



# Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies



United Nations  
Department of Political Affairs

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In 2013, when few formal mediation processes had effectively included women, the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) developed a curriculum based on interviews with 30 mediators and initiated a series of High-level Seminars on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Processes. Hosted by the Governments of Norway and Finland and their respective implementing partners the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), the seminars provided a space to explore alternative ways of designing more inclusive and effective peace processes. This Guidance draws on the seminar materials and guidance notes and feedback provided by seminar participants and senior mediation experts, including UN envoys and members of the UN Standby Team of mediation advisers. The Department of Political Affairs is grateful for the support of these partners and for the financial support provided by its donors through its Multi-Year Appeal.

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# Table of Contents

<b>Part I: Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
Gender, Inclusive Mediation and Sustainable Peace	7
<b>Part II: International Normative Frameworks on Women, Peace and Security</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Part III: Mediation Preparation</b>	<b>13</b>
Preparedness	14
Gender-sensitive Conflict Analysis	15
Consultations, Engagement Strategies and Strategic Partnerships	15
Coherence, Coordination and Complementarity	17
<b>Part IV: Process Design</b>	<b>19</b>
Inclusive Process Design	20
Multi-track Engagement	21
Capacity Building and Capacitating	23
<b>Part V: Mediating Agreements: A Gender Lens on Substantive Issues</b>	<b>26</b>
Gender-relevant Language for Ceasefires and Peace Agreements	27
Security Arrangements	30
Political Participation and Powersharing	34
Constitutions	37
Implementation of Peace Agreements	40
<b>Part VI: Conclusion</b>	<b>43</b>





# **Part I:** **Introduction**

## I. Introduction

Mediation is identified by Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations as a means for the peaceful settlement of disputes.<sup>i</sup> It is a process whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements. Mediation, which has proven to be an effective instrument in both inter-state and intra-state conflict, is a voluntary endeavour that varies in scope, sometimes tackling a specific issue in order to contain or manage a conflict and sometimes tackling a broad range of issues within a comprehensive peace process. Such processes offer a critical opportunity for states and societies to reshape their political, security and socio-economic landscapes in order to lay the foundation for a sustainable peace.

Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 on Women and Peace and Security, adopted in 2000, was the first resolution to link women to peace and security, acknowledging that armed conflicts impact women and girls differently from men and boys. The 1325 agenda, driven by grassroots organizations and by women living in war and working for peace, recognizes the role and contributions of women in wartime and to peacemaking, as well as their fundamental right to be included in peace processes. The participation of women-led civil society groups and the need to address the different needs of women and men in relief, recovery, and post-conflict efforts were key motivating factors for the advocates behind the resolution.

In the following 15 years, seven further resolutions of the UN Security Council and three resolutions of the General Assembly have called for greater and more effective participation of women in conflict mediation processes; for the inclusion of dedicated gender expertise in all peacemaking efforts; for the specific needs and concerns of women and girls to be addressed; and for the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence. Even so, the participation of women in mediation processes and the gender sensitivity of peace agreements have increased only gradually, demonstrating a need for greater efforts to bridge the gap between aspirational global and regional commitments and the lived experience of women in conflict and peace processes.<sup>ii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> This Guidance builds on the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation (2012).

<sup>ii</sup> See the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, and the Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), all published in 2015.

The *UN Guidance for Effective Mediation* (2012) defines “inclusivity” as the extent and manner in which the views and needs of conflict parties and other stakeholders are represented and integrated into the process and outcome of a mediation effort. Inclusive mediation rests on the assumption that building sustainable peace requires integrating diverse societal perspectives, those of conflicting parties and other stakeholders, into the peace process. Inclusive processes will provide multiple entry points and diverse mechanisms for participation. Broader constituencies increase the potential to identify and address the root causes of conflict and to ensure that the needs of those affected by the conflict are addressed. An inclusive process, however, does not imply that all stakeholders can participate directly in formal negotiations; it will rather facilitate a structured interaction between the conflict parties and other stakeholders to include multiple perspectives in the mediation process.

The call for inclusion in mediation processes is not limited to women, but applies to social, demographic, religious and regional minority identities as well as to youth and to organized civil society and professional organizations. In response to increasing demand for targeted expertise in this area from mediation actors and the international community more broadly, the focus of this *UN DPA Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies*, however, is the gender dimension of inclusivity.

With this focus, the Guidance seeks to enhance gender-sensitive mediation capacity at international, regional and national levels and to create more consultative mediation processes through the promotion of both the effective participation of women and gender sensitivity in the design and substance of peace agreements. It gives an overview of the relevant normative frameworks and modalities by which women participate in mediation processes as part of mediation teams, conflict party delegations and civil society organizations (CSOs). It also offers practical strategies and tools for mediators and their teams working to prepare and design gender-sensitive mediation strategies, as well as recommendations on gender-sensitive provisions within peace agreements.

The Guidance aims to be of utility to UN envoys, senior mediators and their teams engaged in or contemplating formal peace processes; UN partners in mediation efforts, including representatives of regional organizations, Member States and civil society organizations; as well as, critically, conflict parties. It recognizes that mediation is a complex endeavour, whose outcomes will be



determined by many different factors, including the regional and international environment; that not all conflicts are amenable to mediation; and that while mediators may have significant room to make procedural proposals, the scope for substantive recommendations varies and can change over time.<sup>iii</sup>

## Gender, Inclusive Mediation and Sustainable Peace

Gender refers to the social attributes, challenges and opportunities as well as relationships associated with being male and female. These are constructed and learned through socialization; they are context- and time-specific and changeable. Gender affects power relations in society and determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman and a man in a given context. A culturally informed approach is of particular importance when promoting the effective participation of women in a peace process, as gender relations are perceived differently in different cultures.

Women and girls play varied roles during violent conflict. Women may be combatants or provide services to combatants, or they may be peacebuilders working to resolve conflicts in their communities. When men are absent, injured or killed, women take over as breadwinners, decision-makers and often become more active in public life. Women leaders can also be effective peacemakers at the community level. Yet, women and girls tend to be identified first and foremost as victims of violence, as they constitute the majority of the world's internally displaced and refugees, and are at risk of grave physical harm, including conflict-related sexual violence. A rights-based attention to their needs is of paramount importance, but should not overshadow the active roles women play in conflict situations.

