Tool 8

Integrating Gender in Security Sector Reform and Governance

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DCAF

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is a world-leading institution in the areas of good governance and reform of the security sector, established as an international foundation in 2000. In Africa, DCAF supports regional organisations, national institutions and non-state actors in their efforts to improve the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector.

About the toolkit

What is the toolkit?

This publication is part of the *Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa*. Its aim is to support implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) policy framework for security sector reform and governance through practical advice and guidance tailored for the West African context, and based on regional experiences. It specifically aims at facilitating policy development, implementation and management of SSR processes at the national level.

Who is the toolkit for?

The toolkit has been developed as a resource for the ECOWAS Commission and all national stakeholders within ECOWAS Member States, including the executive, the parliament, the judiciary, statutory oversight institutions and civil society. It can also be useful to other actors involved in West African SSR processes, such as international partners.

What is the structure of the toolkit?

The toolkit comprises eight complementary chapters (or Tools):

     Tool 1: Political Leadership and National Ownership of Security Sector Reform Processes

     Tool 2: Security Sector Reform Programming

     Tool 3: Good Financial Governance of Defence and Security Institutions

     Tool 4: Effective Management of External Support to Security Sector Reform

     Tool 5: Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector

     Tool 6: Civil Society Involvement in Security Sector Reform and Governance

     Tool 7: Non-State Justice and Security Providers and Security Sector Reform

     Tool 8: Integrating Gender in Security Sector Reform and Governance

Who developed the toolkit?

The toolkit has been produced by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) at the request of ECOWAS.

The tools are all written by African, and primarily West African, experts, with the support of an editorial team also made up of two West African experts supported by an editorial assistant. All the tools have been examined by an Editorial Board made up of world-renowned researchers and practitioners. The members of the board are West African specialists in security sector reform and governance, with long experience and excellent knowledge of the region.

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Acronyms

AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	civil society organisation
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EGDC	ECOWAS Gender Development Centre
GBV	gender-based violence
LNP	Liberia National Police
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPRI	needs, access, participation, resources and impact
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SSG	security sector governance
SSR	security sector reform
SSRG	security sector reform and governance
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WCPS	Women and Children Protection Section

Introduction

Gender equality is an international norm that stipulates the equal right of women and men to access services, opportunities and resources, irrespective of their gender or the sex with which they were born.

In the context of the security sector, this means that men and women must have equal opportunities to participate in the leadership, provision, management and oversight of security at all levels. It also means that the different security needs of women, men, girls and boys should be equally acknowledged and responded to in order to achieve human security.

Gender equality is a constituent part of each of the principles of good governance of the security sector and a prerequisite to the success and sustainability of any security sector reform strategy. There are several reasons why gender equality is necessary to good security sector governance:[1]

- **Gender equality is a fundamental human right:** it is enshrined in various international instruments ratified by all fifteen ECOWAS member states, reflected in their Constitutions, and codified in ECOWAS collective instruments these states have developed and endorsed. The principle of non-discrimination inherent to international human rights law applies in relation to all human rights, including those directly relating to security, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of a list of non-exhaustive categories, among which sex is explicitly mentioned.[2]

- **Gender equality is fundamental to the rule of law:** gender-based discrimination violates the principle of equality before the law. The individual Constitutions of all fifteen ECOWAS member states guarantee equal citizenship for women and men (see Annex 1), making gender equality a fundamental commitment for all ECOWAS member states.

- **Gender equality is a democratic principle:** democracy requires equal participation of all citizens, men and women, in the management of public affairs, including security. This means that democracy cannot be effective if women are side-lined in public decision-making, public service provision, public oversight of state institutions and regulation of non-state actors, including as concerns security.

- **Gender equality is essential to effective security provision:** a security sector that practices discrimination or only takes into account the security needs of some of the population fails to protect portions of the population it is supposed to serve. The persistence of gender inequality also limits the ability of security institutions to prevent, investigate and prosecute crimes in a fair and effective manner.

- **Gender equality reinforces the human capacities of security institutions:** security institutions that deny fair access, working conditions and opportunities for professional development to women professionals deprive themselves from tapping into the skills and competencies of half of the population. Conversely, institutions that do welcome both women and men into their staff, and create fair and healthy working environments that equally promote the leadership of men and women, have access to a wider range of skills and are more representative of the population they serve. This increases their operational capacities, facilitates their relations with different social groups, and allows them to provide more appropriate responses to the security challenges experienced by a variety of people. Such institutions are more effective and accountable.

In West Africa, as in many places, security institutions have long been grounded in male-dominated cultures and conceptions. Despite progress made in some contexts, the overall persistence of sexist and discriminatory structures and practices in the security sector creates considerable challenges for establishing effective and accountable security institutions. While the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS both recommend that the specific security and justice needs of men, women, boys and girls be fully integrated into all security sector reform processes and governance mechanisms, the transition from theory to practice is often challenging.

Existing data suggest that "gender mainstreaming[3] in West African security sectors is on the rise, but remains subject to a piecemeal approach rather than a comprehensive strategy."[4] As of July 2016, all ECOWAS member states have either adopted or started developing a national policy or strategy aimed at promoting the goal of gender equality (see Annex 2). As part of a broader policy framework for gender equality, twelve member states have specific national action plans to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (see Box 21, in section 5.2.1.) and several have also developed specific frameworks for preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

While the development of such overarching policies sends a positive message regarding national commitments to gender equality, much remains to be done to mainstream gender into national defence and security policies specifically. More often than not, national policy frameworks still treat gender-based violence and access to justice as separate from defence and security concerns, and do not consider them key threats to national security despite their impact on the lives of individuals and communities. All the more, the implementation of existing policies in support of gender equality requires changes in institutional and individual practices that are not easy to achieve, especially in the security sector. National legal frameworks are also marked by significant gaps, as demonstrated by the lack of criminalisation of domestic violence or sexual harassment in most West African countries or the rarity of measures to support the leadership of women in security and defence institutions.

Acknowledging these challenges, this Tool is designed to provide practitioners with basic guidance for more efficiently incorporating the aims and principles of gender equality at their respective levels. Considering the breadth of the topic, the Tool focuses on the identification of effective entry points through which various stakeholders (such as SSR coordination bodies and programming teams, parliaments, ministries, individual security institutions, and civil society organisations) can start integrating gender equality as a guiding principle and a goal into their own work and mandate.

The Tool proposes good practices and offers examples of methodologies for integrating gender into national legislation, policies and budgets for security; into SSR programming; into the management of security institutions; as well as into all stages of internal and external oversight of the security sector.

Understanding the links between gender and security

2.1. What is gender and why does it matter for security?

In order to understand how gender affects the security of people and states and the work of security institutions, it is necessary to first define several key concepts.

Gender refers to "the socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women, boys and girls, which give them unequal value, opportunities and life chances", and also to "typically masculine and feminine characteristics, abilities and expectations about how women and men should behave in society, [which] are time bound and changeable" (Definition from the Gender Policy of the African Union).[5]

Gender roles are the socially constructed norms that determine what is expected, permitted and/or valued in women, girls, men and boys in a given context, with reference to typical representations of femininity and masculinity. In most societies, gender roles establish inequalities between women and men in terms of responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, and decision-making opportunities. Gender roles vary according to socio-economic, political and cultural context. In the security sector, as in other public and private spheres, rigid conceptions of gender roles can result in discrimination against both men and women.

Gender stereotypes refer to overgeneralised beliefs and prejudgements about a particular gender. For instance, the notion that "girls are gentle" or "boys are brave" are gender stereotypes. Although they may not reflect reality, stereotypes are strongly embedded in our minds and influence our perceptions and expectations. Gender stereotypes tell a story of what is "typical" of women and men, and this story delimits the scope of opportunities accessible to a person, regardless of their actual capabilities. For example, the stereotype that "women are emotional and indecisive" provides grounds to keep all women, including those who demonstrate decisiveness, away from leadership positions, resulting in discrimination.

Gender bias refers to unconscious assumptions or stereotypes that affect a person's judgements, attitudes and behaviours towards men, women, boys or girls. The unconscious nature of this bias means the person is unaware of being biased and has no intention to discriminate. For this reason, documenting the manifestations of bias and building awareness about its very existence and impacts are critical to any efforts aimed at supporting gender equality.

Gender roles, stereotypes and bias contribute to limiting the access of individuals to services, resources and opportunities on the basis of assumptions about their gender. By imposing fixed roles and rigid representations of women and men, they lead to various forms of discrimination which, in the context of security, may take place among service personnel (men and women) as well as against service users (men, women, boys and girls). The AU defines "gender discrimination" (also called gender-based discrimination) as the "differential treatment to individuals on the grounds of gender".[6]

Typically, gender-based discrimination inside security institutions means that women professionals cannot access the full range of roles and functions to which they could bring value, resulting in squandered human capacity and an inefficient use of talents. This may be the result of discriminatory policies and practices; but it may also be the result of more implicit, sometimes unintentional biases, which manifest in a number of ways, such as in hostile attitudes towards women in leadership positions or a tendency by leadership (deliberate or not) to favour men over women when training and other professional development opportunities arise.

Gender roles, stereotypes and bias also affect the access of service users to support and protection from security threats. For instance, men who have endured sexual and/or domestic violence often experience gender-specific barriers to accessing security and justice services. Due to misconceptions about sexual and domestic violence, as well as stereotypes in relation to men and masculinity, law enforcement agencies and other actors of the penal system sometimes deny men the legal protection offered by anti- sexual abuse and anti-domestic violence laws.

Moreover, **women, men, girls and boys have different experiences of security,** which is why gender is an important factor in determining the particular forms of insecurity a person is likely to face. For instance, data available from several African countries illustrates that domestic and sexual violence disproportionately affect women and children, while victims of gun-related violence are more likely to be adolescent boys and adult men. At the same time, while an average of 70% of homicide victims in West African states are men and boys,[7] evidence suggest that a considerable portion of the remaining 30% of homicide victims (women and girls) are killed by intimate partners or family members. In light of these statistics, reducing homicide risks for men and boys on the one hand, or for women and girls on the other, would require different strategies. More generally, effective strategies to guarantee the security of individuals must take into account the impact of gender roles on victimisation in order to accurately address the needs and vulnerabilities of men, women, boys and girls in their social environments.

Forms of violence that are based on the socially-ascribed differences between men and women are known as **gender-based violence (GBV)**. GBV refers to any form of violence inflicted against a person because of their gender[8] or as the result of power dynamics associated with unequal gender roles. It includes:

• sexual violence inflicted as the result of unequal gender roles between men and women (i.e. all forms of sexual harassment and assault);

• physical violence inflicted as the result of unequal gender roles between men and women (such as slapping, biting, punching, kicking, strangling, stabbing, etc.);

• psychological violence inflicted as the result of unequal gender roles between men and women (such as threatening, isolating, insulting and humiliating with a purpose to dominate, etc.);

• socio-cultural violence inflicted as the result of unequal gender roles between men and women (such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, etc.); and

• socio-economic violence inflicted as the result of unequal gender roles between men and women (such as the denial of property rights or access to financial services on the ground of gender).

Professionals of security institutions operate within defined mandates that may not address all of these dimensions of GBV, but they should be aware of all the factors that impact the security status of women, men, boys and girls. They must also be aware that **GBV is not only violence against women and girls; men**

and boys can also be victims. This is the case, for example, when men and boys are sexually violated as a way to challenge their masculinity or "make them women". Data from 2012 indicate that 33% of male combatants and 7% of male non-combatants surveyed in Liberia had experienced sexual violence.[9]

Box 1: Human security

Human security is a concept that broadens the term "security" to include the promotion of safe and peaceful environments that are conducive to human development and in which human rights are effective. It focuses on people, rather than states; and on their experiences of the many interrelated aspects of security, including food security, economic security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.

Through this extension and humanisation of what is meant by "security", the concept of human security creates space to consider the human face of security, by taking into account the real experiences of women, men, boys and girls. It also creates a framework in which policymakers are encouraged to consider what security means for individuals in different situations; to acknowledge that other areas of public policy, beyond security policy *stricto sensu,* affect the security of people; and to consider the interactions and impact of different policies on the security of individual women, men, boys and girls (also see section 3.5.4.).

2.2. What is gender equality and what does it require?

The AU defines **gender equality** as "the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex [or gender] in opportunities, the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services".[10] This **does not imply that women and men are biologically the same** (see section 2.3.), but that they have equal value as human beings and should be accorded equal rights and opportunities. Gender equality implies that women and men should not be prisoners of rigid gender roles, but rather have the opportunity to express their full potential as individuals who possess unique skills that do not depend on their sex or gender.

Gender inequality, conversely, refers to unequal treatment and access to resources, opportunities and autonomy based on gender. Gender inequality exists in every country in the world because the gender roles assigned to women and girls are typically associated with less power and resources than those assigned to men and boys. This prevalence of gender inequality means that gender equality efforts are relevant in every context and country.

In the context of the security sector, the promotion of **gender equality requires**:

• gender mainstreaming (defined below) in all dimensions of security services and institutions;

• ensuring the effective representation and participation of women, as well as men, at all levels of security management, provision and oversight; and

• challenging rigid gender roles, expectations, assumptions and stereotypes.

Consistent with the internationally accepted definition proposed by the United Nations,[11] the AU Gender Policy defines **gender mainstreaming** as "the process of assessing the [positive and negative] implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."[12] Gender mainstreaming should also take into account the experiences of boys and girls.

To foster gender equality in security institutions, it is important to keep in mind the following principles:[13]

- Equality between women and men should not be merely formal (i.e. the fact that women and men are treated the same); it requires giving men and women equal chances and opportunities to fulfil their potential, and providing them with a conducive environment and the necessary support to do so. Concretely, this means that it is not enough to guarantee women treatment that is equal to that of men. The biological differences between male and female, as well as the socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women, must be taken into account; and addressing those differences may require non-identical treatment.

- The use of affirmative action (also called positive action) is sometimes advisable as a means of achieving substantive equality in terms of the chances and opportunities afforded to men and women. Examples include recruitment campaigns targeted at women; targets or quotas for women's participation; and the establishment of mentoring, training and advancement programmes specifically targeted at women.

- Equality also requires creating the conditions for women to "develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices without limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices".[14]

- Achieving gender equality requires addressing the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality, including discriminatory norms, prejudices and stereotypes. This can be done by challenging rigid gender roles, expectations, assumptions and stereotypes. It may also demand the substantial transformation of institutions and institutional cultures that perpetuate discrimination and inequality.

2.3. What gender is not

Because widespread misconceptions about gender hinder effective integration of the principles of gender equality into security policies and practices, it is necessary to clarify not only what gender is, but also what it is not.

Gender is not the same as sex, which refers to the biological differences between males and females. Gender is also different from sexual orientation, which refers to whom someone is attracted to.

- **Sex** describes the biological differences between male and female organisms (different physiological and anatomical features).	- **Gender** describes the social differences attributed to men and women.
- Sexual differences include reproductive organs, chromosomes (e.g. XY and XX), hormones (e.g. testosterone and oestrogen) and secondary sexual characteristics (e.g. muscle mass and facial hair).	- Gender is learned – girls and boys are taught and assigned different social characteristics, roles, behaviours and activities within particular socio-cultural contexts, on the basis of sex.
- Sex is unchangeable and fixed in the absence of medical intervention (surgery or hormone therapy).	- Gender roles are not fixed; they change alongside changes in society.
- Terms such as "male", "female" and "intersex" refer to the sex of an individual.	- Terms such as "feminine", "masculine" and "androgynous", as well as "woman", "man" and "transgender", all refer to an individual's gender.

Adapted from: DCAF, "Gender Equality and Good Security Sector Governance", *SSR Backgrounder Series* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

Gender is not a "women's issue", it is relevant to everyone: There is a popular but mistaken belief that gender refers to women only. This perception is wrong. This should be a key message of any awareness-raising efforts, including in the security sector. As a matter of fact, gender refers to both men and women, as well as boys and girls; and it is a social construct that affects women, men, girls and boys. Examples mentioned above (see section 2.1.) illustrate how GBV affects men and how gender roles and stereotypes can negatively impact men's access to justice and security services. Rigid conceptions of gender roles within security institutions may also penalise men in a variety of ways. For example, men working in the security sector who wish to dedicate more time to their family are often confronted with implicit barriers, due to the conception that caring roles are only a valid concern for women. Very few West African security institutions have policies that take into account how parental status or other home responsibilities affect personnel; but even when such policies exist, stereotypes around gender roles mean that men still cannot benefit from the same options of flexibility offered to women in similar positions. Implicit expectations, informal peer pressure, and other elements of institutional culture may discourage men from even requesting adjustments permitted by formal policies, for fear of losing credibility or being ridiculed.

Gender is not a Western, or an un-African concept: Although the terminology relating to gender and inequalities may have been developed by Western sociologists over the last few decades, the realities this terminology refers to are universal and timeless. Beyond the words themselves, what is important to focus on is the actual imbalance – in access to resources and opportunities – created by social norms and expectations of men and women. Historically, West African traditional texts, such as the 12th century Kouroukan Fouga Charter, acknowledged that women have a role to play in public affairs. Later transcriptions of the fundamental Charter from the Mali Mande Empire stipulate that "Women, in addition to their daily business, must be associated with all our Governments." The participation of women in formal military bodies is not new to West Africa either; in the 17th century, the Dahomey Kingdom (which extended across most of modern day Benin) created a famous all-women combat force that served as an integral part of the royal army, and at times as an elite militia, until the 19th century. The existence of women warriors in the Ashanti Empire is also historically verified. While these historical facts should not be interpreted as an indication that traditional West African societies had achieved gender equality, they demonstrate a long-standing recognition of the value of women's engagement in the public sphere and in the realm of security.

Modern-day African states and leaders have also taken ownership of the concept of gender equality on several occasions, despite an overall persistence of sexist norms. It is worth noting that UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which supports the full participation of women in all aspects of security, was proposed and championed by an African country, Namibia. Additionally, the African Union Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform (2013) identifies "gender equality and women's empowerment" as one of the "Core African Principles for Security Sector Reform". The ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG) adopted a similar approach, identifying gender equality as a "core principle of West African SSRG" (see section 3.2).

Gender is an essential dimension of diversity, but it is not the same as diversity: Security means different things to different people, depending on their own unique identities and circumstances. While taking gender into consideration helps to understand the security problems affecting men and women as such, it is important to remember that other individual characteristics – such as age, ethnicity, nationality, linguistic background, religion, levels of education, social status, geographic location, health status (including disabilities, HIV status, drug dependence), legal status (as in the case of undocumented immigrants), etc. – affect individual experiences of security as well. This means that not all men will experience security the same way; nor will all women. It is therefore necessary to avoid generalising the experiences of either men or women, but rather to account for all the elements that compose a person's identity and situation. This approach is referred to as an intersectional approach (see Box 2).

