage to do so.³¹

Women have played very small roles in regional initiatives in Africa, such as the Nairobi Declaration on SALW signed in March 2000.³² They have been similarly marginalized in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), constituting only 10% of the 300 official delegates. By leaving them out of the process, DDR planners in the Great Lakes region are behaving as if there were no women fighters or leaders for them to consult. However, in the protracted period of peace negotiations since the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in July 1999, UNIFEM has played a significant role in promoting women's participation and making space for women's capacities and needs to be recognized. With UNIFEM support, Congolese women issued a declaration and plan of action in February 2002 in which they demanded that the ICD mention the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in the preamble of the new constitution, that women gain access to land and positions of political and economic leadership, and that women and children, both within armed forces and affected by them, be prioritized in reconstruction programmes. Despite not being part of the formal negotiating teams, forty women made a special Women's Day presentation during the Sun City Talks in March 2002.

For the MDRP to avoid the same lack of vision, planning and execution that has excluded women in the past, the inadequacy of DDR processes to date must be clearly acknowledged and carefully analysed. As the United Nations and the World Bank have both expressed their commitment to leading a multi-country, multi-donor initiative that is as inclusive as possible, opportunities exist to revisit and re-envisage the roles women could play in DDR processes.

The way forward

Security Council resolution 1325 is the best tool with which to achieve the full participation of women in the MDRP since it sets out a lucid and practical agenda for this process. Resolution 1325 begins with the recognition that women's visibility, both in national and regional instruments and in bi- and multilateral organizations, is crucial. It goes on to call for gender awareness in all aspects of peacekeeping initiatives, especially DDR, urges women's informed and active participation in disarmament exercises, and insists on the right of women to carry out their post-conflict reconstruction activities in an environment free from threat, especially of sexualized violence.

Practically speaking, resolution 1325 allows the following insights to be acted on.

Experience shows that women associated with combat groups, especially irregular forces, are reluctant to identify themselves as DDR processes begin and thus miss the opportunity to benefit from them. Agencies specializing in refugees and internally displaced persons have learned that women are far more likely to speak to women, especially when intimate healthcare issues must be discussed. If women do not feel safe or welcomed in a DDR process, they are likely to 'self-demobilize'—in other words, to disappear from view without taking advantage of any of the opportunities of demobilization, such as job re-training, healthcare and the like. Their capacity for self-reintegration is likely to be very limited, resulting in homelessness, isolation and exclusion from any form of safe paid work. To avoid this situation, training

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must be put in place for women fieldworkers whose role will be to interview women in order to identify combatants and other participants who fit the guidelines for inclusion in DDR processes.

Further experience shows that training in economically profitable skills must be undertaken as soon as encampment begins. Once the process of reinsertion begins, women are overwhelmed with the burdens of housework, agricultural labour, fetching water, child and elder care, and have inadequate access to transportation.

Women are seen as a resource in the reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers because they are usually their primary caregivers. However, they need to be trained to understand and cope with traumatized children if their full potential is to be realized and their workload to be kept at manageable levels.

Men and women ex-combatants have shown themselves to manage money in radically different ways. Cumulative wisdom from the field holds that men are likelier to go on spending sprees than to use their money for familial support. Sustainable reintegration cannot happen unless male ex-combatants are recognized as members of a larger community, which often means being part of a family unit rather than being seen as individuals. For communal benefit to ensue, women must have fair access to the reinsertion package granted to ex-combatants. To ensure this women—especially the spouse or other female family members of an ex-combatant—should be brought in to witness the signing of an agreement on how his money will be paid. By this means, it is hoped, the resources will actually get passed on to the family, and from there move into the broader community. In contrast with men, DDR field workers have learned that money must be given to women combatants away from their male family members. This empowers them economically and may help protect them from exploitation by male intimates.