Conflict dynamics tend to change gender relations, both positively and negatively. In wartime, women may acquire different social and political roles, gaining access to opportunity, leadership and decision-making within their communities when men are away, engaged in or escaping from the armed conflict. This can enhance their ability to mobilize constituencies and advocate with combatants for an end to the violence. Recognition also needs to be given to the role and participation of young women. Young women are frequently part of movements demanding change, but tend to be excluded from peace and transition processes, which, if they include women at all, will commonly engage older and better-connected woman leaders.

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iii See UN Guidance on Effective Mediation (2012)

This Guidance builds on the premise that mediation strategies that systematically include women, and civil society more broadly, are more likely to generate broad national ownership and support for a negotiated settlement and to lead to a more sustainable peace. Drawing on the body of research and practice developed in the framework of SCR 1325,<sup>iv</sup> it holds that:

- Women’s participation can expand the range of domestic constituencies engaged in a peace process, strengthening its legitimacy and credibility.
- Women’s perspectives bring a different understanding of the causes and consequences of conflict, generating more comprehensive and potentially targeted proposals for its resolution.
- Peace agreements that are responsive to the specific needs of women and girls, men and boys, contribute to sustainable peace.

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iv Including Nilsson, D., “Anchoring the Peace: Civil Society Actors in Peace Accord and Durable Peace” (2011), in *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations*, 38:2; Paffenholz, T., “Results on Women and Gender”, Briefing Paper. (2015), Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding and Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, <http://graduateinstitute.ch>; and *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: The Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)*.



**Part II:**  
**International Normative  
Frameworks on Women,  
Peace and Security**

## II. International Normative Frameworks on Women, Peace and Security

**M**ediators conduct their work on the basis of the consent of the negotiating parties and – in many but not all formal processes – the mandate(s) they receive from the appointing entity. UN Mediators work within the framework of the Charter of the UN, relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the Organization’s rules and regulations, global and regional conventions, as well as the international humanitarian, criminal, and human rights law applicable in a given situation.

Eight Security Council Resolutions (SCR) provide a framework for the United Nations and Member States to promote the women, peace and security agenda. These can be divided into two categories. Four resolutions on women, peace and security promote women’s active and effective participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding. The foundational SCR 1325 (2000) recognizes the impact of conflict on women and their role in preventing and resolving conflict and calls for women’s equal participation in peacemaking efforts. The subsequent resolutions urge mediators to have women and women’s civil society organizations effectively represented in peace processes and institutions, and to ensure adequate protection and funding for their needs. The resolutions also lay out a mechanism for regular monitoring and reporting on the implementation of SCR 1325 and call for an active role of the senior UN leadership and increased accountability.<sup>v</sup> Three UN General Assembly resolutions addressing the need to strengthen the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution cross-reference these four resolutions to endorse the need for mediation to incorporate the women, peace and security agenda.<sup>vi</sup>

The second group of four resolutions, starting with the adoption of SCR 1820 in 2008, aims to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence. SCR 1820 (2008) acknowledges that conflict-related sexual violence, when used as a method or tactic of war, can pose a threat to international peace and

v S/RES/1325 (2000), S/RES/1889 (2009), S/RES/2122 (2013) and S/RES/2242 (2015); as well as A/RES/65/283 (2011), A/RES/68/303 (2014) and A/RES/70/304 (2016).

vi There are additional Women, Peace and Security policy frameworks and programmes, such as those adopted by regional organizations (see, for example, that of the African Union, available at <http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/pubs/2016womenpeacesecurity-auc.pdf>), as well as human rights instruments such as the The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). At the national level, 64 countries have adopted National Action Plans on SCR 1325 (2000), as of November 2016.

security, and, depending on the context, may constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity or an act of genocide. Subsequent resolutions called for: the appointment of an Special Representative to the Secretary-General (SRSG) to provide dedicated UN leadership on this issue and the deployment of Women Protection Advisers in mission settings; accountability mechanisms and judicial expertise; and monitoring and reporting arrangements. In 2012, DPA published *Guidance for Mediators Addressing Conflict-related Sexual Violence in Ceasefire and Peace Agreements*, which will be cross-referenced in this Guidance.<sup>viii</sup>

Regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the African Union, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Economic Community of West African States have adopted region-specific agendas or action plans to integrate the SCR 1325 (2000) commitments in continental, regional and national legal and policy instruments and programmes, and to set up annual reporting mechanisms on women's empowerment and equality.

Consistency with international law and other norms contributes to bolstering the legitimacy of a peace process and may help marshal international support for implementation. Under international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions extend specific protection measures to women in armed conflict situations.<sup>ix</sup> Under human rights law, especially the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, all forms of slavery, torture, and inhuman or degrading treatment and the right to be free of these abuses are explicitly denounced.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) prohibits discrimination and disparaging treatment on the basis of gender. Two CEDAW recommendations provide particular guidance on the application of temporary special measures to promote the participation of women (recommendation 25) and on the role of women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (recommendation 30).<sup>x</sup>

vii S/RES/1820 (2008), S/RES/1888 (2009), S/RES/1960 (2010) and S/RES/2106 (2013).

viii The development of this Guidance for mediators benefited from the materials generated in the United Nations Inter-Agency High-Level Colloquium "Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Peace Negotiations: Implementing Security Council Resolution 1820" and was produced with financial support from UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

ix Specifically, article 27 of the Geneva Convention (IV) of August 12, 1949, Article 76(1) of Additional Protocol I and Article 4(2) of Additional Protocol (II) to the Geneva Conventions adopted in 1977.

x See CEDAW/C/GC/25 and CEDAW/C/GC/30

## Guidance on core UN Gender Inclusive Mediation Commitments

### Mediators and their teams should:

- Use normative and legal frameworks (including relevant regional and national frameworks) to promote the **effective participation of women** in the peaceful settlement of disputes, particularly in formal conflict mediation processes.
- Develop and resource concrete **strategies on gender and mediation** to increase the meaningful inclusion of women, particularly at the senior level in formal peace negotiations.
- Provide **gender and inclusion expertise** to all mediation processes from the onset.
- Engage **parties to armed conflict** in dialogue to seek time-bound commitments to cease all acts of conflict-related sexual violence, in compliance with international law.
- Conduct **systematic consultations with civil society**, women's organizations and survivors of sexual violence in all peacemaking efforts.
- Encourage parties to increase **women's political participation** (elected and appointed), including through the promotion of temporary special measures (TSMs), such as quotas, where relevant.
- Encourage the incorporation of **gender-relevant language and provisions** in all ceasefire and peace agreements.