Box 2: Gender, diversity and intersectionality

Security sector institutions have a duty to provide equal service to the entire population, but this requires accounting for the different needs of women, men, girls and boys. While these needs differ greatly by gender, it is important to keep in mind that an individual's identity is formed at the crossroads of many intersecting factors, all of which influence their experiences of security. To understand the different security needs of an individual, it is therefore necessary to consider all these factors, as well as their gender.[15]

The diagram below illustrates some of the many dimensions of a person's identity and circumstances which, in addition to gender, can impact their exposure and vulnerability to particular threats.

Gender

Religion

Age

Health status

Identity

Education

Income level

Marital/
Parental
status

Legal status
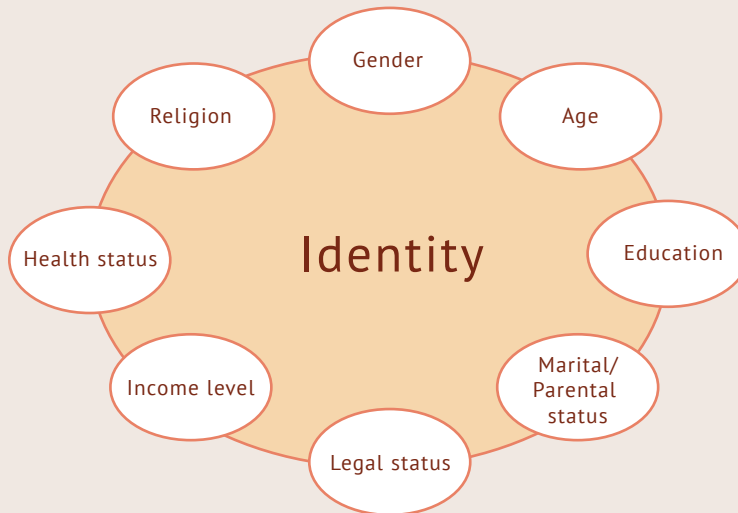
2.4. How is gender equality relevant for the security sector?

The security sector refers to the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for defence, security and justice services of a country. Based on the broad definition offered by regional organisations such as the AU and ECOWAS, the security sector typically includes but is not limited to the following:

- **Statutory and primary security institutions,** such as armed forces, police, gendarmerie and other defence and law enforcement agencies; border police, customs and immigration authorities; civilian and military intelligence services; presidential and national guards; and any other security services set up by the state.

- **The executive branch of government,** including heads of state and government; the office and/or council in charge of national security; and ministries for defence and veterans' affairs, interior or security, foreign affairs, budget and finance.

- **Justice and rule of law institutions,** such as the ministry of justice, courts, public prosecutors' offices, lawyers, bar associations, prisons and other correctional facilities, ombuds institutions, human rights commissions, national reconciliation or dialogue councils, and customary and traditional justice systems.

- **Public oversight bodies,** such as the parliament, national audit office, anti-corruption agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs), academic and research institutions, and the media.

- **Civil emergency units,** such as search and rescue services, firefighting, natural disaster management and natural resource protection units.

• **Non-statutory security bodies,** such as private security companies; neighbourhood watch groups; informal, traditional and customary authorities; and others, depending on the national and local context.[16]

There are a number of ways in which gender equality has a positive impact on the work of security institutions, including:

a) Mandates:

Security institutions operate according to mandates determined by legal and policy frameworks. Integrating the aims and principles of gender equality into these frameworks helps establish more robust mandates that empower security institutions to more effectively respond to the security needs of all members of society.

In the context of national policy development, using gender to analyse threats such as violent extremism can help national authorities better understand the recruitment, grooming and victimisation processes used by extremist groups. It can also help them develop more comprehensive security policies that address the needs of all members of the population – men and women, boys and girls – and not just certain parts of this population. Conversely, a lack of attention to gender specific dimensions of security can lead to unbalanced assessments or an inappropriate prioritisation of the security threats affecting the country and its population. Typically, this results in an underestimation of, and therefore a lack of integration of, GBV in national security policy, despite that fact that it constitutes a direct threat to the security of large portions of the population.

Experience shows that a calculated effort is often necessary to raise awareness among parliamentarians of these traditionally underestimated risks and threats, in order to enact national legislation that addresses the security needs of men, women, boys and girls equally. A parliament that considers domestic violence a "private" or "family affair" will not provide law enforcement agencies with the necessary tools and means to combat it. This is likely to create conditions in which victims are denied access to justice and legal protection and in which a culture of impunity is perpetuated. (See section 7.1. "Integrating gender in parliamentary oversight of the security sector".)

b) Structures and personnel:

The proportion of men and women who are part of the defence and security forces and the justice system varies from one country to another and from one institution to another. Security institutions that open membership to women have access to a broader pool of candidates and range of skills than those that restrict access to men only. As such, a gender equality approach to personnel management, which does not automatically disqualify half of potential candidates, enables these institutions to attract, recruit and retain the best candidates. Better quality recruits, fairer access to professional development and non-discriminatory promotions help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of security institutions.

While this applies to all security institutions, the case of armed forces offers an eloquent example. "Around the world, armed forces are recognising the important contribution that women make within their ranks, and the fact that increasing the representation of female personnel across all ranks is fundamental to future capability and operational effectiveness. While providing equal opportunities for women and men is a legal obligation for armed forces [in a number of countries], forces also recognise the need to attract the best and the brightest talent, male and female. Where armed forces fail to tap into 50 per cent of the workforce's talent pool because of an inability to attract women, and when they fail to retain women whom they have trained and developed, forces risk capability gaps. Moreover, recent operational experience, for example in [Mali], has demonstrated that female personnel bring particular operational benefits, such as in community outreach and intelligence gathering."[17]

c) Quality of services:

Security institutions cannot deliver security according to the actual needs of the population if they do not account for the different ways in which gender roles affect the security of women, men, boys and girls. For example, a justice system that does not recognise the specific needs of women compared to men in particular social contexts cannot be effective in responding to gender-based violence in their society. In countries where domestic violence is a primary source of insecurity for women and girls due to patriarchal legacies, this prevents the justice system from delivering effective justice and protection to half of the population.

Taking an example from a different area within the security sector, there are also a number of ways in which gender equality can help make border management actors more effective and accountable:

- A sectoral approach to the prevention, investigation and control of human trafficking and smuggling that takes into account the ways in which gender influences human trafficking can increase the detection and protection of victims;

- Border management personnel who protect and promote the human rights of men, women, girls and boys are more likely to secure public trust in their services. This in turn increases movement of persons, goods, and services and enhances the criminal prevention and detection capacity of border management personnel;

- Ensuring increased representation of women among border personnel makes these institutions more representative of the population they serve.

d) Accountability:

Gender is a critical, yet often overlooked, dimension of both internal and external control and oversight of the security sector. Accountability mechanisms cannot be effective if they are not equally accessible to women and men in theory as well as in practice; if their mandate and competency do not cover sexual and gender-based harassment, violence and abuse; or if they are not operated and supervised by women as well as men. For accountability mechanisms such as complaint procedures to be credible, men and women must have equal access to participating in related investigations, disciplinary processes, legal prosecutions or other forms of actions aimed at holding security personnel accountable for abuse and misconduct. Otherwise, the security sector may reinforce gender inequality and perpetuate impunity.

Box 3: Examining the impact of gender on judicial impartiality

"It is sometimes assumed that the law is objective, neutral, and impartial and therefore gender has little or no influence on its implementation. And yet […] judges, prosecutors, attorneys, and court associates bring not only their academic training, professional experience, legal diligence, and good intentions to their work; they also bring their values, beliefs, and opinions.

A Judge from the Virginia Court of Appeals noted […] recently that the influence of gender is 'not limited to conscious, intentional discrimination… more often than not [it is] unconscious or subconscious discrimination that occurs because we look at the individual based on stereotypes that we have accurately or inaccurately assigned to one gender or the other…'[18] These observations underscore the importance of identifying and addressing the influence of gender and gender stereotypes in the implementation of the law."

Source: Majda Halilovic and Heather Huhtanen, *Gender and The Judiciary: Selected Findings and Recommendations on the implementation of gender within the judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo: DCAF and Atlantic Initiative, 2015), p. 1.

2.5. How does gender equality relate to good security sector governance?

Security sector governance (SSG) refers to the structures, processes, values and attitudes that shape how decisions are made and implemented in the security sector. **Good SSG** is a normative standard, applying the principles of good governance to security provision, management and oversight in a democratic context. Principles for good SSG include effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness and the rule of law. Gender equality is a fundamental dimension of each of these principles.

According to Article 5 of the ECOWAS Policy framework on Security Sector Reform and Governance, "democratic governance of the security sector refers to the provision, management and control of [the] security sector based on democratic principles and values for the benefit of the people. It requires separation of powers, a participatory and inclusive approach involving citizens through their legally and regularly chosen representatives in decision-making processes, management and control of State activities and functions in the Security Sector."

In the context of the security sector, gender equality means that women and men must have equal opportunities to participate in the provision, management and oversight of security; that they must have equal access to security, security services and security institutions (both formal and informal); and that the security needs of men, women, boys and girls must be equally addressed.

Gender equality is integral to good SSG because it is an essential element of each of the principles of good SSG:[19]

- **Effectiveness:** By engaging both women and men in a meaningful way, security institutions can be more effective in identifying and responding to the security needs of the whole population – including women, men, girls and boys – rather than just a part of it. Effectiveness also assumes that security sector personnel are trained to understand how gender affects their own work, so as to not reinforce discrimination against and the victimisation of persons of a particular gender. This is necessary, for instance, to ensure that police and prosecution services take sexual violence complaints seriously, and more generally treat all sexual and gender-based crimes and offences with the expected level of seriousness and professionalism.

- **Efficiency:** By making optimal use of the capabilities of both women and men, and benefiting from the range of skills brought by women personnel, security institutions can be more efficient, maximising human and financial resources. This requires ensuring that institutional cultures, internal policy frameworks and working conditions are equally hospitable for men and women, and that all staff members have equal access to opportunities for professional development without any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, gender or parental status.

- **Accountability:** As explained above in section 2.4, good SSG requires personnel and decision makers at all levels to be held accountable for their actions, both through internal and external accountability mechanisms (also see sections 6.1.6 and 7). This is not possible if regulation and oversight frameworks do not incorporate the principles of gender equality.

- **Transparency:** To ensure that decisions are made and implemented impartially and in accordance with promulgated laws and policies, men and women working in security provision, management and oversight must have equal access to information, as should all those affected by these decisions and their implementation. In particular, all forms of external oversight of the security sector (including parliamentary oversight, civil society and public oversight, media monitoring and reporting, and judicial oversight) must involve the participation of women and must consider the impact of decisions and actions of the security sector on women, men, boys and girls (see section 7 for further guidance on gender equality in external oversight).

- **Inclusiveness and participation:** Good SSG requires inclusive consultation processes as a way for national authorities to ensure that the laws, policies and strategies they develop reflect the concerns of the people. This means that the public has the opportunity to participate in security related discussions and decision-making, either directly (at the local level, for instance) or through representative institutions such as parliaments. For public participation to be inclusive and effective, women must sit at the table as well as men. All-male decision-making processes have a demonstrated tendency to either disregard the security concerns of women, girls and boys or reflect them through stereotypical, often inaccurate assumptions. An inclusive approach to decision-making is also necessary to create a sense of common goals and shared ownership around a country's security policy. It is worth noting, however, that participation should not be limited to upstream policy discussion and decision-making, but also to downstream provision and oversight of service delivery.

  Participation, not tokenism: Good SSG requires the effective participation of women in decision-making processes; meaning, women must have access to policy discussions and decision-making and must have at least equal opportunity for training, mentoring and other forms of capacity building as men. In correcting structural imbalances induced by gender roles and power relations in society, gender equality may require providing women with additional mentoring and support than that available to men (see section 2.2).

  A genuine form of inclusion and participation, as opposed to mere tokenism, requires more than the addition of one or two women to the participant list for events. It demands that conditions are created whereby women and women's organisations have real agency in policy discussions. In arenas where ranks matter, for example, this means supporting the development of women's leadership and their access to high ranks, so that they can have real agency in such discussions (also see section 6.1.5. on "the danger of tokenism").

  High level participation and women's access to classified information: Some security-related information may be classified, and the necessity for transparency and gender equality implies that women must not be discriminated against when it comes to accessing the highest levels of security clearance. The most common form of discrimination in this area puts obstacles in the way of women seeking to attain leadership positions that would entitle them to high-level clearance based on the stereotype that leadership is a man's quality. Women's access to clearance may also be affected by stereotypes about their presumed "inability to keep secrets". Such stereotypes result in practices that exclude women from circles of information, at the detriment to collegial management of security issues, an important aspect of transparency and inclusiveness.

  1

  See Tool 1 on Political leadership and National Ownership of Security Sector Reform Processes

- **Responsiveness:** as mentioned, the work of security institutions must be driven by the actual needs of the population, including the specific and changing security needs of men, women, boys and girls in a given context. In the absence of gender equality, security provision is often based on stereotypes that portray women as victims and men as perpetrators. These stereotypes may prevent security institutions from offering adequate protection to men who experience victimisation (as they do not match the perceived norm of who a victim should be), or conversely from investigating and arresting women who may be involved in crimes (as they do not match the perceived norm of who a perpetrator should be). Gender stereotypes also prevent security institutions from seeing women and men as, for example, partners who can contribute equally to improving the security of their community. This results in lost opportunities for the security of all. Moreover, without gender equality, security provision tends to rely on assumptions about the types of threats men, women, boys and girls respectively face, leaving security institutions unable to offer adequate protection to victims when these assumptions do not reflect the reality of individual experiences of insecurity.

- **Rule of law**: All members of society, regardless of gender, sex, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, must be equally protected by and accountable to laws that are publicly known, impartially enforced, and consistent with national and international human rights norms and standards. Gender equality itself is among those human rights norms and standards.

Box 4: Guiding questions to monitor gender mainstreaming in security sector governance

The answer to the following yes/no questions should be supported by precise, context-specific elements that illustrate the extent to which each of these points are addressed and suggest improvements.

- Are both women and men (including non-state actors such as civil society organisations) consulted and involved in security provision, management, and oversight?

- Are the different security needs of men, women, boys and girls being adequately addressed?

- Does the security sector have the necessary policies, protocols, structures, personnel, training and resources to meet these different needs?

- Does a healthy and non-discriminatory work environment exist?

3

Integrating the aims and principles of gender quality in security sector reform

> *"Security sector reform must [mainstream gender] throughout its planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. It must also include the reform of recruitment processes and improvement in the delivery of security services to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence."*
>
> Report of the Secretary General, "Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform" [20]

3.1. What is security sector reform?

Security sector reform (SSR) is a process of change or transformation that strives to establish good SSG. The goal of SSR is to ensure that security and justice providers deliver effective and efficient security and justice services that meet the needs of the people – women, men, girls and boys alike; and that they are held accountable to the state and the people. Furthermore, SSR aims to ensure that security institutions operate in a framework of democratic governance, without any discrimination and with full respect for human rights and for the rule of law, including viewing women and men as equal before the law.

Some ECOWAS member states – including Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali and Sierra Leone – have implemented or are currently implementing overarching SSR processes that explicitly aim to restructure and reorient these countries' entire state security apparatuses to better meet both state and human security needs. Such processes involve reviewing a national legal and policy framework, as well as the organisation and mandates of all parts of the security sector, including oversight actors, in order to improve effectiveness and accountability across the board. For SSR to be effective, there must be at least as much emphasis placed on improving governance as on increasing operational capacity and equipment. Programmes that focus solely on effectiveness, such as exclusive training and equipment programmes, without paying any attention to governance structures, cannot be considered SSR.

Other ECOWAS countries have implemented a series of more limited reforms, for example focusing on certain dimensions of how the armed forces, the police or the justice system are managed and operate, without formally calling it SSR. In Ghana, for instance, the reform agenda has developed in an organic manner, alongside the democratisation process and as an integral part of it. This has translated into a seemingly inadvertent shift toward increased practice of good SSG principles, without the need to articulate these changes as an SSR.

But what matters more than terminology is the process – of transforming dysfunctional security systems, typically anchored in cultures of impunity and mismanagement, into service-oriented institutions fit to meet the actual justice and security needs of the people, and responsive to democratic accountability.

3.2. How is gender equality relevant to security sector reform?

> *"[Integrating the principles of gender equality] into SSR processes, in addition to being mandated by international and regional laws and instruments, enhances local ownership, effective service delivery, and oversight and accountability."*
>
> Kristin Valasek, "Security Sector Reform and Gender" in Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008).

As a governance process aimed at improving the effectiveness and accountability of security institutions for the benefit of all, it is essential that SSR does not perpetuate or reinforce gender stereotypes, bias or any other elements of inequality that restrain the access of either men or women, boys or girls, to effective security services.

Gender equality is a normative requirement for SSR enshrined in AU and ECOWAS instruments

- The African Union Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform (2013) identifies gender as one of the "Core African Principles for Security Sector Reform". Paragraph 16.i. of the AU Policy Framework reads:

  "SSR will adhere to principles of gender equality and women's empowerment as enshrined in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004), the Solemn Declaration on an African Defence and Security Policy (2004), the Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (2006), the African Union Gender Policy (2009), the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 and 1889 (2009), as well as other relevant gender instruments of the RECs [i.e. regional economic communities] and Member States. The entire SSR process will, therefore, include women specific activities, gender awareness and responsive programming, and aim to bring about transformative possibilities for gender equity within the security sector."

- Article 16 of the ECOWAS Policy on Security Sector Reform and Governance (2016) reads:

  "SSRG programmes will adhere to the principles of gender equality and women empowerment as enshrined in article 63 of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty (1993), the ECOWAS Gender Policy (2004), article 81 of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework and the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 (2010). SSRG programmes will also adhere to the principles enshrined in other relevant gender instruments of the AU, the UN and ECOWAS Member States. SSRG programming will include gender-specific activities with the aim to promote gender equality within the security sector."

Where gender equality is not considered, SSR will fail

"A security sector that neglects the security of particular segments of the population is neither accountable nor effective. Past experience has demonstrated that when gender equality is not considered in SSR, security [...] institutions will continue with status quo arrangements, typically protecting the interests of the more powerful, male-dominated political elites and overlooking the security needs of women, girls and gender-based minorities.