To best support the civilian community and the ex-combatant alike, individual reintegration packages (including training, resettlement, healthcare, etc.) should be designed to supplement community projects that are aimed at both women and men. If this is not carefully handled, field experience shows that differences between ex-fighters and civilians may deepen instead of lessen over the years, a situation which should be countered as much as possible. Although DDR as a necessity targets the individual, all members of a community should receive recognition for their cooperation in taking in an ex-combatant. The timing of such an intervention is important: field experience also shows that the project cannot already be in place when the ex-combatant gets there or it may not actually target him or her. Essentially, then, while the focus of the programme should remain on supporting the ex-combatant, the receiving community's capacity to reintegrate him/her should also be facilitated without, it is hoped, adding too much unsupported labour to women and men's already heavy workloads.

In African countries, a woman can stop a man from taking his gun outside the house if she is economically empowered to feed him and their children. Field experience shows that women also know the risk of having a weapon at home and this helps them convince men to give it up.³³ This is why women have been especially identified as helpers in processes aimed at collecting SALW. In one interview, DDR experts said 'In the follow-up to initial disarmament, women are an asset. They are in charge of households and they know where the weapons are. They need to be empowered ... so they can disarm men.'³⁴

This viewpoint reiterates what we have learned from Albania—that women can only be supportive of peace-building processes if they are trained and educated to do this work.

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Conclusion

Social transformation after war requires more than the disbanding of militarized structures: it also means harnessing women's capacity as peace-builders through training them as agents of disarmament and supporters of reintegration. If we take seriously the capacity of women, and focus on the best means to build and use that capacity, we will not only be facilitating the smooth flow of DDR processes. We shall also develop the means to support women's access to social, cultural and political representation, change attitudes to land access, increase awareness of levels of violence against women in a post-conflict society, and set in place the means for women and men who reject violence to create new, more socially equitable and responsive institutions.

Notes

1. In DDR processes, disarmament is particularly focused on the removal and destruction of small arms and light weapons.
2. Gender mainstreaming is one of the Millennium Development Goals of the UN. 'A gender perspective is ... mainstreamed to achieve gender equality and improve the relevance and effectiveness of development agendas as a whole, for the benefit of all women and men' < <http://www.unesco.org/women/UGMIFV8.pdf>>. In conflict zones, it means the meaningful and visible inclusion of women and a commitment to understanding how men (and sometimes women) conceive of and exploit images of masculinity that condone violence. For more on gender mainstreaming in the UN system, see < <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/main.htm>>.
3. The nine countries involved in or affected by one or more of the central African conflicts are included (Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe), and an estimated group of 353,000 regular and irregular fighters will be demobilized. See World Bank, 2002, *Greater Great Lakes Regional Strategy for Demobilization and Reintegration*, Washington, DC, The World Bank, < http://www.worldbank.org/ao/post_conflict.htm>.
4. For the complete text of the Beijing Declaration, see < <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>>.
5. See < www.reliefweb.int/library/GHARKit/FilesFeb2001/windhoek_declaration.htm> and < http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf>.
6. United Nations, 2002, *United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education*, New York, United Nations, paragraph 32, General Assembly document A/57/124 of 30 August, < <http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/456/87/PDF/N0245687.pdf>>.
7. Aid workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo 'estimate that half of those fighting in Ituri are underage', < <http://www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?ao=15808>>, accessed 19 June 2003.
8. For information on work done outside the UN system, see the website of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, < <http://www.child-soldiers.org>>.
9. See Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana, 2000, *Girls in Militaries, Paramilitaries, and Armed Opposition Groups*, < <http://www.waraaffectedchildren.gc.ca/girls-en.asp>>; Carolyn Nordstrom, 1999, *Visible Wars and Invisible Girls, Shadow Industries, and the Politics of Not-Knowing*, *International Journal of Feminist Politics*, vol. 1, no. 1.
10. Discussions about whether women are 'innately peaceful' are not new. For an overview of this issue, see Vanessa Farr, 2002, *Gendering Demilitarization as a Peacebuilding Tool*, BICC Paper 20, Bonn, Bonn International Center for Conversion, < <http://www.bicc.de/general/paper20/content.html>>; Joshua S. Goldstein, 2001, *War and Gender*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
11. United Nations, 2002, *op. cit.*, paragraphs 22 and 36.
12. United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2000, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment: Principles and Guidelines*, New York, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Lessons Learned Unit, < <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/DD&R.pdf>>.
13. Interview with Irma Specht, ILO, Geneva, 3 June 2003. This interview will hereafter be referred to as Specht.
14. For more detailed discussions of this point, see Vanessa Farr, 2003, *Men, women and guns: Understanding how gender ideologies support small arms and light weapons proliferation*, in *BICC Conversion Survey 2003: Global Disarmament, Demilitarization and Demobilization*, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, pp. 120-33; Vanessa Farr and Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *Gender Perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and*