## **Part III: Mediation Preparation**

## III. Mediation Preparation

### Preparedness

The strategy for an effective mediation process takes into account the specificity of the conflict; the causes and dynamics of the conflict; the positions, interests and coherence of the parties; the needs of the broader society; as well as the regional and international environments, which will play critical roles in the viability of the mediation effort. Mediation preparedness combines the individual knowledge and skills of a mediator with a competent and cohesive team of specialists, as well as the necessary political, financial and administrative support from the mediating entity or entities. It enables the mediator to guide, navigate and monitor the process and helps strengthen the capacity of the conflict parties and other stakeholders to reach a negotiated agreement, manage expectations and galvanize support (including from international actors) for the implementation phase.

Mandating entities and mediators can send an important signal to the conflict parties when they demonstrate inclusivity in the composition of their mediation teams and reflect it in their actions. Consideration should be given to the following options when selecting and preparing mediators and mediation support teams:

- Appointing women as lead mediators.
- Aiming for gender parity in the mediation support team.
- Ensuring that all team members have a good understanding of the gender dimensions of their thematic or geographic areas of expertise.
- Including gender and mediation expertise in the mediation team or engaging external expertise.
- Organizing context-specific gender and inclusion workshops for the mediation team at the start of the mediation process and when specific issues of the conflict are negotiated.



## Gender-sensitive Conflict Analysis

Gender-sensitive conflict analysis is a first and essential step towards a gender-sensitive mediation process. Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the structures, stakeholders and dynamics of conflict to provide a better understanding of the causes, triggers and forces promoting either violent conflict or peace. Gender perspectives should be applied throughout the conflict analysis process. The analysis needs to go beyond documentation of practices of discrimination, exclusion and the gendered impacts of conflict and assess underlying gender dynamics – the political and economic power dynamics between men and women within a society – and their links to peace and security. It should also help identify opportunities and capacities for peacemaking.

Relations between men and women intersect with many other elements of social cleavage, such as class, race, ethnicity, geographical location, economic inequality and access to resources. Sexual and gender-based violence against women or men can trigger violent defensive reactions or acts of vengeance, e.g. when armed groups systematically commit acts of sexual violence against particular groups, creating a cycle of violence. The analysis should also assess whether the (informal) influence of women may have increased when they take on social and political leadership roles in their communities during men's absence as result of the armed conflict.

## Consultations, Engagement Strategies and Strategic Partnerships

Mediation teams with the mandate to address an extensive range of issues need to speak with a broad range of stakeholders to forge understanding of the situational dynamics and perspectives that contribute to a conflict context. Local and community-based actors, including women's groups, should be engaged in this process. In consultation with women leaders and their organizations, mediators should develop a strategy for outreach to/the involvement of Track II actors at the start of the mediation process in order to encourage broad support for a mediated solution of the conflict.

Women hold many different roles in a conflict setting – as combatants; as supporters, mothers, sisters or wives of combatants; as business owners, teachers, politicians etc – and can serve as a resource on many aspects of a

conflict besides their specific (immediate) needs. In addition to the inclusion of women in the process in their own right, it is important to assess how women have been involved in preventing and resolving conflict within their societies and to consider how to incorporate these experiences within a peace process. Mediation teams should solicit guidance from women's groups and networks, and consult gender experts for advice on how to engage with customary and religious traditions appropriately. These insights will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the situation and enhance the ability of the mediators to explore alternative proposals for the resolution of the conflict.

More broadly civil society organizations (CSOs) including women's groups, can play a critical role in increasing the legitimacy and quality of a peace process.<sup>xi</sup> CSOs active in peacebuilding are potentially important assets, as conflict parties cannot be assumed to always represent the interests of the wider population. However, CSOs – which are not by definition inclusive of women – can also be hardliners, partial to conflict parties or reject a mediated end to the conflict. Mediators are advised to initiate consultations with CSOs from the outset. While in some very violent contexts a ceasefire may need to take the form of an exclusive interim arrangement before the process can be expanded to include other actors, gender perspectives still need to be taken on board. Mediation efforts involving only armed groups risk signalling that violence is rewarded, and can generate resentment within other sectors of society or, perversely, encourage other parties to resort to violent means in order also to get a place at the negotiation table.

Inclusive mediation processes invariably add complexity and require careful planning in order to ensure that adequate resources are in place to conduct broad consultations at the mediation's start-up. Mediation teams should identify logistical, security, financial and other constraints preventing actors from participating, conscious that these will frequently be of a different nature for women.

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xi “Civil society organization” is a broad inclusive term comprising non-governmental organizations, charities, trusts, foundations, advocacy groups and national and international associations.

## Coherence, Coordination and Complementarity

In international conflict mediation, UN entities, regional organizations or Member States formulating the mediation mandate or financing the mediation can strongly influence the process. Coherence tends to increase when the different mediation approaches and actors are acting in support of a lead mediator. The increasing number and range of actors involved in promoting inclusivity and gender equality in peace processes makes coordination of mediation and mediation support efforts essential, but challenging; complementarity can be enhanced through a clear division of labour based on the comparative advantages among mediation actors operating at different levels.

Coherence, coordination and complementarity also pertains to aspects of the process related to gender inclusivity, such as the conduct of consultations with women’s organizations and other Track II actors and building mediation capacity with respective national partners. Joint partnership strategies and trainings and guidance to develop dedicated gender inclusive mediation expertise can all be helpful.

Women peace lobbyists, often with support from global advocacy networks, can play an important role in advancing inclusivity by offering alternative approaches and holding mediation actors and conflict parties to account. An active engagement strategy with women peace lobbyists can enable mediators and their teams jointly to seek more amenable and innovative solutions to enhance the effective participation of women, including, in some circumstances, supporting a mediator by taking on a direct advocacy role with the parties.

Good practice indicates that international contact groups or “friends of mediation” forums, comprising Member States and relevant international and regional actors, can play an important role in the advocacy and coordination of efforts to promote effective participation of women. These groups could also be called upon to consider providing dedicated funding to civil society organizations in conflict and post-conflict situations, and women’s organizations in particular, as called for in UN Security Council Resolutions on Women Peace and Security.<sup>xii</sup>

xii SCR 2122 (2013) OP7b and SCR 2242 (2015) OP3.