Gender equality is a constituent part of **national and local ownership of SSR**. SSR is only successful when led by national authorities and widely supported at the community level. Legitimate ownership requires that women and men have equal opportunity to influence decisions about SSG and their implementation, including through public oversight. [Participation may be direct (e.g. through consultations with civil society organisations, including those supporting marginalised groups of women, men and gender minorities) or indirect (e.g. through diverse and representative elected or duly appointed bodies).]

Gender equality is a constituent part of a **long-term, holistic approach to SSR**. Excluding particular groups of women, men, girls or boys from the oversight, management and provision of security creates a deficit in accountability and effectiveness, placing many of them in vulnerable situations and undermining reform in the long term. For all these reasons gender equality must be considered throughout the course of the SSR process, including in assessment, design and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation."[21]

> *"National ownership cannot be imposed from outside. It must be home grown, taking into account broader needs of all stakeholders in a particular context, with a view to transforming rather than strengthening already broken security institutions."*
>
> African Union, *Conclusions of the Africa Forum on SSR* (Addis Ababa: AU, 2014).

3.3. How to integrate the principles of gender equality in SSR?

To integrate the principles of gender equality into SSR, which is essential to good SSG, it is necessary to:

- **Mainstream gender into SSR policies and programmes.** Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that can help to ensure that SSR accounts for the different ways in which gender affects the security of individuals, and that SSR does not reinforce inequality or the vulnerability of certain groups based on sex or gender.

- **Create the conditions for equal participation and representation of women and men at all levels.** This should extend from the political shaping of SSR, through the leadership of and membership in security sector institutions, to the leadership of and membership in the democratic institutions responsible for monitoring the SSR process and overseeing security sector institutions. This requires that space is created for women as well as men to partake in national conversations on security priorities and to participate in the design and implementation of SSR programmes.

- Unlock the full capacity of women and men to contribute to security for all, by **eliminating restrictions to the contribution of women and men based on stereotypes and rigid gender roles.** Challenging the rigidity of gender roles is necessary to establish gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination, which deprives the security sector of the benefit of a wider range of talents.

In Article 66 of its Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance (2016), ECOWAS provides member states with a series of specific recommendations that can serve as a guiding framework for "implementing SSRG programmes and activities". Principles of gender equality should be integrated into each of the prescribed measures, as shown below (see Box 5).

Box 5: Integrating the aims of gender equality in implementing article 66 of the ECOWAS Policy Framework for SSRG (2016)

Prescribed measure	How gender can be integrated
a) Development, review and update of the national legal framework	Ensure that the legal framework does not create or reinforce inequality; and that it offers equal access and opportunities to women and men to participate in security delivery, management and oversight.
b) Establishing a national team of SSRG experts, to support state efforts	The team should include women and men; it should also include gender experts specifically. Gender experts can be women or men.
c) Designating a national focal point for SSRG who will coordinate with the ECOWAS SSRG team	The national focal point should receive adequate "gender and security" training; s/he should also be in a position to advocate for effective integration of principles of gender equality into national reform efforts.
d) Providing resources to implement national SSRG programmes and a resource mobilisation strategy to secure internal and external funding	Throughout the national budget process, it is necessary to consider what funding needs must be covered in order to allow security institutions to deliver services that are more in line with the actual needs of women, men, boys and girls in the population. When allocating funds for SSR, legislative and executive branches of government should both ensure that sufficient funds are allocated to improving state response to gender-based violence. As part of its oversight function, parliament should also request from the executive data on the proportion of public funds dedicated to addressing the security needs of women, men, boys and girls. Institutions responsible for external resource mobilisation in support of SSR should also prioritise the principles and aims of gender equality in their negotiations with potential external partners. Earmarked funding for "gender and security" interventions should also be negotiated with external partners.
e) Ensure political support to SSRG programme as part of the national development and state reform agenda	Strong links must be made between the development agenda and the SSR agenda. For instance, it may be useful to make explicit reference in official documentation to how SSR contributes equally to two sustainable development goals – Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 16 on Peace Justice and Strong Institutions. Such links should also be made in national development strategy documents and declarations that demonstrate political commitment from national authorities, emphasising the complementarity of security and development agendas for redressing gender inequalities. Further, parliaments can assert their political support by passing resolutions that make clear and explicit links between gender, SSR and development and state reform agendas.

Prescribed measure	How gender can be integrated

f) Design and implement a communication strategy on SSRG programmes	An effective communication strategy should promote equal access for men and women to information. Key issues to consider include the following:
	
	• **"Access to information:** Is the information accessible to minority groups, marginalised communities, differently-abled persons, and poor and uneducated portions of the population in a form that they can easily understand and engage with? When dealing with access, communication planners should closely look at both the availability of the information (does it go all the way to the people it is supposed to reach?) and its affordability (is it available for free, or will it require socio-economically challenged communities to commit already scarce resources?). For instance, if communication planners opt for newspapers as a channel for delivering information, they should consider whether roads and distribution networks allow newspapers to be delivered in remote areas (availability), and whether the local communities targeted are able to buy them (affordability). They must also consider whether levels of literacy will allow the addressees to read and understand the content. It is generally advisable to use multiple transmission channels for one message to maximise the chances of reaching various categories of audience. The use of local languages, traditional channels of information and community radios to convey messages also improves access.
	
	• **[Tailored messaging for different groups of people]:** Are men, women, boys and girls – regardless of their location in the territory and their linguistic background – targeted through the appropriate channels and messages? Developing youth specific messages that rely on youth codes and ensuring that women are represented throughout the communication chain will help to maximise impact.
	
	• **[Inclusive communication processes]:** For instance, key institutions involved in the SSR process should:
	  • have both men and women in their communication teams as planners, translators and spokespersons;
	  • develop communication materials that highlight women's participation (gender-[inclusive or specific] language, photos, examples, etc.);
	  • conduct outreach activities targeting specific gender categories."[22]

g) Provide resources to monitor and evaluate SSRG programmes	Monitoring and evaluation teams, like other specialist teams, should include both women and men. These teams should also receive adequate training on the ways in which gender affects security, as well as mentoring and expert support from gender specialists as necessary. Monitoring and evaluation methodologies should integrate relevant tools to assess the impact of SSRG programmes on men and women, as well as their relation to gender-based violence.
h) Submit reports on an annual basis to the ECOWAS Commission on implementation of SSRG in a progressive manner.	Annual reports should include specific sections explaining the actions undertaken to improve state performance as regards gender and security.

3.4. Adopting an inclusive process to define a national vision of security that takes into account the security needs of women, men, boys and girls

"National stakeholders involved in SSR may have different or even diverging views, concerns and priorities. Multiple factors, such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, education, socio-economic status, geographical location and political sensitivities, affect the perceptions and experiences of security and insecurity within society.

The reform agenda must take into consideration this diversity of perspectives, including the security preoccupations of [women, men, girls, boys, and all minorities and] marginalised groups. Consensus building can prove very useful for that purpose, as it is based on the principles of inclusive participation and aims at reconciling opposing positions. The objective is to reach an understanding and vision of security that reflects the preoccupations of all segments of society.

For more information, see Tool 1 on Political Leadership and National Ownership of SSR Processes

If properly conducted, consensus building addresses public reticence regarding SSR and encourages both public opinion and security sector professionals to influence the formulation of security policies. It notably helps ensure that the SSR process:

• is inclusive and participatory, so as to accommodate different shades of opinion;

• addresses shortcomings of the security sector in a coherent manner;

• accurately reflects the needs of the people;

• enjoys public support and does not generate avoidable resistance."[23]

As they drive and facilitate a collaborative definition of a national vision of security to guide SSR, national authorities should ensure that:

• women and men have equal access to the conversation and are effectively empowered to influence the security agenda;

• the agenda reflects the experience of various types of women, men, girls and boys, rather than a single or simplistic story. This includes making sure that gender-related threats are taken seriously and addressed as matters of public concern;

• the security agenda being developed does not aggravate the vulnerability of particular gender or minority groups to security threats or risks. In line with the principles of gender mainstreaming, it is important to assess the positive and negative implications for men, women, boys and girls of the priorities being defined; and

• the national vision for security considers both women and men as agents of change for improving the security of all.

Participation and representation in agenda setting

In defining a common vision of security that will frame the entire SSR process, it is important to build consensus at several levels, consistently ensuring that women have the same access and opportunity as men to influence the definition of priorities:

• "**At the strategic level:** Consensus must prevail among political leaders and key decision-makers on the objectives and values underpinning the SSR process. Divisions within the political leadership weaken the process and damage the credibility of the strategic guidance which it should provide. [In order to have a real voice in defining a national agenda for security at the strategic level, women must be able to access executive and leadership positions within the government and in political offices.]

• **At the institutional level:** Seeking consensus among defence and security professionals and within security [...] institutions helps to prevent institutional resistance and ensure the relevance of SSR with regard to challenges specific to the security sector. [For institutional level consensus to be inclusive, attention must be paid to ensure that women working in security institutions are fully empowered to

partake in the conversation and influence the agenda in a manner equal to men].

- **At the societal level:** Citizen participation is essential to secure democratic ownership of the reform process. Experience has proven the need for open debates to make the general public aware of the SSR process at an early stage and to enable citizens and communities to influence the formulation of security policies. [Inclusive consensus building at this level requires full participation of women, women's groups and women's organisations]."[24]

3.5. Integrating the aims and principles of gender equality in SSR programming

3.5.1. What is SSR programming?

SSR programming can be defined as the technical exercise that translates a politically-defined national vision for security into a practical set of actions aimed at improving the functioning of security institutions and the security of the state and the people. As such, programming refers to the process of setting up a structured and purposeful set of initiatives – a programme – designed to achieve a specific set of objectives. In order to ensure that the desired results are obtained, activities may be framed by a strategy, key principles and identified targets. Together, these elements define how activities will be organised and implemented.

For more information, see Tool 2 on SSR Programming

2

In the context of an overarching national SSR process, programming may be conducted by a centralised national mechanism set up by the executive, such as a steering or coordination committee or a national security council; whereas limited reforms can be programmed at the ministry or institutional level. In addition to institutional staff, external specialists are often recruited to bring in additional capacity and expertise. Both steering bodies and technical teams should be open to equal participation by men and women, including at the highest level of decision-making. To a certain extent, the principles of SSR programming are also applicable to smaller scale projects, such as those operated by medium-size civil society organisations (CSOs) in particular thematic areas.

Incorporating gender equality as a key dimension throughout SSR programming can improve the relevance, quality, sustainability and local ownership of reforms implemented, as they will be better tailored to the actual needs and expectations of all members of the population, including women, men, girls, boys and minority groups. To ensure sufficient attention to gender equality throughout the SSR process, it is advisable to include it as **both a goal and as a guiding principle** in the strategy and policy documents that set out the framework for programming, and then mainstream it into all phases of programme management.

As part of its advisory role to member states willing to design and implement an SSR programme, ECOWAS can provide critical support in identifying entry points for enhancing gender equality in the security sector, as the opportunities for such initiatives will depend on the local political and economic context.

Box 6: SSR programming

Initial
assessment

Programme
design and
budgeting

Programme
implementation /
on-going
monitoring
and adjustment

Programme
evaluation /
lesson
learning
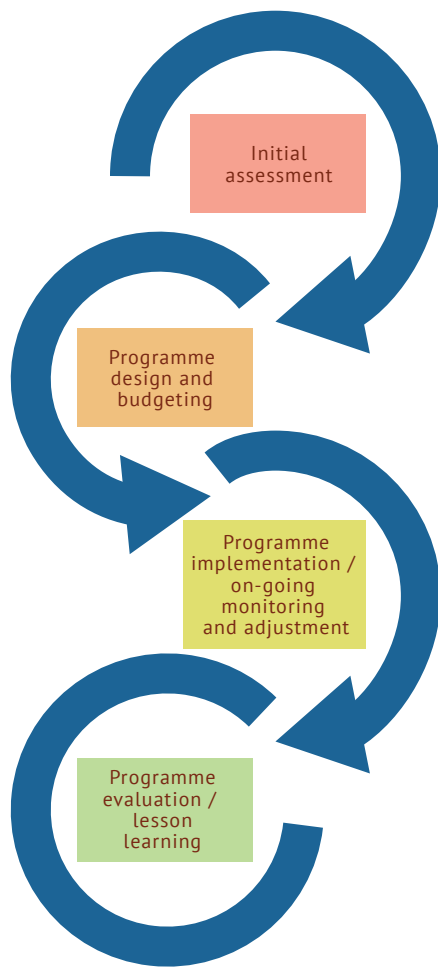
SSR programming varies according to specific contexts, but key phases are generally the same as in most development programmes. These include:

- an initial assessment;
- a design, planning and budgeting phase;
- programme implementation and on-going monitoring and adjustment; and
- a final evaluation and lessons learning phase.

SSR programming also involves the coordination of all actors involved and the management of effective communication on progress with all stakeholders, throughout the process.

Responsive programming requires continuous efforts to update the context and stakeholder analysis, so that the programme keeps up with contextual evolutions. Thus, each step of the cycle builds on previous ones, and the quality of each phase will impact those that follow. If gender equality is to be effectively integrated in SSR programming, **a conscious effort must be made to address it at each step.**

With reference to Article 66 of the ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance (2016) presented under section 3.3. as a guiding framework, the following section provides further guidance on how to promote gender equality throughout SSR programming.

3.5.2. Gender equality in security sector assessments

An assessment is a process of gathering and analysing data to understand and document a given situation. In the context of SSR programming, the initial assessment phase is used to analyse the context for reform, including the security and justice needs of the population as well as gaps and dysfunctions in the institutional response to those needs. This assessment also serves to map the different actors involved and to identify risks that may threaten the success of the programme. A well conducted initial SSR assessment offers a basis for determining specific programme objectives and provides documented baselines for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

The scope and choice of methodology for an SSR assessment depends on the context and the resources available. Different formats of assessments are possible, including:

- **Preliminary informal analysis:** to gain a basic understanding of the context and needs;
- **Initial scoping study:** to assess whether an SSR programme would bring added value;
- **Full assessment:** to provide an in-depth overview of the national context for SSR;
- **Sector or problem-specific assessment:** to analyse a specific institution and its needs or to look into a specific security problem.[25]

These different types of assessments can be sequenced; for example, following up a quick informal assessment with a more thorough one, or undertaking a more focused analysis of a specific problem identified in a broader assessment. Regardless of the scope and method used, gender equality must be included as an essential aspect of the assessment, to inform fair and accurate reform initiatives.

Even in the desk research phase of assessments, principles of gender equality must guide analysis of context, stakeholders, interests, priorities and other relevant elements:

- **An analysis of how gender roles influence the needs and concerns of all stakeholders** may help ensure that no women, particular categories of men, or minorities are side-lined. This is critical to securing broad and inclusive national ownership of the SSR process, which cannot be limited to government or state ownership. Women's organisations in civil society must have real access to national consultation mechanisms. Women working in security sector institutions and female staff associations must be involved in internal efforts to build institutional consensus about reforms.

- **An analysis of how the legal and policy framework impacts men, women, boys and girls** provides a baseline from which to draw realistic reform targets to improve gender equality in the composition and work of security institutions (see sections 4.1 to 4.3).

- **SSR assessments must also consider the ways in which gender affects reform needs**. Assessments and professionally guided self-assessments of how equal the treatment is of men and women at security institutions are among the tools available to comprehensively assess reform needs. Moreover, SSR assessment teams should include women and men. They should also develop working methodologies to collect, analyse and interpret information, paying attention to the impact of socially established gender roles and restrictions.

In all forms of assessment, **both who collects the information and where/who the information is collected from will affect the kind of data that is obtained.** The inclusion of women and men in assessment teams, as well as among respondents, will give a fuller picture of the relevant security needs to be addressed. When composing an assessment team, it is also important to ensure that gender specialists are included and provided the necessary space to influence SSR programming. While good practice commands that women be part of SSR expert teams, it is worth noting that being a woman is not the same as being a gender expert. Not all women are gender experts, and there are men with considerable gender expertise.

Another critical issue is how to design assessment tools. Unless they ask the right questions of the right people, assessments will not gather the information needed to support responsive and solution-oriented programming. It is vital that the principles of gender equality are reflected in all processes that affect data collection and processing, from questionnaire design to the choice of venue for focus group meetings (Box 7).

Box 7: Incorporating the principles of gender equality in data collection methodologies for SSR assessments

Information gathering method	Tips for integrating principles of gender equality
Desk research / Review of normative & institutional documentation	• In documentation review, include ethical norms such as codes of conduct, anti-discrimination policies, and institutional policies supporting gender equality (such as those prohibiting discrimination or sexual harassment and abuse). • Review reports and survey results from civil society organisations working on the connections between gender and security, especially women's organisations. • Include gender specialists in the desk research and review team. • Assess the extent to which gender is addressed in security sector training curricula.
Field surveys	• Ensure that survey topics include concerns specifically relevant for men, women, boys and girls. The input of women's organisations in the design of surveys and development of questionnaires can be helpful. • Use gender inclusive or gender specific language in questionnaires, as appropriate (see section 7.1.2). • Reach out specifically to women and girls as respondents. This may require adjusting the location and timing of field visits so that women are available and more likely to speak freely. • Partner with grassroots women's organisations to develop and conduct field surveys. • Interview women and men separately on critically sensitive issues, in order to allow more honest responses. Where literacy rates allow, it can be useful to conduct parts of the survey in writing (through individual, possibly anonymous questionnaires). • Whenever relevant/necessary, anonymise the results of surveys, so as to avoid exposing respondents to risks that may result from their participation. • Allow participants to use pseudonyms, whenever necessary or requested by them.
Focus groups	• Consider the cultural context: men may not be willing to reveal certain information in the presence of women or of other men; women may not be or may not feel allowed to speak publicly in the presence of men. As such, small group discussions can be organised in mixed, all male, or all female groups, depending on the context or topic. • Place focus group discussions under Chatham House rules, and explain what this means. • Anonymise reports of focus group discussions whenever necessary/relevant, while capturing the gender of respondents to the extent possible.
Interviews with key contact persons	• When developing a list of resource persons to interview, make sure to include women, and not only men. • Only attribute specific quotes to interviewees with their express authorisation.

3.5.3 Gender equality in SSR programme design

The design phase of programming involves developing a strategy to address the gaps and problems identified in the assessment, in order to better respond to individual and institutional needs. This requires establishing precise objectives that reforms should achieve, as well as the most appropriate methods to achieve them given available resources. An SSR programme should include initiatives that aim to reinforce both the effectiveness and accountability of security actors, especially as regards:

- the effectiveness (actuality and quality) of justice and security services delivered to women, girls and boys, as well as to men;

- the readiness (ability and willingness) of justice and security institutions to hold perpetrators of gender-related crimes and offenses accountable before the law and to protect victims;

- the level of accountability of security institutions or members of their personnel implicated in gender-related violence, abuse, exploitation and other forms of crimes and misconduct; and

- the level of accountability of security institutions failing to effectively protect men, women, boys or girls.