- International Concerns*, BICC Brief 24, Bonn, Bonn International Center for Conversion, <<http://www.bicc.de/publications/briefs/brief24/content.html>> ; Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 2002, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment*, New York, UNIFEM, <<http://www.unifem.org>> .
15. Ryszard Komenda, 2003, presentation at the UN-OSCE Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects in South Eastern Europe, 11–12 March, Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia.
 16. See the Women's Portal of IANSA, <<http://www.iansa.org>> .
 17. Interview with Maximo Halty, Prosper Bani and Mikiko Sawanishi of the UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), Geneva, 3 June 2003.
 18. Interviews were conducted by Vanessa Farr, Flora Macula and Bjarney Friðriksdóttir, with a wide spectrum of people involved in the weapons collection programme in Albania, 9–14 September 2003.
 19. The increased participation of women suicide bombers in Palestine and Chechnya, to name two recent examples, attests to women's capacity to embrace violence when they feel themselves to be in an intolerable and apparently un-negotiable situation. I am grateful to Dyan Mazurana and Kristopher Carlson for sharing with me an early draft of a paper on the experiences and roles of women and girls in the Sierra Leonean DDR process, in which they observe that young ex-combatants, especially mothers, are sometimes aggressive and vociferous in claiming DDR benefits in the aftermath, and in some instances, pose a security risk.
 20. Interview, BCPR group. The BCPR group argues that this situation arises because DDR processes are frequently dangerous. In their view, while it is desirable to include women in DDR teams, it cannot be enforced as rule: each process needs to be judged individually to assess the level of threat to the field team and women should not be sent into situations in which they are more vulnerable than men. Where women will be an asset, however (and several examples were given of when this has been the case), their contributions to DDR processes have proven invaluable.
 21. Specht interview.
 22. Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, 2000, *Women at the Peace Table: Making a Difference*, New York, UNIFEM, <<http://www.unifem.undp.org/resources/peacebook.html>> .
 23. Article XXVIII, for instance, states: 'Given that women have been particularly victimized during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes, to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone.' See <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html>> .
 24. Jeremy Ginifer, 2003, Prioritising Reintegration, in Mark Malan et al., *Sierra Leone—Building the Road to Recovery*, Monograph 80, Pretoria, Institute of Security Studies, <<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/monographs/No80/content.html>> .
 25. This is a multi-country, multi-agency and multi-donor project, drawing from the strengths of the World Bank, the United Nations, international donors and local governments.
 26. See, for example, Veronika Martin, 2003, Angola: Women's Access to Demobilization and Reintegration Program Funding Essential, *Refugees International Bulletin*, 7 March, <<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/cgi-bin/ri/bulletin?bc=00499>> .
 27. World Bank, 2002, *op. cit.*
 28. Martin, 2003, *op. cit.*
 29. Nathalie de Watteville, 2003, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs: Addressing Gender Issues, *Findings*, no. 227, World Bank, June, <<http://www.worldbank.org/afr/findings/english/find227.pdf>> . In Angola, the World Bank bears the major responsibility for reintegration, while the Angolan government has control over disarmament and demobilization. As the main funder of the exercise, the World Bank should be expected to have considerable influence over how the government goes about its programme, yet it does not appear to have insisted on the implementation of its own findings.
 30. UNITA social affairs officer Carlos Morgado, as quoted in Angola: UNITA wives fear exclusion from govt aid, *IRINews*, 10 March 2003, see <<http://www.irinnews.org/homepage.asp>> .
 31. Martin, 2003, *op. cit.*
 32. For a more substantial discussion of the gender failings of this initiative, see Vanessa Farr, 2002, A Gendered Analysis of International Agreements on Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation, in Farr and Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–24.
 33. Interview, BCRP group.
 34. Interview, BCRP group.