## Guidance on Mediation Preparation

### Mediating entities, mediators and their teams should:

- Select a mediator with the knowledge, skills and experience in the specific conflict situation; women candidates should be actively identified and considered in the selection of lead mediators.
- Be strategic when composing a **mediation support team**; aim for gender parity, include gender expertise and ensure or instil, as needed, gender inclusive mediation expertise among all team members through training workshops and guidance materials.
- Undertake **gender-sensitive conflict** analysis and regular internal assessments of the process in order to make adjustments to the mediation strategies, as needed, including by:
  - Assessing the **differentiated impact** of armed conflict on men and women and acknowledging that **gender dynamics** create unique opportunities and challenges for peacemaking.
  - Analysing the many **different roles of women** in conflict (from combatant to peacemaker) and exploring the types of knowledge, information and networks they may offer.
  - Exploring how **normative frameworks and cultural settings**, the country's position on international/regional and national normative frameworks and regional good practices can assist the mediator in promoting inclusive mediation.
- Prepare to deal with **opposition to inclusive mediation approaches**, e.g. assess how culture or local traditions affect opportunities for women's participation in mediation processes.
- Ensure consistent **political and financial support** for the effective participation of women in the mediation process, e.g. through coordination mechanisms among international actors. Consider constraints for women's participation such as security needs, chaperones, family obligations, meeting hours etc.
- Acknowledge the role of **international contact groups** in advocating for and coordinating efforts to promote the effective participation of women and call on these groups to harmonize efforts to build the capacity of and provide dedicated funding to support women's civil society organizations.



# **Part IV:** **Process Design**

## IV. Process Design

### Inclusive Process Design

Mediation process design refers to the formulation of a plan/strategy on the approach and organization of the mediation, in order to facilitate a successful resolution or management of a conflict. An inclusive process is more likely to identify and address the root causes of conflict and ensure that the needs of the affected sectors of the population are addressed. It can also deepen national ownership, engaging communities who have suffered the impact of the conflict and other sectors of society who must work towards a peaceful future.

Inclusive process design creates multiple entry points and diverse mechanisms for participation. It involves systematic outreach to integrate the perspectives of conflict parties and of other stakeholders, particularly women, and to create new constituencies for peace. The urgency of reaching an initial ceasefire agreement, however, may in some instances result in a more limited participation in the early stages of a process. Balancing the humanitarian imperative to stop the killing with the demands of conflict parties and normative commitments is a complex task for mediators.

Mediators need to promote understanding among conflict parties of the value of the broad participation of women. They must recognize, however, that conflict parties will largely determine who, how and when different actors are brought into the process. Mediators can nonetheless encourage conflict parties to include senior women in their delegations and to convene regular consultations with women representatives, for example by:

- Encouraging the conflict parties to include at least one-third senior women representatives in their negotiating delegations.
- Considering design options such as granting conflict parties extra seats at the table to be filled by women.
- Assisting the conflict parties in regularly convening consultations with their constituencies, including women representatives.

Ensuring equal access to funding, space, facilitation and security for women delegates of conflict parties, as well as for women participating in Track II processes, will further help to facilitate more effective participation. Threats to their physical security are a major constraint for women, an issue which requires careful consideration by the mediation team. Options include:

- Providing physical protection to women delegates engaged in formal talks, but also to women participating in dialogue and technical meetings.
- Organizing support facilities, like child care and additional related costs, to allow women delegates to attend all sessions, and planning meetings at hours that facilitate maximum participation of women.
- Enabling women delegates to participate in trainings and to meet separately or across parties to determine and strategize on shared interests and priorities.
- Providing equal funding (e.g. for airfare, hotel, meals and incidentals) to party representatives, regardless of their gender.

## Multi-track Engagement

Mediation processes become more complex when the consultation base expands and multiple forums are used to engage actors at different levels. Mediators may have to grapple with the potential tension between inclusivity and a timely resolution of conflict. It may also be difficult to engage interest groups that are not easily defined or lack clear leadership, such as social movements, youth, and women's groups, which are not organized constituencies such as political parties or armed movements. This puts a premium on stakeholder mapping, planning and management of the process.

Women leaders and civil society representatives perform a variety of roles in a mediation process: they can be members of party delegations, technical advisers, observers, members of special committees to advise the mediator or delegates to a separate but linked Track II process. Or they can be their own grouping influencing a mediation process. Mediators and conflict parties are advised to actively explore different options for women's representation in multi-track processes, including:

- Convening a women’s advisory committee to the mediator to ensure that women have the mediator’s ear and are invited to provide inputs to the mediator.
- Creating structures for dialogue and negotiation to allow women civil society groups underrepresented in the formal talks to communicate with conflict parties and mediators and their teams.
- Initiating civil society forums with representatives from trade unions, business sector, human rights groups, women’s organization, religious institutions, indigenous groups, etc. to give the general public a chance to be heard and linked to the mediation process and to attempt to address their concerns.
- Linking up with national/local peace initiatives that are commonly called upon to resolve disputes and to promote dialogue, trust and peace within communities.
- Identifying women leaders and organizations early in the mediation process to be members of the implementation bodies of the future peace agreement or to support and promote its equitable implementation.

Women and their organizations may have distinct political affiliations, reflecting the divisions within their societies. Mediators and conflict parties considering which women’s representatives to involve in a multi-track process will therefore want to assess who their organizations are representing and what their specific interests and contributions to the mediation process can be. Transparent and consistent selection procedures are crucial for enhancing the legitimacy of a multi-track mediation effort – without them there is a risk of deepening rifts. Careful consideration should be given to:

- Criteria for selection (political, demographic, geographic, etc.).
- Modes of selection (self-selection, designation, election, etc.).
- Responsibility for selection (insiders, outsiders, or both).
- Modes of participation (direct, indirect, observer, etc.).



Outreach towards women and the society at large can increase support for the mediation effort and include more representative voices with different constituencies. This in turn can assist conflict parties and mediators in generating buy-in and a sense of ownership of the process, as well as stronger and more sustainable agreements. Formulating a two-way communication strategy – i.e. informing the wider society of the mediation progress and soliciting suggestions for consideration at the table – is an important means of building trust. This might involve discussing an actual or perceived lack of security with women and then ensuring that the peace agreement will adequately reflect their needs and perspectives.