Actively integrating the principles of gender equality into the programme design phase helps ensure that sectoral reforms do not reinforce gender inequalities, but address them. It also provides opportunities to build projects and interventions that specifically address gender inequality into the overall SSR programme, so that targeted interventions are aimed at solving (or contributing toward the resolution of) specific problems.

Experience shows that in the absence of deliberate efforts to incorporate the aims and principles of gender equality into SSR programme design, both through gender mainstreaming and through specific projects, gender inequalities are usually left unaddressed, which weakens the overall SSR process and puts its sustainability in question. Moreover, making explicit why and how SSR will address the manifestations and impacts of gender inequality on state and human security is necessary to secure the budget needed to conduct such projects.

Strategies for building the aims and principles of gender equality into programme design include:

- **Mainstreaming gender** throughout all sectoral and cross-sectoral initiatives.

- **Planning and securing funding for specific interventions and projects** aimed at addressing the root causes, manifestations and impacts of gender inequality on the security of people and on the performance of security institutions. For example, these may include projects aimed at preventing sexual violence and/or improving institutional response to it; support for women's leadership in the security sector through training and mentoring programmes; the establishment of zero tolerance policies for sexual harassment within security institutions; integrating gender in professional training curricula for security sector institutions; etc.

- **Ensuring the effective participation of women and men in all dimensions of the programme.**

Box 8: The NAPRI wheel – an analytical tool for mainstreaming gender into programming

The NAPRI Wheel is an analytical tool that looks at five different programmatic dimensions. Namely, it considers how the programme relates to and affects the needs, access, participation, resources and impact of different gender groups. This tool can also be used to analyse the integration of gender into smaller projects, in policies or in practices.[26]

Impact
What is the impact of the policy, programme, project or intervention on women and men?

Needs
How does the policy, programme, project or intervention meet the identified needs of women and men?

Access
Do women and men have equal access to the rights, benefits and/or resources afforded by the policy, programme, project or intervention?

Participation
How have women and men been involved in developing, implementing and evaluating the policy, programme, project or intervention?

Resources
Is the distribution of resources in the framework of the policy, programme, project or intervention equitable and consistent with the identified needs of women and men?

From the outset, the design phase must include development of a plan for **how to monitor implementation of the programme,** including how to monitor its impact on different gender groups. It is also important to plan early on for an effective **communication strategy**, which will enable internal and external stakeholders to exchange information about the programme and the context of intervention, and which will help coordinate the stakeholders involved. An effective and inclusive communication strategy should:

• Include women as well as men in information circuits;

• Provide women's organisations access to interact with security institutions and other actors;

• Provide space for women and women's organisation to communicate about their work relevant to the SSR programme;

• Ensure the full and equal participation of men and women on communication teams;

• Treat information on gender and security with the same level of seriousness and professionalism as any other programmatic areas of the SSR programme;

• Ensure that communication materials produced by the programme or as part of the programme's outreach do not reinforce gender stereotypes; for instance by systematically depicting women as victims and men as "protectors" or perpetrators. Visual communication material, such as drawings, photographs, posters, stickers, etc. should in particular reflect the variety of roles that men and women can assume if SSR is carried out in a framework of gender equality.

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For more information on how to communicate regarding SSR programmes, see Tool 1 on Political Leadership and National Ownership of SSR Processes

3.5.4. Gender equality in the budgeting of SSR programmes

Budgeting is an essential part of SSR programming. The budget provides the financial framework for implementation and reflects the priorities of the programme. When it comes to integrating principles of gender equality into the budgeting phase, it is important to allocate sufficient funds to respond to the needs of women, men, girls and boys. Experience has shown that when funds are not specifically allocated to address the root causes, manifestations, and impacts of gender inequality on the security of the state and the people, these important aspects of SSR tend to remain overlooked. Box 9, below, provides examples of some considerations that may help secure the funds necessary to cover the costs associated with improving security sector performance as far as gender equality.

At a more macro level, it is also important to ensure that public resources are not simply diverted from other areas of need for particular gender groups, to fund SSR. Acknowledging that the security of women and girls does not only depend on the work of security institutions, but also on their access to education, livelihood and political rights, attention must be paid to avoid excessive "securitisation" of development resources in the name of SSR (see Box 1 on human security, and section 2.1.)

Box 9: Considerations for incorporating the principles of gender equality into SSR budgeting

Budget items	Elements to consider
Personnel	Is funding secured for costs relating to short-term gender specialist support (consultant)?
	Is funding secured for personnel costs related to long-term gender specialists (staff)?
	Is funding allocated to cover the costs of maternity, paternity or other family-related leaves among programme staff?
Projects/Activities	Is funding secured for projects that specifically address the causes or manifestations of gender inequality in access to security and justice, or within security institutions, including through earmarked funding mechanisms?
	Is funding secured for activities that specifically address the causes or manifestations of gender inequality in the framework of broader sectoral and cross-sectoral projects?
	If projects include direct or indirect funding or material support to civil society organisations, are women's organisations either specifically targeted or included among the recipients?
	Do cost estimates for project events (such as planning meetings or capacity building workshops) include the costs associated with the participation of women and men from regions and provinces outside the capital city?
Monitoring and evaluation, and communication	Are funding and other resources available for collecting and processing sex-disaggregated data?
	How does the M&E framework propose to document the impact of resources invested into the programme on the security of specific gender groups?
	Is the budget provisioned specifically for outreach to women in both urban and rural areas?

3.5.5. Furthering the aims of gender equality throughout programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation

For an SSR programme to promote gender equality, it is important that the way it is implemented does not intentionally or unintentionally reinforce inequality. All the actors involved in programme implementation must make a continuous effort to ensure equal participation by women and men, be it in decision-making spheres, in technical and implementing teams, or as beneficiaries of initiatives.

When faced with difficulties reaching women or collaborating with them in a substantial way, security institutions and ministries implementing reforms should consider partnering with women's organisations, including those at the community level, as well as with other specialised civil society groups operating from the grassroots to national levels. These organisations often have experience working with women from a variety of backgrounds and have the networks necessary to bring women's contributions to the SSR arena.

Reinforcing the aims of gender equality also requires that programme monitoring and evaluation fully integrates the participation of women and men, and tracks programme performance regarding the ways in which gender affects the security of men, women, boys and girls, as well as the performance and accountability of security institutions and their personnel. Ideally, the integration of gender equality principles should be monitored both as an aspect of intervention and as a goal in itself.

In order to monitor the progress of the programme in improving gender equality in the area of security, it is critical to:

- identify relevant and specific progress indicators from the outset;
- collect baseline data against which progress will be measured over time;
- define procedures for continuous update of progress indicators, as the programme unfolds;
- identify realistic targets that will determine the success of planned interventions regarding gender equality in SSR.

To understand whether a programme is effectively responding to the needs of a complex population, most or all indicators may need to be disaggregated by sex and age. Sex-disaggregated data provide a more accurate view of the potentially different impacts of the programme on women and men, and helps identify and correct instances in which programme interventions unintentionally reinforce gender inequalities.

For example, at the activity level, when recording how many individuals benefitted from a training programme, it is advisable to distinguish how many of the participants were women and how many were men. If an overall 70% of the staff in a particular service were trained, this may appear at first glance to be a rather successful rate of staff penetration. However, if the gender breakdown of this figure reveals that only men received the training and that the 30% left out included every woman on staff, this would suggest that the initiative did not meet the needs of all staff and may even have reinforced inequality within the institution. Without the use of sex-disaggregated data, this may not have been evident. Such adverse effects should be monitored not only at the activity level, but also at the programmatic level as it relates to the outcomes and possible societal impacts of SSR.

While monitoring is continuous, **evaluation** is periodic. It can be undertaken after implementation is complete to assess outcomes (summative evaluation), during the course of implementation as a tool to improve programme management and performance (formative evaluation), or even before the start of a programme or project to assess its likelihood of success or determine whether its design will enable the evaluation of outcomes later (prospective evaluation). Evaluations can be done internally by those responsible for implementation, e.g. a line ministry, or externally by independent actors.

Decisions about what to monitor and evaluate are strongly linked to overall goal setting for a programme. This means that monitoring alone will not produce data on gender equality unless there is a conscious decision to incorporate its principles when the programme is designed and the monitoring system established.

The information captured in monitoring provides material for later evaluations. It may be difficult to assess whether the benefits of a programme reached women and men equally, if no monitoring data is available. Still, even in this case, gender equality can be included as an evaluation criterion, though evaluators will have to collect the information from other sources; for example through qualitative methods like interviews with stakeholders. As in the case of assessments, it is important to include both men and women among respondents and as part of interviewing teams in order to get a full perspective.

The role of ECOWAS in facilitating experience-sharing for integrating the principles of gender equality into SSR programming

As a regional community with a mandate to provide technical support to member states, ECOWAS is in a unique position to facilitate experience-sharing among member states and ensure that gender equality is a key part of lessons-learning exercises on SSR in the region.

Box 10: Setting up appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems

Developing logically strong theories of change:

- Does the programme rely on a reasonably anticipated succession of actions and results likely to lead to better access and opportunities for women and men through SSR?

- Does the programme rely on tested assumptions rather than on gendered stereotypes or unproven, biased assumptions?

Defining and updating relevant indicators:

- Do the identified indicators indeed reveal the type of progress a project aims to achieve? Speedy and overly formal programming processes sometimes result in the identification of misleading and irrelevant indicators, which do not "indicate" much about the progress they are supposed to track. An example of this typical shortcoming was found during a review of a justice programme in Sierra Leone, where "an initiative to strengthen local courts was measured through an indicator on the number of local court cases overturned on review. [This] indicator was misleading in that it might capture a stronger review process, rather than improvement in the quality of local courts".[27] A misleading indicator of this type might adversely impact whether women's access to justice is prioritised as a programmatic goal, by giving decision-makers the false sense that progress is being made.

- Can monitoring teams reasonably expect to access updated data at the frequency and with the level of precision necessary to document the indicators throughout the programme's duration?

- Are reliable data collection methods in place? Programme-generated data is sometimes considered less reliable than data that is independently collected; and data gathered through surveys designed by the programme can also raise the issue of the quality of survey methodologies.

- Are the monitoring personnel of security institutions trained to collect and process sex-disaggregated data, and do they have access to the necessary resources to do so consistently?

- Do the identified indicators provide for assessing both positive as well as possibly harmful impacts of programme interventions on gender dynamics in security institutions, and in the broader society?

Organising joint multi-stakeholder monitoring and reviews:

- Are collaborative monitoring systems in place, and do they incorporate the active participation of national and local women's organisations?

- Are the findings of monitoring exercises, reviews and formative evaluations discussed in participatory formats, and do women and men have equal access in influencing subsequent programme adjustments?

- Are collaborative knowledge management mechanisms in place, to ensure that programme monitoring provides opportunities to develop the skills of women and of women's organisations, as well as those of men?

- Are institutional actors whose mandate is to promote gender equality (such as those in ministries of gender or women's empowerment, on parliamentary commissions for gender equality or women's rights, or in institutional gender units of security sector line ministries or institutions) included in joint programme reviews?

Planning and budgeting for credible monitoring and evaluation of gender work in SSR (also see Box 9):

- Is sufficient funding allocated to implement gender initiatives in the framework of the SSR programme?

- Is funding for an independent external evaluation of all aspects of the programme, including gender mainstreaming, built into the programme design and the budget from the outset?

3.5.6. Securing the support of external partners for gender equality as part of the process and goals of reforms

> *"The readiness of external partners to support gender equality initiatives in SSR is an underexploited opportunity for West African governments. Government institutions engaged in SSR programming should proactively seize this opportunity, by not only using gender terminology as a set of buzzwords but actually taking the lead in addressing grassroots and concrete expressions of gender inequality as a challenge for good security governance. Gender equality must neither remain nor continue to be considered an agenda pushed by outsiders."*[28]

SSR programmes in West Africa are often supported by international partners, ranging from international and regional organisations, such as the UN, AU or ECOWAS, to bilateral partners and international non-governmental organisations. It is crucial that the efforts of these partners are coordinated by national authorities to ensure overall coherence of the programme and the alignment of all initiatives with national priorities. Coordination further serves to avoid duplication of efforts, and identify gaps and opportunities for synergy.

See Tool 4 on Effective Management of External Support to SSRG

In a national SSR process, coordination between national and international actors is usually facilitated by the body responsible for steering the process. If many international partners are involved, they usually also have a mechanism to coordinate among themselves. Methods for coordination include regular meetings, mapping of partners and their different initiatives, as well as joint planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Ways to account for gender equality in the coordination of external partners include:

- Mapping SSR initiatives supported by external partners and specifically focused on gender;
- Reviewing the 1325 NAP of external partner countries whenever discussing possible collaboration with them;
- Ensuring that all SSR initiatives take into account relevant national policies and instruments relating to gender, e.g. national action plans on the implementation of UNSCR 1325;
- Inviting external partners to engage in the discussion on how gender is mainstreamed in SSR initiatives in general;
- Emphasising the importance of gender equality as a goal of SSR, through specific mention in all partnership agreements with external actors.

For more information on the coordination of external partners, see Tool 1 on Political Leadership and National Ownership of SSR Processes and

Tool 2 on SSR Programming

Box 11: Keeping gender on the agenda while deciding on priorities – a partner's perspective

During the programme design phase, there are usually more good ideas proposed than can be carried forward by available resources. It is therefore necessary to establish priorities, ensuring that gender equality remains on the agenda.

In its 2015 Review of UK Development Assistance for Security and Justice, the British Independent Commission for Aid Impact concluded that there were "promising early results on community-level justice, particularly for women and girls". Analysis of UK justice and security assistance in Malawi, Bangladesh and Sierra Leone revealed that "[w]omen have been important beneficiaries of […] the local justice work". According to the Review:

"[t]he most promising results across the Security and Justice portfolio are, without question, at the level of local community justice. This is usually an area with fewer political interests at play, where DFID [Department for International Development] has more space to work.[29] It is also an area where local NGOs have a comparative advantage, offering an effective delivery channel. [Good programme results in examined countries were] accompanied by awareness raising and legal empowerment among local communities, with a good focus on women and girls. […] In Sierra Leone, according to surveys conducted by the programme, DFID's work with community mediators and paralegals has helped to increase women's awareness of S&J services available within their communities."

This finding tends to confirm that gender work is often a cost-effective dimension of a justice and security agenda, and should therefore be maintained as programmatic priorities are defined.

Box 12: ECOWAS support for external resource mobilisation for reforms specifically addressing the causes, manifestations and effects of gender inequality

Recognising the need to support gender-specific resource mobilisation, the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC) was set up in 2003 by Decision A/DEC 16/1/03 at the conference of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, to provide ECOWAS with a specialised agency on gender and development. EGDC is at the forefront of initiating programmes for gender-specific resource mobilisation in ECOWAS states. ECOWAS support for gender-specific resource mobilisation includes information collection regarding projects and programmes, and corresponding resource needs, through close collaboration with country-based counterparts. ECOWAS is also engaged in convening and participating in donor conferences to source funding and commit resources to SSR and to monitor progress on national reforms.

Integrating the principles of gender equality in the national strategic framework for security: legislation

In each country, the work of the security sector is guided by a strategic framework comprising laws and policies. This framework defines the mandates, powers and relations of security institutions. It reflects national priorities as far as security; assigns rights and responsibilities to the women and men working in the security sector; and protects men, women, boys and girls in the public.

If security institutions are to function within a framework of gender equality, the creation of an adequate legal and policy environment is essential. This section and the following one explore how national security legislation and policy can reflect the aims and principles of gender equality. Complementary guidance on integrating gender equality into parliamentary oversight of the security sector, and especially into the legislative process, is provided in section 7.1.

Although the development of laws and policies that reflect gender equality is not sufficient in itself, this is a necessary prerequisite to enabling and triggering changes at more operational and practical levels. While the executive and the parliament have the principal responsibility in this regard, independent oversight actors such as women's organisations and other civil society groups can also play an important role in pushing for policy and legislative change through their advocacy efforts.

Potential entry points for improving the extent to which a strategic framework for security addresses gender inequality include:

- Establishing a comprehensive overview of the legal and policy framework pertaining to gender and security
- Assessing the extent to which the legal and policy framework for security integrates the principles of gender equality
- Incorporating international commitments into national legislation
- Integrating the principles of gender equality into national security legislation

4.1. Establishing a comprehensive overview of the legal and policy framework pertaining to gender and security

Conducting a review of existing legislation can help to identify outdated and discriminatory laws, and spot gaps and loopholes in the legal framework that reinforce gender inequality.

In many West African countries, limited capacities for institutional memory and legal documentation make it difficult even for officials – let alone for civil society – to grasp the relevant legal framework comprehensively. In view of this fundamental challenge, an exhaustive **inventory, compilation, and digitisation of the laws and policies governing the security sector** can be an effective entry point to integrating the principle of gender equality into security legislation and policy.

Compilation projects can provide several opportunities to spark discussion on how gender affects security. Not only can the final product start such a conversation, but the process itself often involves reaching out to institutional and non-institutional actors and engaging with them around the broad aims of the project, which begins a dialogue on the topic. Such compilations can offer a comprehensive basis for the review and assessment of the legal and policy framework, using gender as an analytical tool.

For legal and policy inventories and compilations to be comprehensive, it is important to consider not only conventions, laws, policies and standards specifically relating to the security sector, but also all instruments relating to gender equality that have a specific relevance to security institutions (see Box 13 for an example).

Box 13: Mapping study of national laws and policies in Mali

In 2015, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) coordinated a mapping study of the extent to which security institutions in Mali have integrated the principles of gender equality. The first part of the study focused on national governance indicators, and specifically on the following instruments:

1. **National security laws and policies, including:**
   - The Malian National Security and Civil Protection Policy (2010)
   - The National Strategy to Combat Insecurity and Terrorism (October 2010)
   - The National Security and Civil Protection Policy Framework (October 20, 2010)
   - The Draft Defence and National Security Bill
   - The Framework and Military Programming Act for 2015-2019

2. **National laws and policies on gender, including:**
   - The National Gender Policy of Mali (PNG 2009-2018), and the related National Gender Policy Action Plan (2011-2013)
   - National gender-sensitive planning and budgeting strategy (2011-2013)
   - Action plan for United Nations Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325
   - Sexual harassment-specific legislation – in the case of Mali, there are no specific provisions.

3. **National legislation on women and men in the workplace, including legal provisions applicable to security sector institutions**:

- on marriage;   - on breastfeeding;   - on trade unions;
- on pregnancy;   - on working hours;   - on health care; and
- on maternity leave;   - on working restrictions; - on retirement.
- on paternity leave;   - on salary;

The study also reviewed:

- the national ratification status of international agreements and international human rights conventions relevant to security and/or gender;

- the national acceptance status of individual complaints procedures attached to human rights conventions; and

- the national acceptance status of inquiry procedures attached to human rights conventions.

Source: Maitre Fatimata Dicko Zouboye, Maitre Kadidia Saganare Coulibaly, "National Governance", in Veerle Triquet and Lorraine Serrano (eds.), *Gender and the Security Sector: A survey of the National Police, Civil Protection, the Armed and Security Forces, the Justice system and Penal services of Mali,* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

Documents to consider in a comprehensive review and assessment of the normative framework typically include:

- **National legislation,** i.e. the constitution, organic acts, ordinary laws, decrees and bills. This should include national legislation on both security and on gender (such as anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws).

- **Institutional guidelines,** including institutional codes of conduct; standard operating procedures; institutional policies that address sexual and gender-based harassment, abuse and exploitation, sex and gender-based discrimination, or promote gender equality in other ways; and other regulatory frameworks that set behavioural standards within individual defence, security and justice institutions to help improve accountability by providing benchmarks for fairly and equally addressing wrongdoings of all personnel.

- **Regional commitments,** such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons Control, and the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (see Annex 3 for a non-exhaustive overview of gender in ECOWAS normative instruments for peace and security).

- **International norms, standards and other commitments,** such as international humanitarian law, international human rights law, the UN Convention against Torture, The UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (see Annex 4 for an overview of ratifications, accessions and successions of the CEDAW by ECOWAS Member States). National level implementation plans and strategies should also be taken into consideration (see section 5.2.2.).

4.2. Assessing the extent to which the legal framework for security integrates the principles of gender equality, and identifying gaps

In addition to a compilation, it may be useful to conduct a review and assessment of the legal and policy framework that governs a particular part of the security sector, such as defence, justice, or the interior, or individual institutions within these domains (i.e. whole or parts of the armed forces, the judiciary, or the police, for instance). In this case, it can be sufficient to focus the scope of the review to a more limited corpus of documents, including laws and policies applicable to all security institutions and those directly relevant to the particular institution at hand.

To determine the extent to which the national legal framework is conducive to gender equality or should be updated, good practice recommends assessing the following aspects:

- Are there **laws that discriminate or have a negative impact on a particular gender or age group?** These may include laws on marriage, property or child custody that reinforce inequality between women and men; or legal dispositions on the age of criminal responsibility, which may not be the same for girls as for boys.

- Are there **laws that directly address gender inequality?** These may include laws to prevent sexual harassment or discrimination in the workplace (for example, based on the grounds of pregnancy, maternity or marriage; or against men and women on the basis of health conditions).

- Are national laws in **conformity with relevant regional and international treaties** to which the state is party?

- Do **formal and customary laws and practices** dealing with family matters (marriage, divorce, parenthood and career, custody, or inheritance) and/or with gender-based violence (rape, marital rape and other forms of intimate partner violence, child abuse, etc.) follow the constitution and national laws and meet regional and international standards?

Box 14: Guiding questions for a gender assessment of national, regional, and international laws and standards

"This self-assessment does not propose a comprehensive analysis of the country's constitution, laws and traditional law and customary practices with regard to human rights, equality and gender […]. To do this, we suggest you use a resource such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Gender in the Criminal Justice System Assessment Tool and/or the American Bar Association's CEDAW Assessment Tool.

[Assessment] questions for all security sector institutions [may include the following]:

    a. How do national laws and policies for the institution make reference to gender (e.g. non-discrimination provisions)?

    b. Do national laws and policies on gender (e.g. strategy on violence against women, 1325 national action plan, anti-trafficking strategy) set out particular responsibilities for security institutions? If yes, describe the responsibilities.

    c. How is the institution being monitored for compliance with national laws and policies on gender?

    d. How is the institution being monitored for compliance with regional and international human rights and other standards in relation to gender issues?"

Source: Megan Bastick, *Gender Self-Assessment Guide for the Police, Armed Forces and Justice Sector* (Geneva: DCAF, 2011), p. 23.

4.3. Reviewing national legislation on security to improve consistency with the principles of gender equality

4.3.1. Incorporating international commitments for gender equality into national legislation

Each state establishes its own procedures for incorporating international instruments into domestic law. In some cases, the signature of a convention by the executive is sufficient for the convention to enter into force. In other cases, this signature has to be validated through ratification by parliament. Annex 4 presents an overview of the adhesion of ECOWAS member states to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

In order to facilitate the implementation of regional norms and policies at the national level, ECOWAS has created "additional acts to the revised ECOWAS treaty" – a category of regional documents that are statutorily applicable at the national level as soon as they have been adopted by the heads of state of ECOWAS members. Since the ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance was adopted in June 2016 in this way, no particular domestication process is required for its implementation at the country level. However, national implementation plans can help facilitate and accelerate the national uptake of regional policy.

Besides this specific regional policy, which frames gender equality as a "core principle of ECOWAS SSRG",[30] ECOWAS member states are signatories to a number of international, regional and sub-regional instruments that prescribe or promote gender equality (see Box 15). Adhering to these instruments is a first step in bringing national frameworks up to international standards. While some of these instruments are legally binding, others constitute so-called "soft law" and mainly represent a political commitment to certain goals and a recognition of good practice. Although non-legally binding, soft law can open doors for civil society actors to push for changes to national legislation, policy and practices on the basis that the state must meet its own self- and publicly-imposed commitments. In some cases, soft law is a first step toward "hard law," such as when treaties or national laws make reference to principles already contained in declarations, policies or other soft law instruments.

As security is primarily a national concern, governed by national laws and policies, there needs to be an intentional effort to implement international commitments at a national level. This can be done by reviewing and adapting the national legal framework to align with international instruments, or by creating action plans or policies to implement international instruments at a national level.

Reviewing national laws that may contradict commitments enshrined in international conventions or regional instruments is mainly the joint responsibility of the executive and the parliament, but civil society groups, including women's organisations, can play an important role by advocating for the harmonisation of national laws with international instruments. This was the case in Liberia, where the law on rape was revised in 2005 to align with international standards and good practice, as the result of pressure from civil society and a high-level political commitment to fight GBV (Box 16).

Box 15: Examples of international and regional instruments related to SSG and gender equality

Instruments marked with an asterisk (*) are legally binding.

International

- UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

- UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)*

- UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993)*

- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

- UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) on Women, Peace and Security: UNSCR 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), and 2242 (2015)

Continental

- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)*

- AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003)*

- African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004)

- African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Resolution on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Women and Girls Victims of Sexual Violence (2007)

- AU Gender Policy (2009)

- AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (2013)

Regional

- ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001)*

- ECOWAS Gender Policy (2004)

- Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services of ECOWAS (2011)

- ECOWAS Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance (2016)

Box 16: The revision of the Liberian rape law

The Liberian Penal Code was amended in 2005 by the National Assembly, to make the section on rape more consistent with international standards. New features included a broader definition of rape, specific provisions for gang-rape as a first-degree felony, use of gender-neutral language to include both men and women as possible victims and perpetrators, and measures aimed at increasing the protection of minors against sexual abuse.

The revision of the law was part of efforts by the Liberian government to address sexual and gender-based violence. Other measures included the adoption of a National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action and the creation of specialised police units, courts, prosecution and investigative services.

While strong political commitment and leadership by the President of the Liberian Republic contributed to this legal evolution, the Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia (AFELL) also played a leading role in campaigning for and drafting the revised rape law. Consultations were also held with community members and legal experts before and during the revision process.[31]

4.3.2. Integrating the principles of gender equality into national security legislation

National legislation is the key component of normative frameworks that can either support or hinder the equal access of women, men, girls and boys to security. The executive and legislative branches of government have a key role to play in ensuring that national legislation for security adequately addresses gender dimensions of security provision, management and oversight. There are several possible entry points for this purpose.

Within the framework of rule of law and good SSG, all members of a society should be equally protected by and accountable to the law. This means, on the one hand, that no laws should be discriminatory against men, women or other groups. On the other hand, specific laws may sometimes be necessary to reduce inequalities and protect the rights of persons in situations of vulnerability.

Box 17: Opening access to women through review of discriminatory laws – the case of Senegal

Many ECOWAS member states have reformed security-related laws to reflect evolving societal values and promote gender equality, for example by removing legal barriers to women's employment in security and defence forces.

This was the case in Senegal, where the National Defence Law was amended in 2008 to remove the requirement that recruits to certain paramilitary bodies, such as the gendarmerie, had to have completed military service – with the implication that only men could qualify. With the removal of this discriminatory condition, the revised law allows for women's equal access to the armed forces by making them eligible for any position.

Specifically addressing gender-based violence in national legislation
Gender and age both influence individual experiences of threat and insecurity. Effective security provision to men, women, boys and girls requires a robust legal framework that is not only non-discriminatory, but which also clearly criminalises all forms of gender-based violence. Sometimes, certain forms of GBV, such as domestic violence, are not explicitly criminalised because they are regarded as private matters. This makes preventing, responding to and prosecuting such violence difficult from a legal perspective; such loopholes in legislation leave victims unprotected and vulnerable to further violence.

Developing specific legislation on sexual and domestic violence
Legislation on sexual and domestic violence often constitutes a special area of focus, to ensure equal protection of women, men, girls and boys. Effective prevention, response and prosecution are only possible if an adequate legal framework is in place.

Experience shows that simply including domestic abuse and violence, and psychological, physical and sexual violence by an intimate partner, in more generic laws often fails to provide law enforcement and prosecutors with sufficient tools to fight these crimes. Instead, good practice recommends developing specific laws criminalising sexual violence committed inside and outside of the house, by family members as well as by strangers; and all forms of domestic violence. Such laws should also recognise aggravating factors, including sexual violence against underage boys and girls or domestic violence committed in front of children. For example, Sierra Leone passed a Domestic Violence Act[32] in 2007, which defines domestic violence as an offence and provides for protection orders, among other measures (Box 18).

Strategies to improve legislation in this regard may include:

- **Updating the legal definition of sexual and domestic violence,** for example by replacing the single crime of rape with a series of graded crimes and offences defined by the absence or presence of aggravating conditions; by explicitly criminalising marital rape; and/or by changing the consent standard to eliminate a requirement that the victim physically resist his/her attacker. Definitions of sexual violence should not be limited to cases where a particular sexual organ penetrates a particular orifice, and legislation should cover situations where the perpetrator(s) and/or the victim(s) are men, women, boys or girls, members of the public, security personnel, or detainees.

- **Criminalising other forms of GBV,** such as stalking, sexual harassment, harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation, and human trafficking.

- **Applying internationally agreed good practices** such as treating the complainant's credibility equally to that of complainants of other crimes, i.e. by eliminating requirements that the victim's testimony be corroborated and placing restrictions on the introduction of the victim's prior sexual conduct, and requiring active consent for lawful sexual acts.

- **Reforming laws, policies and practices to enable the removal of domestic violence perpetrators from the home,** e.g. by granting power to the police to issue temporary eviction or barring orders.

- Establishing legal provisions or the application of **special measures for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses.**

- **Removing mitigating factors** such as passion or honour, which downplay the seriousness of gender-related crimes.[33]

In addition to ensuring that the legal framework is adequate, it is also important to promote initiatives that increase access to justice for men, women, boys and girls across the country, including by raising awareness about rights and increasing legal entry points. The development and distribution of plain language or vernacular versions of relevant legislation may support these goals; along with legal literacy programmes and information campaigns informing people, including those that are illiterate, about their rights and how to approach the justice system. Such initiatives are often undertaken by CSOs, but can and should also be carried out by ministries of justice, parliaments or independent oversight institutions.

The impact of awareness-raising campaigns largely depends on their ability to reach relevant audiences, even in remote areas. In this regard, building partnerships with local structures can be helpful. For example:

- **Cooperatives of rural women/associations of women farmers:** In rural areas, women's cooperatives can serve to convene awareness-raising sessions. By partnering with these local associations, legal clinics operated by women's organisations based in cities can access networks of women who are otherwise difficult to make contact with.

- **Community radio:** Building partnerships with community radio stations can help women's organisations reach a broader audience, in the framework of rights awareness-raising campaigns.

- **Community and local opinion leaders:** Engaging with traditional chiefs, religious leaders, youth opinion leaders, or other respected and influential individuals at the community level can help to support awareness-raising campaigns. Opening a dialogue with these key local actors can be instrumental in ensuring that they do not act as spoilers. Going further, the successful engagement of community and local opinion leaders may induce their support.

Box 18: Addressing inequality through law-making in Sierra Leone

In an effort to address the various forms of inequality and marginalisation that affect women in Sierra Leone, and to improve the ability of police to respond to violations of women's rights, the following laws were passed between 2005 and 2009.

Law	Implications
Anti-Human Trafficking Act – 2005	Prevents the exploitation of men, women and children through movement from their original place of safe abode.
Domestic Violence Act – 2007	Criminalises domestic violence, and defines police actions to assist victims of domestic violence and the provision of legal redress.
Devolution of Estates Act – 2007	Makes provisions for estates to be devolved to women and makes it possible for women to inherit land and property.
Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorce Acts – 2009	Makes provisions for marriages contracted in customary/traditional rites to have legal recognition and bring them in line with civil, Christian and Muslim marriages and divorces.

Source: Miranda Gaanderse, *Security for All: West Africa's Good Practices on Gender in the Security Sector* (Geneva: DCAF, 2010), p.17.

Integrating the principles of gender equality in the national strategic framework for security: policy

While laws prescribe or prohibit certain behaviours, policies are used to articulate national priorities, identify key areas for reform, and guide the way these desired goals are achieved. As such, they also influence how national resources are used for the good of the state and the people.

5.1. Integrating gender into national security policy documents

National security policy is made by governments and expressed in different kinds of policy documents, ranging from national policies to strategies and action plans. Some states adopt overarching national security policy documents, such as the Côte d'Ivoire National Security Strategy for 2014 to 2024,[34] which set out and prioritise internal and external security threats as perceived by the government, as well as responses to these threats. In addition to or instead of such an umbrella policy, governments may develop other kinds of policy or strategy documents, such as sectoral policies for defence or other specific areas of security. Nigeria, for instance, adopted three different security strategies in 2015, including a National Security Strategy, a Counter Terrorism Strategy, and a Cyber Security Plan and Strategy.[35]

Other security policy documents may include strategies for SSR – either in the form of a cross-cutting SSR policy, if there is a comprehensive SSR process in place, or in the form one or several sectoral reform policies, such as a strategy for police reform.

The development of security policy offers an opportunity to define or update a common, national vision for security. It requires thorough analysis of the security environment and of the capacity of the security sector to respond to threats, to the needs of the state, and to the needs of the women, men, girls and boys that constitute the population. Taking the needs of all these groups into account makes policies not only more viable but also more truly national, in that the interest of the entire nation is served.

Box 19: Gender in the Côte d'Ivoire National SSR Strategy

The 2014 SSR strategy developed by Côte d'Ivoire incorporates gender mainstreaming as a guiding principle, in both its strategic objectives and in planned specific reform initiatives.

It states that "better knowledge and understanding of gender mainstreaming in the security sector in Côte d'Ivoire is an important goal. The objectives of the reform are effective mainstreaming of gender and empowerment of women and of traditional categories that have formerly been excluded from all components of the security sector in Côte d'Ivoire. Côte d'Ivoire will need to follow in the footsteps of countries that have established good practices in this regard."

The strategic objectives of the reform process include ensuring "a balanced representation of women in civil and military institutions". Gender-related planned reforms include:

• Developing a vigorous gender promotion policy based on the effective participation and empowerment of female personnel in security and defence institutions.

• Defining an integrated and holistic policy for raising public awareness, taking into consideration issues related to rural land tenure, gender, and HIV/AIDS.

• Mainstreaming gender into all activities related to the transformation and management of security sector institutions.

• Strengthening mechanisms for preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

Sources: Côte d'Ivoire National Security Council, Stratégie Nationale RSS (2014); Côte d'Ivoire National Security Council, "Les 108 réformes" (2014).

Although usually driven by the executive, security policy development should actively involve other stakeholders, such as parliament, local governments, non-state security actors and civil society. Limiting the actors involved may speed up the policymaking process, but broad consultations are likelier to result in a more relevant and sustainable outcome. Ensuring that the policy drafting body is representative in terms of women's and men's participation may also result in a more pertinent final product. Providing members of that body with training on gender and security will also improve their capacity to draft policy conducive to gender equality.

Good practice recommends that gender equality be explicitly included in security policy documents, as a policy goal, and not just indirectly addressed. Otherwise, policy implementers risk "forgetting" about this dimension of the policy and disregarding it. To facilitate effective implementation, the goal of gender equality should also be broken down and contextualised, for example by referring to non-discrimination and equal participation as core values and programmatic priorities.

Broadening the scope of policy from national security to human security, and seeking to address internal as well as external security threats, is another way to account for a broader range of needs. Gender-based violence may pose as much – or even more – of a threat to society than the risk of external aggression or terrorism, but this is often underappreciated by security policies. Nonetheless, there are recent examples of efforts in West Africa to address GBV through policymaking as well as legal and institutional reform (see Box 16 for the example of the Liberia rape law).

When policymaking is preceded by an assessment of the security situation and relevant institutions, that assessment should also offer information about existing inequalities by consistently disaggregating data by gender and age. This will give a fuller picture of the specific threats to women, men, boys and girls living in different parts of the country and belonging to different socio-economic groups, to allow for adaptive policy response.

For security policies to serve as effective tools for achieving gender equality, both men and women should be included in their implementation and monitoring. Sufficient resources must also be allocated for implementation of the policy, including for attaining all gender-related objectives.