## Capacity Building and Capacitating

Conflict parties and other stakeholders may need advice and assistance to strengthen their capacity for negotiation. Technical assistance may also be required to galvanize national and international support for implementation. Mediation teams may need to identify partners early in the process to help build the capacity of women's organizations and other CSOs to engage effectively in the process. Such technical assistance can help create space for women CSOs, or enable them to develop their networks, a common agenda for change and negotiation strategies.

When circumstances allow, mediators should also work with the parties to create space for women delegates. Options include:

- Offering training on negotiation and substantive issues and providing international expert advice and exchanges with different conflict settings to enable them to effectively participate in peace talks (including modules to unpack international mediation approaches and UN terminology).
- Helping diverse groups of women form coalitions with broad constituencies to create common platforms of interest and agendas to present to conflict parties, mediators and observers.
- Soliciting position papers from women and other civil society groups on negotiation topics, and setting aside time on the agenda for negotiating teams to discuss these inputs.

- Facilitating regular meetings between women leaders and leaders of conflict parties, as well as with the mediator and the mediation team, to discuss issues on the agenda and to generate greater political will for women's equal participation.
- Assisting women in overcoming specific challenges, such as the need for additional funding to facilitate accompaniment; helping obtain visas; and access to information.

## Guidance on Process Design

### Mediators and their teams should work with conflict parties to:

- Design **inclusive mediation processes** with multiple entry points and diverse mechanisms for participation in order to integrate perspectives of conflict parties and other stakeholders, including women.
- **Identify civil society organizations**, in particular women's groups, for inclusion in Track II efforts and develop an engagement strategy at the outset of the mediation process, with actors such as representatives from trade unions, business sector, human rights groups, women's organizations, religious institutions, and indigenous groups.
- Explore all **options** for including women and civil society in a mediation process, e.g. as official members of delegations, technical experts, observers, delegates in Track II and III consultations, or facilitate access to conflict parties in the peace process.
- Facilitate women's **effective participation** by creating space and providing technical advice, as needed, for women to build their capacity and networks and to develop their own agenda for change.
- Facilitate **regular meetings** between women leaders and leaders of conflict parties to discuss issues and generate greater political will for women's equal participation.
- Identify and address **security, logistic, travel and financial constraints** that may restrict women from participating in a mediation process.
- Enable systematic consultation of and **outreach** towards women across societies to increase support.
- Plan for inclusion of women in the **implementation arrangement** of the peace agreement and consider their role when designing oversight and dispute resolution mechanisms (see section on Implementation of Peace Agreements).



**Part V:**  
**Mediating Agreements:  
A Gender Lens on  
Substantive Issues**

## V. Mediating Agreements: A Gender Lens on Substantive Issues

### Gender-relevant Language for Ceasefires and Peace Agreements

Peace agreements aim to end violence and provide a platform for the transition to peace by addressing the causes of conflict directly, including through the establishment of new mechanisms or institutions through democratic processes. Different kinds of agreements are reached over the course of a mediation process. Some – such as ceasefires or procedural agreements on the nature of talks – are limited in scope and address a specific issue in order to contain or manage a conflict. Comprehensive peace agreements, in contrast, tackle a broad range of issues, amongst which a ceasefire agreement might be a constituent element.<sup>xiii</sup>

The viability of a peace agreement is determined by the characteristics of the process and the contents of the accord. Its durability is generally based on some combination of: the degree of political commitment of the conflict parties; buy-in from the population; the extent to which it addresses the root causes of the conflict; the degree of international support it can gather and sustain; and whether it can withstand the stresses of implementation.

Operative paragraph 8 of SCR 1325 (2000) calls on all actors involved in negotiating or implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective and consider:

- Addressing the special needs of women and girls during repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Supporting local women’s peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution and involving women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreement.

<sup>xiii</sup> For the purpose of annual Women, Peace and Security data collection, the UN Department of Political Affairs includes, under the term “peace agreements”: cessation of hostilities, ceasefire, framework and overall peace agreements signed between at least two parties to a conflict, intended to end, prevent, or significantly transform a violent conflict so that it may be addressed more constructively.

- Ensuring protection of and respect for the human rights of women and girls, particularly with regard to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

Gender aspects of substantive issues should be clearly articulated, as peace agreements that are gender “neutral” or “blind”<sup>xiv</sup> have proven detrimental to the security and peacebuilding needs of women. Women should be identified as contributors and agents, not only as victims or persons with specific needs. Agreements should also incorporate clear gender-sensitive modalities for implementation, monitoring and dispute resolution to address disagreements that may arise during implementation, and make provisions for women’s active involvement within them.

Detailed knowledge of cultural, traditional or religious concepts, principles and institutions is essential, as they are likely relevant to an appropriately gendered approach. Agreements should draw on these constituent elements – as well as other sources such as a country’s legal framework or international standards – to advance women’s rights and gender concerns.

In many processes mediators can influence drafting processes, encouraging conflict parties to include gender-relevant language from the start. But the mediation team should also be ready to respond to the parties’ doubts or resistance. When the inclusion of gender-specific provisions in ceasefire or peace agreements proves too difficult, mediators should consider suggesting “hooks” for later, such as references in the preamble to relevant United Nations Women Peace and Security resolutions, relevant humanitarian or human rights law, CEDAW, or other frameworks relevant in the particular conflict context.

xiv Gender-blind agreements do not make any reference to the differential impact of conflict on men and women or make gender-relevant recommendations.

## Guidance on Gender-relevant Language for Ceasefire and Peace Agreements

### Mediators and their teams should work with conflict parties to:

- Use inclusive **terminology and pronouns** that designate neutral concepts covering both men and women (e.g.: “the people, men and women, of country X”; “s/he”) where possible and avoid terminology that is gender exclusive (e.g.: “he”).
- Anticipate how the **translation of gender terminology** into other languages may alter the meaning or result in unintended restrictions.
- Cite **gender principles** found in international and national norms and standards (including SCR 1325, CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN-issued guidance, National Constitutions and laws, National Actions Plans, etc.) in the preamble and state the commitment of parties to those obligations and to compliance at the national, regional and local levels.
- When **specifying women**, do so separately and as actors in the political, economic and social realms, rather than as (only) part of a list of “marginalized” or “victimized” groups or as “women and children” or “women and youth”; but also note their special post-conflict needs as victims where applicable.
- Where possible, include **determinative** rather than aspirational language in women-related clauses (such as “will” or “must” rather than “should”) to ensure specific action in the implementation phase.
- Include provisions for **equal rights of men and women** and inclusion of women in interim or transitional administrations, including temporary special measures for women, including quotas where appropriate.

## Security Arrangements

### Cessation of Hostilities and Ceasefire Agreements

Cessation of hostilities or ceasefire agreements may set the stage for a comprehensive peace process including other aspects of security arrangements. While in some contexts the conflict dynamics necessitate an exclusive interim arrangement to address a high level of violence, gender perspectives should still be reflected in a cessation of hostilities or ceasefire agreement. This can be done through:

- Gender-sensitive analysis/information gathering.
- Inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions within a code of conduct identifying permitted or proscribed actions towards military and civilian populations.
- Planning for appropriate facilities for men, women and children during the separation of forces and in cantonment sites.
- Undertaking demining/providing security sensitive to the different needs of men, women and children, for example by safeguarding agricultural paths, wells and firewood collection areas.

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) should be treated as a method or tactic of warfare and addressed early and directly in any cessation of hostilities or ceasefire agreement so that persons with command responsibility understand their obligations to prevent or ensure punishment of such crimes. If left unaddressed, conflict-related sexual violence may continue outside the purview of the agreement and monitoring arrangements. Beyond the serious consequences for victims and the need to ensure accountability for such violations, CRSV risks triggering renewed violence or vengeance, and can undermine confidence in the mediation process and the peace agreement. Conflict-related sexual violence should be included as a prohibited act in the definition of principles or codes of conduct of ceasefires or peace agreements and be excluded from amnesties in line with international law. It should therefore be addressed across an agreement including in provisions on accountability and monitoring arrangements.



Monitoring, verification and reporting mechanisms are critical for the implementation of cessation of hostilities or ceasefire agreements. Women should be identified as contributors and agents, not just as victims or persons with specific needs. Their participation in monitoring and implementing bodies, including dispute resolution mechanisms, is essential, and may contribute to enhancing the sustainability of ceasefire agreements. The inclusion of women in such mechanisms facilitates access to information and the reporting of violations against women and men survivors and witnesses.

## Security Arrangements

Security arrangements vary in scope and nature. They may include disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration; reform of the national security architecture, including defence or police sector reforms; and the protection of civilians or internally displaced persons, amongst other agreed issues.

When including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration provisions in peace agreements, conflict parties and mediators need to be mindful of the various roles women have played in the armed conflict (i.e. as combatants or providers of combatant support as cooks, messengers or sex slaves) in order to identify them as beneficiaries of recovery and reintegration programmes. Gender-sensitive eligibility criteria should be formulated, acknowledging the special needs of women beneficiaries, whether as members of armed groups, or as members of the communities receiving demobilized combatants. Mediators are advised to consult extensively with women on the design of security arrangements that seek to address or prevent sexual violence and to gain their support for the laying down of arms. Women are influential actors, whether as mothers, sisters, spouses or co-combatants.

Although the full range of security sector reform-related provisions may not be addressed by the mediation process, Mediators should nonetheless seek to secure with the text a clear commitment by the parties to gender-sensitive security sector reform. Commitments might include: legislation to tackle discriminatory practices and address violence against women; the recruitment of women into armed forces, including the national police; gender-sensitive selection criteria for recruitment and the vetting standards of ex-combatants

for integration into security organs; and mandatory conflict-related sexual violence training for security forces.

Recognizing that the majority of internally displaced persons in conflict or post-conflict areas are women and girls, mediators should promote inclusion of women in all safety and security arrangements relevant to displacement, such as the management of displaced persons' camps, including facilitating conflict resolution between different wards. Early warning systems, monitoring and verifications mechanisms are some of the areas in which the parties are more likely to agree on gender-sensitive frameworks.

Transitional justice measures seek to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses, to recognize the rights of victims, promote civic trust and strengthen the rule of law. Measures such as criminal prosecutions, truth commissions and reparations programmes – where they are applicable – need to incorporate provisions to address violations perpetrated against women, including but not limited to conflict-related sexual violence, and establish that amnesties for serious crimes under international law are prohibited. Individuals credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for conflict-related sexual violence are to be excluded from participating in government and the national security system, including the armed forces, police, intelligence services and the national guard, as well as civilian oversight and control mechanisms.



## Guidance on Gender Aspects of Security Arrangements, including Conflict-related Sexual Violence

Mediators and their teams should work with conflict parties to:

- Identify whether conflict-related sexual violence has been used as a method or tactic of warfare and include it as a **prohibited act** in the definition or principles of ceasefire and peace agreements, as well as in security, accountability and monitoring arrangements.
- Put in place **gender-sensitive monitoring and verification arrangements** for ceasefire agreements, including gender expertise, women monitors and translators and effective dispute resolution mechanisms; create an enabling environment for women and men to safely report conflict-related sexual violence violations; and pursue adequate and timely funding to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and verification of ceasefires and peace agreements.
- Include additional provisions for **protection for women and children** in communities facing greater security threats; insist on detailed security arrangements such as the provision of security escorts, regular patrolling and command posts (e.g. for sanitation areas, water and firewood collection points and markets).
- **Acknowledge that amnesties are prohibited** for serious crimes under international law, including conflict-related sexual violence; arrangements for transitional justice, including prosecution, reparations and truth seeking bodies need to address conflict-related sexual violence crimes among acts of violence perpetrated against women and men.
- Systematically gather **early warning information**, then investigate and report it.
- Address conflict-related sexual violence, where relevant, when **dismantling, disengaging and withdrawing armed forces** and integrating former combatants into security or state institutions.
- Mandate **security forces** to combat and monitor conflict-related sexual violence, provide training on effective military response and law enforcement, and develop a code of conduct to vet security actors, prohibit CRSV and punish misconduct.
- Ensure that **disarmament, demobilization and reintegration provisions** are gender-sensitive, acknowledge the role of women in the conflict (e.g. as combatants) and their special needs, and identify women as beneficiaries of post-conflict programmes.