> ## Box 20: Questions for national security policymaking
>
> These questions may serve as a (non-exhaustive) basis on which to assess whether national security policies effectively contribute towards gender equality:
>
> - Is the emphasis on national or human security? Have internal security threats and day-to-day threats to human security been considered?
>
> - Has the policy been developed in a participatory manner, with the inclusion of women's groups and other CSOs, staff from the ministry of women's affairs, female parliamentarians, and gender experts?
>
> - How does the policy address the particular security needs of women, men, girls and boys?
>
> - How does the policy address GBV?
>
> - How does the policy emphasise the importance of gender equality goals, including non-discrimination and the equal participation of men and women?
>
> - Is the policy formulated in gender inclusive or gender specific language, as relevant?
>
> - Is the policy in line with international, regional, and national legislation and policies on gender equality?
>
> - Will the policy be implemented, monitored and evaluated in an inclusive manner?
>
> Based on: Mugiho Takeshita, "Practice note 8," annex to Peter Albrecht and Karen Barnes, "National Security Policy-Making and Gender" in Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008).

5.2. National action plans to support implementation of the women, peace and security agenda

5.2.1. What are the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and National Action Plans?

In the context of UN-mandated SSR processes, the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) on women, peace and security define minimum standards related to gender equality. UNSCR 1325, adopted in 2000, is the most influential resolution, and many member states have subsequently adopted national action plans detailing how it is to be implemented. The UNSCRs cover five broad themes.

1. The inclusion of women in leadership positions and at all levels of decision-making processes related to SSR and the prevention, management and resolution of conflict.

2. The integration of gender perspectives into peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

3. The inclusion of more female professionals in peacekeeping and in the security sector.

4. The consideration of the different needs of women, men, girls and boys in all post-conflict processes.

5. The creation, in consultation with women, of reforms and mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual violence.[36]

National Action plans, or NAPs, "are a useful tool to integrate the obligations of SCR 1325 at policy and strategic levels. A NAP spells out the steps that a government is currently taking and those initiatives and activities that it will undertake within a given time frame to meet the obligations of the resolution. NAPs can help increase the comprehensiveness, coordination, awareness, ownership, accountability, and M&E of a government's women, peace and security activities. While SCR 1325 does not explicitly encourage states to develop a NAP, the UN Secretary-General has regularly issued calls for states to adopt one. [...]

All existing 1325 NAPs have different approaches and cover different thematic areas. While they generally address the prevention of GBV and the need for an increased representation of women in decision-

making, they vary as to whether and how they address such issues as DDR [disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration] and the inclusion of local women in peace processes."[37]

UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions are an example of international "soft law" that has been influential in shaping policy at the national level. Since it was adopted in 2000, twelve of the fifteen ECOWAS member states have developed NAPs for implementation of the resolution, which serve as tools for governments to set priorities and guide national policy and law-making (see Box 21). As a regional organisation, ECOWAS has also included a "Women, Peace and Security" component in its Conflict Prevention Framework (2008)

Box 21: National Action Plans for implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in ECOWAS member states

In moving from adhesion/ratification to actual country-level implementation, NAPs can effectively open doors that allow civil society to engage national authorities. NAPs are also helpful in facilitating the definition of country-specific goals by national stakeholders, and setting up participatory monitoring systems to track progress and identify reversals. In order to remain effective, NAPs should be reviewed periodically.

As of February 2016, the following ECOWAS member states had developed NAPs:

2008: Côte d'Ivoire   2012: Burkina Faso, Togo, Mali, Ghana

2009: Liberia, Guinea   2013: Nigeria

2010: Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau   2014: The Gambia

2011: Senegal

Source: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, "National Action Plans for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security" (2015), http://www.peacewomen.org/member-states.

5.2.2. How to develop national action plans on women, peace and security

National action plans on women, peace and security should be developed through consultative processes: Good practice recommends that a NAP be adopted by the executive, through a consultative process that invites a wide range of stakeholders to participate. In most West African countries, the drafting process has been led by ministries of gender, women, women's empowerment or social affairs, but has included a broad range of stakeholders, including ministries of defence, security and promotion of human rights, as well as parliaments. Such inclusive approaches help create ownership among a broad base of stakeholders. It is particularly important that civil society organisations, especially women's organisations, are provided substantial opportunities to partake in the development of NAPs. This strengthens the link between policymakers and the public and enhances the relevance of these policy instruments vis à vis the actual security concerns of women from all backgrounds.

As operational instruments, **NAPs should be context-specific** and should address the particular security challenges that are prevalent for women and girls in a given context. Experience shows that, especially in countries with limited resources, unfocused action plans that fail to prioritise based of the actual and most urgent needs of women and girls end up having little impact. An evidence-based assessment of the most pressing and pervasive challenges should guide the determination of which priorities the 1325 agenda may help to address. It is essential that such assessments are conducted by and with women and girls at all levels, and supported by specialists who have gender equality expertise.

While developing a NAP, good practice also recommends **planning from the outset for inclusive implementation, monitoring, and review mechanisms and processes.** Key points to consider include (but are not limited to):

• **Who will monitor NAP implementation?** Making this a shared responsibility between women and men at all levels may help to prompt or consolidate a collaborative approach to promoting gender equality. UNSCR 1325 NAPs should be regarded as a national endeavour that concerns men and women equally, and not as a "women's issue."

• **What indicators will be used for NAP monitoring?** How the data is going to be collected, and how to ensure that sex disaggregated data is available, are important considerations.

Box 22: Ghana's National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Beyond its National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325, Ghana adopted a three-year implementation plan in 2012. The NAPSs objectives include the:

• protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls in situations of conflict and in peace support operations;

• participation of women in conflict prevention, peace, and security institutions and processes; and

• prevention of violence against women including sexual, gender-based and conflict related violence.

In the framework of these objectives, Ghana's 2012-2014 implementation plan also sought to achieve the following tasks, which support the integration of gender equality principles into the armed forces and encourage the deployment of women to peacekeeping operations:

• review national security and defence sector policies to ensure alignment with global and national commitments to gender equality;

• evaluate all training materials to ensure gender mainstreaming;

• review conditions of service for peacekeepers to ensure that specific requirements for women such as clothing, equipment, monthly supplies, and separate facilities are addressed;

• establish a minimum target for the deployment of women to peacekeeping; and

• establish gender units i.e. teams of specialists who hold expertise on how gender affects security and the security sector within the Ministries of Defence and Interior to, among other things, oversee the recruitment and deployment of women to peacekeeping.

Source: DCAF, "Ghana: Gender-related Human Resources Policies in Armed Forces" in *Gender and Security Sector Reform Training Resource Package*, p. 5. Available at: http://www.gssrtraining.ch/images/stories/PDF/defensegender/Ghana-Human-Resource-Defence.pdf.

6

Fostering gender equality within security institutions

For the most part, security institutions in West Africa and elsewhere have long been and remain male-dominated environments, anchored in hyper-masculine cultures. However, it is becoming more and more clear that without the contribution of women as staff members and decision makers at all levels, security institutions are missing out on the wide range of skills and talents that women could bring to the table.

This section presents actions that can help to develop more inclusive and non-discriminatory security institutions by:

- **Building inclusive institutional cultures** that value the contributions of women as well as men, and establish clear standards of behaviour for all members of the institution;
- **Developing and enforcing institutional policies** for equal opportunity; zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based harassment, violence and abuse; and creating a culture of accountability;
- **Documenting and monitoring gender equality in security institutions,** so that leaders can manage transitions towards gender equality in the most accurate and effective way, taking into account the unique circumstances of their institution.

Complementing these points, the following section (7) will explore how effective mechanisms for democratic accountability can also support gender equality in the security sector.

6.1. Building an inclusive institutional culture within security institutions

The concept of institutional culture refers to the "collection of values, history and ways of doing things that forms the unstated 'rules of the game' in an institution."[38] It goes beyond formal policies, practices, and structures and defines what is valued in the institution, including the norms and kinds of behaviour that are implicitly expected from, accepted, or allowed for men and women.

Security institutions often have a culture that emphasises characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity, such as authority or physical strength. These cultures may be discriminatory, for example if degrading jokes about women and minorities are accepted, or even expected; or if women are informally limited to support roles or given less consideration in meetings and trainings. In the context of African and particularly West African societies, the sets of unwritten norms, codes of behaviour, and informal solidarities that underpin institutional cultures should also be reflected upon; these may be framed in the language of 'custom', 'tradition' or sometimes religion.[39]

Creating an inclusive culture is therefore an important step toward removing explicit and unspoken barriers to the full integration of women and members of minority groups in security institutions. Doing so requires expanding the concept of what is valued in the organisation, and shifting from masculine representations of strength and power towards an appreciation for diversity and the insights and experiences it brings to an institution.

Institutional culture develops and is upheld collectively, and as such, changing it also requires a collective effort. This may take time, but is possible with a strategy and commitment from senior leaders. The initial training or induction phase, when new personnel join an institution, is crucial to shaping their attitudes toward gender equality and interactions between male and female staff.

6.1.1. The importance of leadership in building an inclusive institutional culture

Box 23: Leading by example: the importance of role modelling for gender equality in security institutions

Seeing their leaders treat women with the same level of respect and consideration as men is often a more powerful incentive than policy to compel subordinates to treat both genders equally. Similarly, women in leadership positions can serve as role models for women subordinates. Not only can they play critical roles as mentors, but they can also demonstrate that it is possible for women to be successful in a given institutional setting.

As role models, senior leaders (both men and women) in security institutions who are willing to promote inclusive and respectful institutional cultures should **refrain from the following attitudes,** which send the wrong message and create a hostile work environment:

- Making sexist or inappropriate jokes, such as jokes that suggest the superiority of one gender compared to the other, ridicule notions of femininity, question the masculinity of certain men, or convey explicit sexual content or references;

- Referring to male or female colleagues through sexist, unprofessional and debasing titles, such as "honey", "sweetie", "beautiful", "girl", "boy", etc.;

- Adopting attitudes of "misplaced chivalry", which decrease the professional credibility of women by suggesting that they are weak or need to be "protected";

- Making inappropriate or sexualised comments on the looks of men or women, such as calling colleagues "sexy", "hot", "fat cow", "fat pig", etc.;

- Displaying images with sexual content (on screens, on objects, or in other visible ways), listening out loud to sexually explicit radio programmes or to music that has explicit lyrics, or engaging in actions that have a sexual connotation and affect the working environment of others.

Given the hierarchical nature of security institutions, it is important that each member of the chain of command leads by example as far as gender equality at his/her own level. Leaders at all levels must be aware that their own attitudes influence the work atmosphere and the mindsets of all their team members, men and women. Individuals in leadership position should not only refrain from sexist and inappropriate attitudes (such as those listed above), but must also react strongly to any such behaviour by their subordinates. It is essential to send the clear message that sexist and disrespectful comments or attitudes are contrary to the values of the institution and will not be tolerated.

The **management style, values and behaviour of senior leaders (men and women)** directly impacts institutional cultures. Leaders can contribute to a greater embrace of change and a shift in attitudes among their subordinates by exhibiting a personal commitment to reform through their own behaviour (see Box 23). In doing so, they act as positive **role models** for leaders in middle-ranking positions as well as other staff members. Senior leadership also has an important role to play in supporting and **facilitating practical initiatives to reinforce gender equality,** such as policy reviews or assessments. These leaders have the power to allocate the necessary resources to such measures, and to provide appropriate equipment and services for women and other underrepresented groups.[40]

It is the further responsibility of leadership to raise awareness among personnel about why it is important for an institution to consider the needs, concerns, and perceptions of both men and women, as well as those of minority groups.

In addition to senior leaders, middle-ranking managers or commanders also have a critical role to play in implementing reforms, changing institutional culture, and ensuring that women and men are given equal opportunities in a safe and healthy working environment. Leaders at all levels must be aware of their role and responsibilities in this respect and must have the necessary support, information, training and incentives to fulfil these responsibilities.

To strengthen their understanding of how to integrate gender equality into their work, security sector leaders can reach out to domestic or international experts in the civilian sector for advice, training, or mentoring, or to their peers in other institutions or countries to share experiences and good practices.

6.1.2. Developing awareness on gender within security institutions

Leadership committed to gender equality and institutional efforts to raise awareness among personnel at all levels are instrumental to correcting misconceptions about gender and opening the door to dialogue.

Building inclusive and non-discriminatory cultures within security institutions requires raising awareness not only among leaders, but among all staff members (men and women) about the root causes, manifestations, and impacts of gender inequality on their work.

The perception that 'gender is not an issue' prevents institutions and their members from addressing the systemic effects of gender inequality. It also gives rise to a hostile environment for anyone who wishes to talk about how gender bias, stereotypes and expectations affect their work, by creating the fear that raising concerns about equal treatment of men and women will make one look like a troublemaker. This is why fostering gender equality within security institutions requires documenting the impact of gender inequality in these institutions. Gender assessments and monitoring processes can provide an evidence base that supports decision-making and is also instrumental in raising awareness and building an agenda for security institutions to shift towards gender equal cultures, policies and practices (also see section 6.3.).

Basic training on gender, gender stereotypes, and gender bias can help raise the awareness of staff members (men and women) on how gender influences both their work environment and performance. Institutional leaders have a key role to play in ensuring that all staff members have a clear understanding of what is and is not permitted as far as gender-related attitudes. This includes clarifying what constitutes inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment, explaining gender related policies in terms that are easily accessible to a particular group of personnel, and making all necessary counsel available.

Leaders may consider organising **awareness-raising sessions,** either in response to particular incidents or as part of routine briefings, and including relevant lessons in their daily supervision of and guidance to subordinates. When meetings are organised following a particular event, it may be counterproductive to name and shame particular individuals; rather than focusing on individuals, it can be useful to reflect as a group on certain types of behaviours.

Another way to raise awareness of gender among staff within an institution is by giving men and women equal levels of visibility in the **language and images** that are used in internal communications. Research shows that the systematic use of masculine terms "for generic purposes can create barriers to women's equality and reinforce perceptions that women are less credible" or capable.[41] Similarly, visual internal communications should not only avoid representations featuring all men, but should avoid depicting women mainly or only in subordinate and support roles. As anecdotal as this may seem, representations play an important role in the development of institutional cultures, by shaping the thinking of staff members and defining expectations.

Box 24: Promoting and raising awareness on gender equality within security institutions through allies or champions

One way to encourage commitment among leaders to gender equality is through the selection of champions, allies or advocates within an institution – leaders who demonstrate a personal interest in reinforcing gender equality within the institution and are committed to actively raising awareness regarding equality and/or diversity. These champions may support such initiatives through their actions, for example by allocating resources to gender equality efforts, or by encouraging dialogue on opportunities and challenges for integrating gender equality.

Allies or champions have the advantage of being part of an institution and understanding the existing gender biases of its culture. In male-dominated security institutions, male gender champions are especially important because they can inspire and enable other men to tackle and eliminate the individual and institutional blind spots that prevent gender equality and provide the opportunity to build an equitable organisation.

Select champions may benefit from specialised training on gender equality and on strategies for reinforcing it, or mentoring by more senior gender champions.

6.1.3. Acknowledging and valuing expertise on gender as a professional skill

While all personnel should have a basic awareness of gender equality, security institutions can demonstrate further commitment to gender equality by encouraging staff members to develop expertise on gender and acknowledging the value that gender awareness and competencies add to the equity and performance of the institution. Subjecting promotion to criteria that include the respect of institutional values for gender equality is one way of doing so, as is the integration of gender into professional training programmes. Such measures help to communicate the institution's recognition that knowledge and competencies on gender qualify as valuable professional skills.

In this regard, training is crucial to providing security sector personnel with appropriate knowledge of what gender equality is, how it relates to their work, and how they can implement it in their daily tasks. Therefore, gender equality should be fully integrated into the training associated with all career paths within the security sector, starting with basic entry-level training and life-long in-service training for all personnel; but also in more specialised training adapted to the roles and levels of responsibility of those in leadership or oversight positions. Regardless of the form it takes, gender training is most effective when endorsed and encouraged by senior management.

Integrating modules on gender into professional training programmes can be a useful entry point to introduce the subject, explain what gender equality is, why it is relevant to the work of security sector

actors, and how it can be implemented practically in their work. Making basic gender training compulsory can help ensure that all staff members receive at least minimal information about the topic and have some awareness of what gender is and implies (see section 6.1.2.). As a matter of fact, clarifying key concepts and dispelling typical misconceptions is often necessary before trainees can understand why they must integrate a gender perspective into their daily work.

Beside specific gender modules, good practice recommends that all training take account of women and men as decision makers and staff members of security institutions; and of women, men, girls and boys as beneficiaries of security services and as potential offenders. This adds practical value to standalone training modules on the concept of gender, because it helps trainees understand how gender directly relates to all aspects of their work.

Gender training should, on the one hand, deliver certain defined content and knowledge. This usually includes the security needs of men, women, boys, and girls and how to identify them; the relevant institutional framework, including laws and policies; and methods for practically implementing these in everyday work.

However, effective gender **training should also aim to be transformative**, which means that it should seek to instil certain values. Interactive adult-learning methodologies are useful to engage training participants on issues that require them to question their current values and prejudices. Values relating to gender equality that security sector institutions may want their staff to endorse include:

- that men, women, boys and girls are all entitled to an equal level of security;
- that women and men should be able to work in any position or part of the institution;
- that the importance of upholding the chain of command implies it is unacceptable for a subordinate, man or woman, to refuse to take orders from a woman of higher rank; and
- that sexual harassment and abuse are unacceptable behaviours and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

It is particularly important that trainings themselves counter stereotypical assumptions about gender roles. For example, if training materials include pictures, these should show both men and women as security providers and as civilians. Trainers should also strive to use diverse examples and inclusive language to avoid reinforcing stereotypes (also see guidance on internal communication, in section 6.1.2.).

When integrating gender equality into training, it is sometimes useful to rely on external expertise from civil society, academia or other specialised institutions. However, inviting external actors to deliver one-off training modules is a common pitfall that may actually reinforce the impression that gender equality is something external (a "civilian thing") and not an integral part of security sector training and work. Instead, gender components should resemble other trainings as much as possible. If skilled gender trainers are available within institutions, empowering them to deliver training sessions to their peers may improve the receptiveness of participants. When necessary, external specialists may also be requested to support trainer development programmes, mentor newly trained gender trainers in preparing for and delivering courses, or advise on course material and training methodologies.

In addition to general training provided to all staff, it is important that those in leadership or oversight positions, as well as those working directly on sexual and gender-based violence, receive training that is specifically adapted to their roles and responsibilities. And beyond their participation in training events, **senior leaders may benefit from mentoring arrangements,** whereby they work one-on-one or in small groups with experienced peers to help them achieve specific goals, such as leading their staff toward better performance on gender equality. This approach is most effective when the mentor holds at least the same seniority as the colleagues they support. This may be less time-consuming than standardised training and more flexible, in that mentoring can be adapted to individual needs and priorities.

Security personnel assigned to work specifically on gender related questions, such as responding to sexual and domestic violence or handling internal complaints on discrimination or sexual harassment, should

receive tailored training. If there is an institutional policy against sexual harassment or discrimination, or a code of conduct addressing these issues, all staff should also be trained on the content and practical implications of these codes and policies.

6.1.4. Men and masculinities in the security sector

Box 25: Gender training for the police in Liberia

In the Liberian National Police (LNP), all recruits receive six hours of gender training on gender awareness and on the prevention and investigation of GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, over 350 officers who serve either as gender focal points or in the Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS) have received additional training. The 4-week WACPS course includes the following topics relevant for work on gender:

- The concept of gender, including gender analysis in LNP work (3 hours)
- Challenges around gender (6 hours)
- Introduction to human rights (7 hours)
- Overview of investigative techniques (15 hours)
- Introduction to criminal investigation (5 hours)
- Forensic awareness (3 hours)
- Case files (10 hours)
- Responding to domestic violence (3 hours)
- Crime scene management (10 hours)
- Domestic violence awareness (3 hours)
- Report writing (5 hours)
- Testifying in court (3 hours)
- Attending court hearings (5 hours)

Source: Miranda Gaanderse and Kristin Valasek (eds.), *The Security Sector and Gender in West Africa: A Survey of Police, Defence, Justice and Penal Services in ECOWAS States* (Geneva: DCAF, 2011), p. 21.

Masculinity refers to socially ascribed roles, characteristics, qualities and behaviours traditionally associated with men. While there are multiple ways of being a man, there tends to be one prevailing form of masculinity that is accepted and endorsed within specific socio-cultural contexts, a so-called "hegemonic masculinity". Security institutions have historically been the purview of men, and the ideals of hegemonic masculinity may thus be very dominant within them. This may make it hard for women to feel comfortable working in these institutions, or may lead to the exclusion of or discrimination against women.

However, the pressure for male conformity takes a toll on men as well. While cultural norms define masculinity as maintaining power over others along lines of age, class, ethnicity or sexuality, men who fall outside of this – for example by their appearance or behaviour – may face discrimination, harassment, bullying or abuse. Other men may not feel comfortable speaking out even if they disagree with such treatment, for fear of not conforming to the norm.

Another way in which gender inequality and macho representations of masculinity can have a negative effect on men is when male victims of crimes traditionally associated with women, such as sexual and domestic violence, are faced with stigma or ridiculed when they report such crimes.

Starting a conversation on gender and increasing the representation of women in the security sector creates space for men to challenge gender norms, too, and reduces the pressure on them to conform to macho expectations. This makes it easier to discuss issues such as gender-based bullying or violence against men. Ultimately, achieving gender equality is not possible without the active engagement of men, especially in male-dominated security sectors.

6.1.5. The danger of tokenism

Tokenism is the practice of including one or a few members of a minority in a group as a mere gesture, without affording them the power or authority other group members enjoy. This may be done, consciously or unconsciously, in an effort to portray signs of progressiveness, inclusiveness or diversity, instead of taking steps to remove barriers to the inclusion of women or minority groups, such as people with disabilities or different ethnic backgrounds or sexual orientations, in organisations (also see section 2.5. on "Participation, not tokenism").

A typical example of tokenism is the inclusion of a lower-ranking woman in a decision-making committee or management organ otherwise made up exclusively of higher-ranking men. While the presence of a woman may give the appearance of progressiveness, it is almost impossible for her to have any impact at all in that context. First, because both she and her colleagues may not perceive her as qualified to be included, and second because breaking rank in such hierarchical structures can lead to being labelled a troublemaker.

The use of tokens is particularly counterproductive because it does not address the root causes of gender inequality but rather covers over problems with the superficial inclusion of women, which cannot be considered true participation. The mere presence of women may give the false impression that women are represented and gender inequality is addressed; and this can give leaders the sense that nothing more needs to be done about women's participation, thus reinforcing the status quo.

When a woman is appointed to a specific position for the first time in the history of an institution, there is usually increased visibility and pressure on her to perform at an even higher level than men in similar positions. Appointing under-trained or under-skilled individuals in such instances sets them up to fail, with the risk that an individual's shortcomings are generalised as "proof" of women's incapacity to hold a position. This reinforces stereotypes and may lead to other women within the institution facing even higher barriers in the future.

Instead, an inclusive institutional culture supports the genuine equal participation of women and men, including by encouraging women to build their skills towards fully deserved promotions and opportunities.

Box 26: Women's staff associations in the security sector

It is essential that women working in the security sector are seen by their male colleagues as equal partners. Women's staff associations may contribute towards this objective by promoting women's rights, including support for the systematic integration of a gender perspective and the recruitment, promotion and training of women. Women's staff associations can also carry out networking activities to share experiences and skills. Across West Africa, formal and informal associations of women exist within security sector institutions – from associations of female police officers or wives of prison staff to women lawyers' associations. These associations undertake a number of different activities to support their members, but are often chiefly focused on social welfare issues such as providing financial and moral support in times of need, such as for weddings and funerals. Though social welfare issues are important, these associations can also be key actors in bringing about institutional change from within the security sector. They can advocate for the rights of female security sector personnel, provide a bridge between women's organisations and security sector institutions, and support the provision of security and justice to marginalised groups such as women and children.

Source: Miranda Gaanderse, *Security for All: West Africa's Good Practices on Gender in the Security Sector* (Geneva: DCAF, 2010).

6.1.6. Establishing a culture of accountability for sexual and gender-based harassment, violence, abuse and exploitation

In many West African countries, security institutions have a track record of unaddressed abuse and misconduct; as a consequence, they are viewed as having a culture of impunity. Efforts to build institutional credibility, and the trust and confidence of the population, demand that this actual or perceived culture of impunity is replaced with a culture of accountability. While section 7 focuses on the importance of external oversight for this purpose, this section looks at the role of internal oversight and accountability mechanisms.

While security institutions have a number of mechanisms for internal oversight and accountability, it is important that these mechanisms take into account specific challenges relating to gender as far as abuse and misconduct that occur both inside the institution (i.e. among personnel) and towards civilians.

For the purposes of this Tool, the generic term "sexual and gender-based harassment, violence and abuse" refers to different types of inappropriate and/or criminal behaviours, including but not limited to:

- All forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, gender or sexual orientation
- Sexual harassment, bullying or hazing either against women or against men, including bullying of a nature to ridicule a person's masculine or feminine identity[42]
- Sexual abuse of male or female colleagues
- Sexual exploitation of male or female civilians

Depending on national and institutional contexts, internal accountability can be enforced through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms, such as:

- **Chain of command:** In combat and operational branches of institutions, such as the police or the armed forces, each individual is accountable to a direct supervisor, who is in turn accountable to another supervisor at a higher level. The chain of command is a hierarchical order, typically rank-based, that plays a critical role in upholding discipline within the forces. This includes holding individuals accountable for any form of sexual and gender-based harassment, violence and abuse.

- **Management oversight:** In other branches of security institutions, such as administrative and civilian support functions, management oversight structures are again in place to hold each individual accountable to a direct supervisor. Supervisors are responsible for holding the individuals they supervise accountable for any form of sexual and gender-based harassment, violence and abuse.

- **Internal investigation services:** In many security institutions, specific units or departments are formally tasked with internal oversight. These may be services responsible for the conduct of internal investigations, such as inspector generals, internal affairs services ("the police of the police"), provost gendarmerie ("military police"), or similar outfits. These units have a significant role to play in maintaining high standards of behaviour within the forces by holding security personnel accountable for any form of sexual and gender-based harassment, violence and abuse. This requires taking complaints seriously, investigating them appropriately, and taking necessary measures to protect complainants from any form of retaliation.

- **Peer control:** Besides formal hierarchies and oversight structures, the informal dynamics at play within security institutions can also help to prevent serious misconduct. It is true that misplaced conceptions of "brotherly loyalty" and exclusively masculine conceptions of *esprit de corps* may incite members of a team to cover for the abusive or criminal behaviours of their teammates, thus perpetuating a culture of impunity. Leaders are challenged to reorient toward a positive conception of loyalty, by building a collective understanding of the harmful effects that abusive or criminal behaviours have not only on the victim but on the entire group. It is also necessary to encourage a culture in which female members of teams and units are fully integrated in *esprit de corps*, instead of being treated as late or disruptive additions to fundamentally male teams. From the perspective of leaders, this requires articulating the operational benefits that the unit gains from its female members, as well as the operational losses that come with sex- or gender-related victimisation.

When backed by high ethical values, unwritten rules of honour may discourage members of a team from engaging in inappropriate behaviour, which would isolate them from the rest of the group; especially if there is a clear sense that abuse and misconduct will not be tolerated either by the hierarchy or by peers in the group. This, however, clearly requires deep shifts in male-dominated institutional cultures.

Furthermore, establishing a culture of accountability requires confidence among personnel in the capacity of complaints mechanisms (see section 6.2.3., on complaints mechanisms). Combined with negative peer pressure dynamics, the lack of such confidence plays a significant role in the underreporting of incidents of sexual and gender-based harassment, violence and abuse; which in turn leads to a general underestimation of the pervasiveness of the problem (see section 6.3.).

6.2. Setting up and enforcing institutional policies supporting gender equality

Institutional policies give direction to the work of security institutions. To promote gender equality, all policy documents relevant to an institution should be reviewed to ensure that they are not discriminatory and that they provide for the needs of men and women as security service providers, and also that they are conducive to effective institutional response to the security needs of the population, including children, minority groups, people with disabilities and other persons in situations of vulnerability.

At an institutional level, this may entail assessing documents such as codes of conduct, human resource policies, and operational procedures to determine whether they adequately integrate gender equality or need to be updated. These reviews are ideally conducted by line ministries or by institutions themselves.

6.2.1. Overarching policies promoting gender equality

Many security institutions have adopted policies aimed at addressing different forms and manifestations of gender inequality, such as so-called "gender policies", equal opportunity policies, and policies prohibiting sexual and gender-based harassment, abuse and exploitation. These policies contribute to setting behavioural standards for all members of the institution and may promote gender equality in the provision of security services, in personnel management, or in other relevant areas. When such policies do exist, there should be clearly defined responsibilities as to their implementation and monitoring, and funding allocated for those purposes. Periodically, the policy should be reviewed to determine whether it has produced the desired effect, or if it should be updated or implemented differently.

Box 27: Gender policy review in the Sierra Leone Police

In 2014, the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) conducted a review of its Gender Mainstreaming Policy and its Policy on Sexual Exploitation, Harassment and Abuse, both of which were adopted in 2008.

The policy review was part of the mandate of the newly established Gender Unit to review all SLP policies from a gender perspective.

A technical committee was set up for the review, comprising thirteen internal and four external members. Internal members included staff from the Gender Unit as well as from the Legal and Justice, Human Resources, and Complaints, Discipline and Internal Investigations Departments. The external members were a gender consultant, a barrister, an academic, and a representative of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs.

The technical committee reviewed old policies and drafted updated policies, which were presented to the SLP Executive Management Board for deliberation and feedback. After incorporating this feedback, the technical committee presented new drafts to the board, which approved the revised versions.

As a final step, the revised policies were validated at a workshop attended by SLP staff from all regions as well as civil society representatives, the Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission, and the Gender Adviser to the President of the Republic.

The Executive Management Board is responsible for overall implementation of these policies, while the directors of all departments and all heads of units are responsible for implementation within their area of work.

Source: Project documentation from DCAF-SLP collaboration (2014).

6.2.2. Human resource policies: ensuring equal opportunity for women and men in access to security sector employment, career development and leadership positions

Discriminatory human resource policies and practices play a considerable role in limiting the access of women to security sector employment and limiting their professional development if they do manage to get hired. Sexist misconceptions and gender stereotypes – such as "women are emotional and therefore cannot be decisive leaders" – are often the root cause of policies and practices that exclude women from all or some categories of employment in security institutions.

In order to attract the most talented professionals, security institutions must go beyond simply opening membership to women and men alike; they must create employment conditions that allow women to remain in institutions (retention) and build long-term careers. In concrete terms, this means that men and women should be given equal opportunities to work at all levels of the institution, with no domains reserved to certain staff based on assumptions linked to sex or gender; and in particular that women should have equal opportunity to access and occupy leadership positions.

Women tend to be underrepresented in West African security institutions for a number of reasons. Recruitment schemes may fail to attract women or may discriminate against them, intentionally or unintentionally, due to explicit or implicit gender bias. Women who join security or defence forces may leave because of a hostile or unsupportive environment, sexual or gender-based harassment, discrimination, or because of the challenges related to combining a career in the security sector with social expectations and internalised roles as caregivers in the private sphere. (Men may also leave because of sexual and gender-based harassment, abuse or discrimination.) In terms of promotion, women are often deprived of opportunities to advance to higher ranks due to unfair rules, for example if promotion requires experience in combat roles that women are restricted from or if promotion is subject to conditions of uninterrupted working periods, which penalise women in the case of maternity.

In enhancing gender equality in human resource management, some of the key points to consider include the following:

Recruitment:

- **Set clear targets** for the number or proportion of women the institution aims to recruit. Whereas strict quotas can be controversial and may produce adverse effects, recruitment targets can help focus efforts and offer a clear goal to strive toward. Such targets also help to assert a commitment from the leadership of the institution. In order to support equal recruitment patterns, it may be useful to define targets per category of employment, so as to avoid massive recruitment of women as administrative and medical staff exclusively, for instance, or other statistical distortions that give a false sense of women's access to the entire security sector.

- **Encourage women to apply** for employment in the security sector by directing recruitment campaigns at women as well as men, including using pictures of women in promotional materials and advertising at places frequented by women. Advertisement slots on the radio or television should be aired in connection with programmes targeting women. Radio announcements should be delivered by female and male voices alike. The Armed forces of Burkina Faso (including the Gendarmerie), and the Gendarmerie of Senegal have set inspiring examples with media campaigns specifically targeting women for recruitment.

- **Update job descriptions** to include skills both traditionally associated with women – such as communication, teamwork, and the ability to de-escalate tense interpersonal situations – and traditionally associated with men – such as leadership, effectiveness and resistance to stress and pressure – in the requirements of jobs. It is also important to ensure that the language used by job descriptions does not suggest that the ideal candidate would be a man.

- Review **physical requirements and testing methods** to ensure that they are proportionate with the needs of the job, and not excessive. The idea is not to lower standards where those standards are appropriate for the job in question, but to ensure that tests do not discriminate against female candidates by over testing physical fitness or other features where it has no correlation with the actual operational needs of a position. Examples from West Africa include the Armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire and the Gendarmerie of Niger, which have adjusted physical requirements by sex, without prejudice to the degree of fitness effectively needed for the job.

- Consider providing **extra training** and mentoring support to promising women candidates, as an equal opportunity measure.

- **Establish vetting procedures that incorporate background checks on sexual and gender-based harassment, abuse and exploitation**. Good practice recommends subjecting recruits to background checks that verify any history of sexual or gender-based violence.

Retention:

- Create and enforce strict **policies against sexual and gender-based harassment and discrimination.**

- Provide equal **opportunities for training and career development** to women and men.

- **Strive to create family-friendly policies** that allow staff members to combine their professional and family responsibilities, such as:

  - Provisions for flexible working hours or part-time work for parents (fathers and mothers) or those caring for sick or elderly family members;

  - Paid maternity and paternity leave;

  - Provisions for lighter work for women who are pregnant or have recently given birth;

  - Time and facilities for breast-feeding during working hours;

  - Child-care facilities or contributions to child-care costs: for instance, the Gendarmerie in Niger has provided day-care and nursery facilities;

  - Flexibility in deployment to allow parents of young children to stay near their families.

- Ensure that there is appropriate **equipment and infrastructure** for both men and women, such as separate and safe accommodation, washing and changing facilities, and appropriate uniforms.

Promotion:

- **Open roles from which women are excluded** by law, providing equal access to men and women (see example of Senegal, Box 17)

- **Reconsider any restrictions, written or unwritten, to the promotion of female staff members,** like requirements for completing a certain number of years of service without interruption. Such requirements penalise female staff members who experience a pregnancy and also discourage male staff members from taking paternity leave, which accentuates the wrong perception that parenthood is a concern relevant only to women.

- Include both women and men on **promotion boards.**

- **Basing promotions on written tests,** as the Gendarmerie of Niger does, or on an appropriate blend of written and non-written tests, can help to reduce risks of subjective and discriminatory decisions. The Armed Forces of Senegal have also **adjusted physical tests by sex** for promotion purposes.

- Provide **support and mentoring** to women staff, for example by creating a mentoring programme and/ or a women's staff association. In Sierra Leone, a women's staff association provides mentoring for women recruits. The Togolese Armed Forces have also developed a fast-track promotion programme for women staff.

Box 28: Increasing the recruitment of women in the Senegalese armed forces

Women were first recruited into the Senegalese armed forces in 1984, and were trained as medical officers.

In 2008, in an effort to increase the representation of women in non-medical positions and to conform to national and international commitments relating to gender equality in the security sector, a new policy of gender integration was developed. This policy set a goal of recruiting 600 women over a 2-year period at all three levels of the armed forces – officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates. The 2008 recruitment goal was thus 300 new female recruits, with that quota broken down to the regional level.

Female recruits were first assessed against standard eligibility criteria and determined fit or unfit for further consideration. In all but one region, the number of women selected exceeded the regional quota, with a total of 520 women selected and 323 eventually incorporated into the 12th Instruction Battalion for basic training, and from there into different units (e.g. air force, navy, engineering) for further specialised training.

In many cases, women were acknowledged for their distinguished achievements during training, and for showing more commitment to their posts than male recruits. Thereby, the recruitment of women resulted in an improvement in the overall quality of soldiers in the armed forces.

Source: Miranda Gaanderse, *Security for All: West Africa's Good Practices on Gender in the Security Sector,* (Geneva: DCAF, 2010), p. 42.

6.2.3. Specific policies against sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse by service personnel and within security institutions

It is important for any security sector institution to take measures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based harassment and abuse, both within the institution itself and as regards the interaction between security and defence personnel and the general public.

Policies and prevention

To prevent sexual and gender-based harassment and abuse within institutions, it is important to have a clear policy or code of conduct that asserts the right of all staff to be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of sex, gender, ethnicity, religion or other personal characteristics; and which explicitly forbids all forms of harassment or abuse, including bullying, hazing and all forms psychological violence. The policy should also state the duty of managers and commanders to actively prevent such behaviour and to investigate complaints, the duty of bystanders and witnesses to intervene, and should convey that retaliation against complainants or witnesses will not be tolerated.