## Political Participation and Powersharing

Intra-state conflicts are often a violent contestation over the manner in which the territory is governed or its resources shared. Powersharing arrangements are thus the main response for ensuring that aggrieved groups are adequately represented in political decision-making. Among other things, powersharing arrangements review and establish new institutions and rules to facilitate a more inclusive architecture and the implementation of the peace agreement, in which the diversity of the society is reflected in an effort to engender civic trust. While vertical and horizontal powersharing options provide multiple opportunities and entry-points for inclusivity, particularly of women, in public life, they must also provide for effective decision-making which avoids paralysis, including through vetos and unanimity requirements.

Mediators should always assess the differential impact of powersharing mechanisms on women's participation in public life.

- Mechanisms that (typically) increase opportunities for women include:
  - Proportional representation of large electoral districts with a substantial number of electable seats tends to optimise opportunities for women.
  - Federalism and other forms of decentralisation generally provide for several levels of elected bodies, creating more opportunities for women to get elected.
  - However, women's representation in politics will only substantially increase when the electorate is sympathetic to the idea of this increase and willing to adopt temporary special measures to promote it, including quotas where relevant and appropriate.
- Mechanisms that can negatively impact women's representation include:
  - Powersharing between groups, which can limit the willingness to consider powersharing on the basis of gender.

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xv "First Past The Post" is the simplest form of a plurality/majority system, using single member districts and candidate-centred voting. The winning candidate is simply the person who wins the most votes.

- Single member constituency with a first-past-the-post system.<sup>xv</sup>
- Autonomy for minority groups, including the right to self-organization, which, depending on the values of the group, can potentially jeopardize women's participation.

Powersharing arrangements between conflict parties can also be a source of new conflict, making it essential to seek broader societal support from the start of the mediation. In some circumstances, national dialogues might be considered in order to probe the opinion of the population, promote mutual understanding and build broader consensus. Constitutions are generally better negotiated separately from peace agreements (see next section).

Where special remedial measures are deemed necessary, powersharing mechanisms in peace agreements can be combined with sunset clauses<sup>xvi</sup> to secure the effective participation of women. Measures to ensure greater women's political representation in the structures of the key institutions (e.g. executive, legislature, parliamentary committees, judiciary and administration, army and police) include:

- Minimum requirements for women's representation in constituent assemblies and transitional governing bodies (e.g. at least 30 per cent of the participants).
- Legal quotas for reserved seats, reserved constituencies, and quotas for women candidates to elected or appointed offices in the legislature, executive, judiciary.
- Targets and affirmative action or positive discrimination for recruitment to the civil service, police, and army.
- Coordination and advocacy, such as the establishment of women's caucuses or intra-parliamentary alliances.

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xvi A sunset clause is a measure within a statute, regulation or other law that provides that the law shall cease to have effect after a specific date, unless further legislative action is taken to extend the law.

## Guidance on Gender Aspects of Political Participation and Powersharing

Mediators and their teams should work with conflict parties to:

- Design powersharing mechanisms with **gender-sensitivity**; in particular, consider measures that have a positive impact on women's representation.
- Include a clause calling for the meaningful representation and participation of women in **elected and appointed positions**, including at national, regional and local **levels of government**, throughout the country. This might include **minimum requirements** for women's representation in constituent assemblies and transitional governing bodies (e.g. at least 30 per cent of the participants) or **legal quotas** for reserved seats, reserved constituencies, quotas for women candidates to elected or appointed offices in the legislature, executive, judiciary.
- Specify mechanisms (e.g. criteria based selection/election processes) to ensure **qualified candidates** are chosen for such positions.
- Consider **temporary special measures and sunset clauses**, including quotas where relevant and appropriate, to ensure the inclusion and effective participation of women in key bodies and processes, such as commissions and constitutional and electoral processes.
- Make explicit that quotas are a "**minimum**" **requirement**, rather than a cap on women's representation.

## Constitutions

A constitution-making process can be a central aspect of a comprehensive political transition in the aftermath of conflict. Constitution-making provides an opportunity to create a common vision of the future of a state, and can have a profound and lasting impact on peace and stability. UN engagement and assistance to constitution-making processes is in some circumstances therefore a core component of peacebuilding, and requires a coherent, multifaceted and gender-sensitive strategy.

To be successful, constitution-making should be nationally owned and led. Constitution-making processes can include broad representation and public outreach. Most countries do not adopt completely new constitutions, but instead adapt familiar procedures, perhaps drawing on a constitution that was applied before or used by a neighbouring country. The UN is committed to making every effort to support and promote inclusive, participatory and transparent constitution-making, with special attention to the equal participation of women, and to consistently promote compliance with international human rights, norms and standards.

A common challenge is to avoid pressure to complete the constitution-making process too quickly. Divided societies with deep disagreement on fundamental issues will almost always require time to reach consensus. There are usually rational and understandable reasons to expedite the process to return control to civilian authorities or hold constitutionally based elections as soon as possible. However, short timeframes often result in limited public involvement, and penalise women especially. Inclusive constitution-making can be boosted through early civic education workshops and the distribution of educational materials to broaden participation, with such an effort ideally supported by a comprehensive media strategy. Special attention is required to include women of diverse age groups and from minority populations in public consultation processes. The outcome of these consultations with women groups needs to be carefully analysed and systematically fed into the process.

Recurrent issues with regard to gender and constitution-making include:

- Discrimination (i.e. prohibition and elimination of).
- Equality (i.e. realisation in law and in fact).

- Participation (equal and effective).
- Protection (both in the public and private sphere, including conflict-related sexual violence).
- Special needs (notably health, education and work).
- Special roles and responsibilities (notably child and family care).

Decision-making in constitution-making processes is frequently exclusive and dominated by elites, predominantly men, even in highly participatory processes such as constituent assemblies and national dialogues. Hence, mediators need to promote effective women's representation in bodies that govern these transition processes. Options include:

- Providing for positive temporary special measures and dedicated resources to support the participation of women.
- Introducing special leadership/chairing arrangements, speaking/procedural rules and decision-making mechanisms, for example for constituent assemblies and national dialogue processes.
- Creating specialized, independent bodies such as Human Rights Commissions and Commissions on the Status of Women and Girls, with consultative, administrative and even judicial powers.





## Guidance on Gender Aspects of Constitutions

### Mediators and their teams should work with conflict parties to:

- Promote effective **women's representation in constitution making and other bodies** that govern transition processes, by adopting positive temporary special measures and allocating dedicated resources; or making special leadership/ chairing arrangements, speaking/procedural rules and decision-making mechanisms, for example for constituent assemblies and national dialogue processes.
- Encourage the perception of constitutions as a framework for an inclusive society in which all people, women and men, are included in the **language and institutions of the constitution**, which should avoid gender prejudicial language like 'he/his'.
- Include a clause with explicit reference to women prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual preference, marital status, and pregnancy, and require **special measures** to ensure equality for women in law and in fact, including for women belonging to minorities or indigenous peoples.
- Ensure that the constitution does not permit **civil and customary law** to discriminate against women and girls in any way (particularly in the areas of citizenship, nationality, personal status, family, education, labour, property and inheritance).
- Secure women's representation in public life, notably in **elected and appointed positions**, including the executive, legislature and judiciary, public administration, and security services (e.g. through quotas).
- Secure **protection from all forms of violence** against women and men, boys and girls.
- Protect **social and economic rights** and spell out aspects of these rights that affect women in special ways such as health, pregnancy and maternity.
- Create opportunities for women and men to **engage in public life** (e.g. protect the right to associate, assemble and free speech; secure access to information and require public bodies to act in a transparent way; etc.).
- Require the state to **establish institutions and processes for advancing and monitoring respect for women's rights**, such as establishing a separate government agency or specialized bodies (e.g. Commission on the Status of Women and Girls) or assign existing government departments and public services with special responsibility for women and girls.

## Implementation of Peace Agreements

Ceasefire and peace agreements can fail in the implementation phase for different reasons:

- Limited commitment of parties and their constituencies to implement the agreement.
- The fragility of agreements that were negotiated in exclusive processes and lack national ownership, or contain vague language that did not lay out clear responsibilities for the parties involved.
- A breakdown of transitional security arrangements as a result of weak monitoring and verification mechanisms, or the absence of dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Partial implementation of the agreement due to lack of funding or unfulfilled donor commitments; a lack of consultation between mediation teams and implementing entities, as well as among implementing agencies.

Inclusive mediation processes that build relationships between conflict parties and other stakeholders in the course of the mediation help forge joint ownership of the agreement. Time may be an important element in this process, and mediators may need to resist pressure from donors and other international actors to find quick solutions to end the conflict.

Active engagement of women civil society organizations during both the mediation and implementation is likely to increase the legitimacy and sustainability of an agreement. Efforts should be made to promote women's representation in decision-making positions, such as signatories to peace agreements and as chairs or active members of transition or implementation bodies, for which quotas or other special measures for the effective inclusion of women may be required. Conflict parties and mediators could also consider establishing national thematic working groups for the implementation of agreements – including a “1325” group to monitor and ensure gender sensitivity – whilst also assigning women to all other thematic groups. Other possible initiatives include hosting regular meetings for women's organizations with international missions, diplomatic teams and envoys

during implementation and inviting women representatives to speak at and participate in international preparatory, strategy or donor meetings.<sup>xvii</sup>

Peace agreements often contain provisions pertaining to implementation support by third parties (such as donors, development agencies, electoral advisory groups and peacekeeping forces), sometimes without much consultation between the mediation teams and the implementing entities. Well before the negotiations are concluded, conflict parties and mediators are advised to draw upon the skills of implementation experts with the necessary tools and expertise. Mediators should also ensure that there is sufficient gender expertise in the implementation teams, as gender-sensitive analysis is often lacking in the design of immediate post-conflict security and economic recovery programmes.

Where appropriate, mediators should also seek support for the implementation phase from International contact groups or “friends of mediation” forums, commonly comprising Member States and relevant international and regional actors. Such groupings can provide helpful political and material support for an effective transition process (i.e. by contributing funds, expertise, and coordinated action). A special focus on monitoring the realisation of gender-relevant provisions in the peace agreements is warranted, most notably the political participation of women. Mediators should encourage donors to adhere to the UN commitment to dedicate 15 per cent of all post-conflict peacebuilding funds to projects addressing the specific needs and empowerment of women. Contact groups can provide dedicated funding to support civil society in conflict and post conflict situations.<sup>xviii</sup> International actors can also be encouraged to support documentation of good practice including analysis of efforts, challenges and successes of gender inclusive mediation approaches, thereby helping to contribute to reliable data on women’s actual participation in peace processes and the implementation of agreements.

xvii See the International Civil Society Action Network “Better Peace Tool” (2015) for more recommendations at [www.betterpeacetool.org](http://www.betterpeacetool.org)

xviii As called for in UN Security Council Resolutions on Women Peace and Security SCR 2122 (2013) OP7b and SCR 2242 (2015) OP3.

## Guidance on Gender Aspects of Implementation Arrangements

### Mediators and their teams should work with the conflict parties to:

- Promote **women's representation in decision-making positions**, such as signatories to peace agreements and chairs and members of transition or implementation bodies, for which quotas or other temporary special measures may be required.
- Involve **women as planners, implementers and beneficiaries**, to support a sustainable transition process; and make sure that women have access to post-conflict programmes and technical assistance.
- Invite women civil society representatives to speak and participate in international preparatory, strategy, or donors' meetings/summits and advocate for **dedicated funding to support women's civil society** initiatives in conflict and post conflict situations.
- Continue or establish international contact groups during the transition phase to provide **political and material support for effective implementation**, with a special focus on the realisation of gender-relevant provisions, most notably the political participation of women.



**Part VI:**  
**Conclusion**

## VI. Conclusion

This UN Department of Political Affairs' Guidance responds to the need to realize aspirations and commitments made by the international community, and reinforced at the regional and national level, with regard to the effective participation of women in mediation and peace processes as well as the introduction of a more gender-sensitive approach to the substance and implementation of peace agreements. It recognizes that mediation is a complex endeavour, whose outcome is determined by many different factors. It also acknowledges that the role, reach, and influence of the mediator – who engages only on the basis of the consent of the conflict parties – will vary greatly. The Guidance nonetheless rests on the premise that mediation strategies that include women systematically, and prioritize attention to gender inclusive provisions in the agreements that are eventually reached lay the foundation for a more durable peace. Far from being prescriptive, the Guidance contains a number of practical suggestions for consideration by mediators and their teams, as well as conflict parties. Not all of them will be possible to implement in every situation, but if more of them are implemented more frequently, the building of sustainable and inclusive peace, and the achievement of the normative goals for Women, Peace and Security that were first set out by the Security Council in Resolution 1325 (2000) will be increasingly realized.





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