Policies against sexual and gender-based abuse and exploitation should address in clear terms:

- the types of behaviour that are prohibited;
- locations that are off limits for staff, if any (such as brothels);
- the procedures for complaints, investigation and reporting; and
- the responsibilities of witnesses to report, and of managers and commanders to prevent and punish, such behaviour.

Complaints mechanisms

There should be several channels by which complaints or reports of sexual harassment and abuse can be made, including through independent oversight bodies. Complaint procedures should be clearly set out in relevant policies. For internal complaints, it is important that the chain of command can be bypassed. Complainants should ideally have the option of being interviewed by a man or a woman, and in their own language. Some security institutions have procedures to allow for anonymous complaints.

The investigation of complaints should be confidential, transparent, fair, quick and thorough. There should be mechanisms in place to monitor complaints, their investigation and outcomes. Also see section 6.1.6. on "Establishing a culture of accountability for sexual and gender-based harassment, violence, abuse and exploitation".

In-house training and briefings on policy

Training is essential for promoting a healthy workplace environment free of discrimination and harassment. All staff should be trained so that they are aware of existing policies and their content, as well as of how to report harassment and abuse.

Supervisors should be trained specifically on their roles and responsibilities and on how to prevent, respond to, and investigate cases of sexual and gender-based harassment, violence, abuse and exploitation. Also see section 6.1.3. for more guidance on training as a means to support gender equality.

Victim support

Institutional policies must layout clear procedures for first responders and supervisors on how to ensure protection and support to victims without compromising investigations, for example referring victims to available medical, counselling, and advising services even if they choose not to file a formal complaint.

Institutional policies and the people responsible for their implementation should acknowledge that victims have a right to file complaints and receive necessary support; but also that this right is not an obligation. Practices such as blaming victims for not reporting incidents of sexual and gender-based harassment, violence, or abuse, or attempting to force them to do so when they have expressed the will not to, are harmful in that they perpetuate victimisation.

Moreover, if policies meant to protect complainants are to be effective, support services should also be made available to victims who do not report incidents immediately, but come forward years afterward.

For cases within security institutions, there should be procedures for quickly transferring complainants to other positions within the institution while the case is investigated, if needed. The risk of retaliation against complainants and witnesses should be anticipated and addressed.

Box 29: The Sexual Harassment Policy of the Armed Forces of Liberia

The Armed Forces of Liberia has a Sexual Harassment Policy contained in Chapter 3 of its Initial Early Training Soldiers Handbook Volume I (revised September 2007).

The Policy states that "sexual harassment is inappropriate and unacceptable conduct. Sexual harassment destroys teamwork and is detrimental to combat readiness." It defines sexual harassment and categorises it as verbal, non-verbal and physical contact. It also provides indicators of sexual harassment and suggests responses, including confronting a harasser, filing a complaint, and reporting harassment through the chain of command.

The chapter also has a section on "Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention." It defines sexual assault as "any behaviour of a sexual nature performed against another person against his or her will" and rape as "sexual intercourse by force and without consent." It also states that these crimes are punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and local civilian laws – carrying penalties that may include confinement, dishonourable discharge, and forfeiture of all pay and allowances.

Source: Miranda Gaanderse and Kristin Valasek (eds.), *The Security Sector and Gender in West Africa. A survey of police, defence, justice and penal services in ECOWAS states* (Geneva: DCAF, 2011), p. 149.

6.2.4. Reinforcing institutional capacity for gender equality through specialised structures or teams: the opportunities for and challenges of establishing gender units or focal points

When aiming to incorporate the principles of gender equality into their work and practices, security institutions can either choose to establish a specialised structure or role, such as a gender unit or gender focal point, or to give the responsibility of implementation and monitoring to already existing bodies.

Establishing specialised *gender units or focal points* is one of the ways an institution may develop its expertise and improve its performance as far as gender equality. The responsibilities of specialised units and focal points can include ensuring that policies, codes of conduct, and regulations pertaining to gender are implemented, and that gender is mainstreamed in the institution. They can also play a strategic role in raising awareness on gender within the institution, or in serving as conduits for developing gender expertise within the security sector. However, it is important for decision-makers to be fully aware of the advantages and disadvantages of such specialised units.

The creation of specialised units or positions has several advantages, notably:
- the creation of a pool of gender experts;
- an increased strategic focus on gender;
- enhanced co-ordination and engagement across different divisions;
- the attraction of dedicated funding for integrating gender; and
- the reinforcement of collaboration with external gender/oversight actors.

On the other hand, several disadvantages should be also be noted, including that these units or positions:
- may lack seniority and credibility;
- can create a perception in other parts of the institution that "someone else" is responsible for gender mainstreaming, leading to disengagement from the effort by most of the personnel;
- risk having unclear mandates or overlapping ambiguously with other existing bodies; and
- are often under-resourced compared to other units.[43]

The existence of a gender unit or focal point does not mean that other units cannot have roles and responsibilities in implementing gender equality within the institution. Whatever arrangement is chosen, these responsibilities should be clearly defined and adequate resources allocated to implementation.

> **Box 30: The Liberia National Police Gender Affairs Section**
>
> The Liberia National Police (LNP) adopted its Gender Policy in 2005, and in 2008 established a Gender Affairs Section to support, monitor, advise, and report on implementation of the Gender Policy. With seven staff members, the Gender Affairs Section promotes the recruitment of women, supports capacity-building for female staff and the incorporation of gender training into the police academy, raises awareness both within the police and among the general public on the Gender Policy and violence against women and children, and broadly monitors the integration of gender into LNP policies, guidelines and programmes. The Gender Affairs Section also responds to complaints against police personnel of sexual harassment, domestic violence, and persistent non-payment of mandatory child support.
>
> *Source:* Miranda Gaanderse and Kristin Valasek (eds.), *The Security Sector and Gender in West Africa: A Survey of Police, Defence, Justice and Penal Services in ECOWAS States* (Geneva: DCAF, 2011), p. 146.

6.3. Documenting and monitoring gender inequalities in security institutions to support effective and non-discriminatory decision-making

The implementation of relevant measures to promote gender equality and sustain progress towards this objective requires that institutional leaders can rely on accurate and up to date information on the causes, manifestations and impacts of gender inequality in their institutions. Conducting gender assessments and/or integrating gender into their plans for monitoring how reforms and policies are implemented can help capture a fuller picture of the progress made and the challenges remaining.

6.3.1. Conducting gender audits and assessments of security institutions

A gender audit or assessment a can be a useful first step to establish the extent to which gender equality is already built into the core values and functional routines of an institution, and what challenges must still be addressed. It serves as a basis for identifying key areas for improvement, in an effort to build fair, effective and non-discriminatory security institutions.

Gender audits or assessments may vary in scope, looking at one or several aspects of gender equality within an institution or within particular parts of it. General areas that may be assessed include effectiveness of service provision, policy framework, relationship with the community, accountability and oversight mechanisms, human resource management, and institutional culture.

For an audit or assessment to be useful, it should be followed up by an action plan that addresses identified weaknesses. As the plan is implemented, systematic monitoring and evaluation will indicate what progress has been made and if adjustments need to be made to the action plan.

Who should conduct the audit or assessment?
An internal or external team may be tasked with conducting the audit or assessment. Both options have advantages and limitations, summarised in Box 31, which serves as a guide to choosing the formula that best fits the circumstances and purpose of an assessment.

If an internal team undertakes the assessment, the institution may seek support from an external gender specialist to advise and strengthen the team. Regardless of whether the assessment team is internal or external, ownership by and support from leaders within the institution is critical both to facilitating the collection of information and ensuring that findings are taken seriously and built upon for improvement.

Box 31: Advantages and disadvantages of internal and external gender assessment teams

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Internal assessment team	• May be less expensive and more straightforward. • Knowledge of internal structures, procedures and hierarchies. • May be taken more seriously, depending upon the seniority and influence of working group members.	• Inexperience in conducting gender assessments. • Lack of independence. • Fear of being too critical. • Potential barriers to collecting information from persons of higher rank and/or different divisions.
External assessment team	• More independent point of view, potentially broader perspective. • Less fear of consequences when being critical about internal processes. • Expertise and experience in conducting gender assessments.	• Lack of understanding of how the institution works. • Potentially less able to enlist staff cooperation in and ownership of the process. • Lack of a common vision/goal and potentially more limited interpretation of outcomes.

Source: Megan Bastick, *Gender Self-Assessment guide for the Police, Armed Forces and Justice Sector* (Geneva: DCAF, 2011).

How to conduct an institutional gender assessment or self-assessment

Steps for conducting an institutional gender assessment or self-assessment may include:

- **Considering the benefits and risks** of carrying out the assessment. Benefits may include demonstrating a commitment to high-quality standards and creating a basis for improvements, whereas uncovering dysfunctions poses a risk if there are no resources or will to follow up with action.

- **Obtaining authorisation and/or buy-in from relevant stakeholders**. Unless senior leadership is on board, securing the resources, staff time, or information necessary to conduct an assessment will be difficult. The findings of an assessment may also be ignored if there was insufficient ownership of the process from the start, possibly resulting in increased frustration among staff members suffering discrimination and other forms of unfair treatment on the basis of sex or gender.

- **Organising the work**. Assessment teams are responsible for determining a work plan with defined deadlines and responsibilities, preparing a budget, and ensuring that necessary funding to cover assessment costs is secured. Depending on the scope of the assessment, it may also be necessary to develop a communication plan that defines what information to share with staff, how and when to share it, and who should share it.

- **Defining the type of information required to meet the objectives of the assessment.** The assessment team must write guiding assessment questions and identify information sources. Key questions may include:

  - How does the institution treat women and men as employees?

  - How does the institution treat women, men, girls and boys who are trying to use its services?

  - What elements are available to assess whether or not women and men participate equally in decision-making within the institution?

  - What mechanisms are in place to ensure equal representation of men and women at all levels of the institution?

- What human resource policies and practices are in place, which encourage the recruitment, retention and advancement of women?

- What policies and mechanisms are in place to prevent and address sexual harassment, discrimination and violence?

- Which technical capacities does the institution have to effectively address gender inequality in the framework of its mandate?

- How does the institution integrate concerns of gender equality and inequality into the training of staff?

- To what extent and how does the institution currently mainstream gender into its policies, programmes and initiatives?

- What indicators are available to assess the extent to which the funding allocated to addressing gender inequality in the work and functioning of the institution is adequate?

- **Collecting information.** A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods should be used. Quantitative methods, such as examining recruitment and salary statistics, provide numbers that can be used as a baseline for improvement; whereas qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, are more useful to understanding underlying reasons, for example why women leave the security forces. Common methods for collecting information include document review, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, site visits, community group interviews, and surveys.

- **Analysing the information and reporting on findings.** Analysis may require additional interviews to clear up questions with the data. Findings and recommendations should be gathered in a report that is discussed with relevant senior management, formally accepted by the institution, and presented to staff and other relevant stakeholders.[44]

Box 32: The institutional self-assessment of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP)

The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) began a reform process in 1997. As part of this process, the service developed a number of key policies that seek to promote gender equality and improve its responsiveness to the security needs of men, women, boys and girls.

In 2011, the SLP undertook an institutional gender self-assessment to measure its achievements to date in integrating the principles of gender equality into its reform process, and identify remaining gaps as well as good practices to inform the ongoing restructuring.

The self-assessment was conducted from May to October 2011 by a 10-member working group within the SLP, comprising personnel from different departments with varied ranks, expertise and length of service. The SLP working group was supported by a local external consultant who specialised in gender equality and had considerable experience supporting security institutions in this area. The methodology used to collect data included both qualitative (literature review, focus groups and interviews) and quantitative (survey) methods. The assessment covered the following dimensions:

- Performance effectiveness

- Laws, policies and planning

- Community relations

- Accountability and oversight

- Personnel

- Institutional culture

In addition to this self-assessment, gender equality was identified as priority for future reform and institutional development activities. Follow-up initiatives have included the establishment of a Gender Unit in 2012 as well as the review of institutional policies on gender mainstreaming and on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. New policies were adopted in 2014, followed by a re-organisation of the Gender Unit and Family Support Units under a single Gender Directorate.

6.3.2. Ongoing monitoring of gender equality in security institutions

Monitoring gender equality as a part of internal oversight or human resource management systems may help to follow how men and women are treated within an institution in areas such as promotion, retention and advancement, as well as whether they get equal pay for equal work and whether cases of discrimination and harassment are effectively addressed.

There are different methodologies for organising this monitoring and integrating it into institutional processes. Overall, the following types of sex-disaggregated data should be systematically collected as part of ongoing monitoring of gender equality within institutions:

Recruitment

- Data on the sex of candidates should be collected at every stage of the recruitment process, comparing the percentages of women and men who make it through each stage and examining barriers to underrepresented groups.
- Data on staff diversity, including on the representation of women and men in particular services and roles, should be used in recruitment decisions.
- The recruitment programme should be periodically reviewed against its targets, investigating reasons why any are not being met and identifying solutions.

Assignment, career development, deployment, promotion and salaries

- Statistics about all personnel (women and men) should be collected and analysed at all stages of their careers, including:
  - the percentages of women and men at every rank;
  - the units in which women and men are serving, with special attention paid to the percentage of women in specialised functions;
  - the participation rates of women and men in specialist training, mentoring and leadership programmes;
  - the deployment rates of women and men;
  - the respective salaries of women and men of the same rank;
  - applications made by and grants afforded to women and men for family-friendly provisions;
  - the retention rates of women and men; and
  - the reasons given by women and men for dropping out of training or leaving the service.
- Reports on the progress made on gender equality across a range of key indicators should be periodically issued.

In addition, security institutions should strive to monitor gender-related complaints through mechanisms such as the following:

- Regularly reviewing records of complaints of sexual discrimination, harassment, bullying and abuse to identify trends and check the timeliness, consistency, transparency and equity of procedures and sanctions. If there is a disproportionate abandonment of complaints, failure to investigate, failure to find complaints substantiated, or failure to discipline perpetrators appropriately, investigate the reasons behind this. Doing this requires that:
  - records are kept of all complaints of sexual discrimination, harassment, bullying and abuse, as well as of investigations, findings and their resolution;
  - definitions of various types of misconduct (for example, sexual harassment and sexual abuse) and of available resolutions (substantiated or unsubstantiated) are standardised to ensure that data can be compared.

- Scrutinising whether individuals who have made complaints may have been subjected to retaliation.
- Publishing statistics about the number of sexual discrimination, harassment, bullying and abuse complaints received, as well as the nature of the complaints and their consequences (without disclosing any details that could identify victims or accused (but not convicted) perpetrators).[45]

Integrating the principles of gender equality into external oversight of the security sector

Women and men from all backgrounds must have equal access to accountability mechanisms, otherwise the security sector risks reinforcing existing gender inequalities by allowing more powerful members of society (including security institutions' own staff) to dominate others.[46]

Increased accountability of the security sector is, alongside effectiveness, one of the main goals of SSR. Indeed, the ECOWAS Policy Framework on SSRG advocates for the establishment of democratic control and oversight institutions as essential to this framework. These accountability mechanisms are necessary to hold security sector institutions and personnel responsible for their actions, to verify whether they work effectively and efficiently, and to ensure they abide by the rule of law. Such mechanisms also serve to prevent discrimination, corruption and abuse of power.

Specific accountability mechanisms vary between ECOWAS member states as well as between specific institutions within a country, but they always include both internal and external oversight mechanisms.

Internal oversight and control is exercised within institutions themselves, by managers, commanders, inspectorates, internal audit services or special courts (see section 6.1.6. and box 29). Line ministries also exercise control and oversight over security sector institutions under their authority.

External oversight of security institutions is provided by a number of actors, including parliaments, judiciaries, national ombuds and human rights institutions (NHRIs), national anti-corruption bodies, and national audit offices. Civil society, including the media, also has an important role to play in external oversight of the security sector in a democracy.

Incorporating the principles of gender equality into internal and external oversight helps ensure that:

• Security institutions perform their missions effectively, taking into account the security needs of men, women, boys and girls.

• Institutions are representative of the population they serve and benefit from the capabilities of both women and men.

- Sexual and gender-based harassment, discrimination and abuse within institutions is prevented and addressed.
- Misconduct, exploitation and abuse by security sector staff towards the public is prevented and addressed.

Issues relating to internal oversight of security institutions were addressed above (see section 6.1.6.), so this section will focus on providing tips and suggestions of possible entry points for integrating gender into the work of external oversight actors. It will also address oversight of security actors that are often ignored, such as intelligence services, local and traditional justice and security providers, and private security companies.

7.1. Gender equality, parliamentary oversight of the security sector and legislative processes affecting security

7.1.1. Integrating the principles of gender equality at all levels of parliamentary oversight

Although they differ greatly depending on the political system, parliaments have some common characteristics. Parliamentary oversight begins with the legislative authority to make laws and approve government policies and a national budget, and continues with the corresponding authority to oversee how these are put into practice. These responsibilities are implemented through three complementary levels of action (plenary sessions, committees, and individual actions undertaken by parliamentarians), which all come with a particular set of tools.

For more information, see Tool 5 on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector

Parliaments can also use these three main levels of action to improve the ways in which parliamentary oversight of the security sector takes gender into consideration, including by:

At the level of the plenary:

- Creating gender caucuses aimed at bringing together male and female MPs to support the integration of a gender perspective in parliamentary work.
- Creating women's caucuses or groups for women in parliament, to increase their visibility and leverage.
- Making background checks a requirement for endorsing government propositions for top appointments in the security sector.
- Requesting that government report on the gender composition of security sector personnel, and propose plans for working toward equal access and opportunity for women and men.
- Requesting that government report on the gender breakdown of troops sent abroad (usually to peacekeeping missions) and on the treatment of potential cases of sexual misconduct, abuse or exploitation by troops abroad.
- Requesting that government report on the proportion of public funds used to prevent and respond to sexist and sexual crimes and other forms of GBV.

At the level of committees, especially defence and security committees:

- Working with civil society organisations, especially women's organisations, to ensure that laws and policies respond to the need of all members of the population.
- Working with human rights commissions to monitor human rights violations, discrimination, sexual harassment, or abuse by public and private security providers.
- Consulting with external stakeholders, including urban and rural women's organisations, to get broad-based input on security policies, through hearings or field meetings with communities.
- Requesting the support of gender specialists for committee work.

- Organising hearings and enquiries to gather information from relevant government officials and non-governmental experts on the ways in which gender affects security across the country or in a particular part of the country.
- Conducting or commissioning professional analysis of the potential negative and positive impacts that draft laws of proposed government policies relating to security may have on men, women, boys and girls.
- Conducting visits and inspections of security services in the field, such as visits of detention venues to assess the detention conditions of women, men, girls and boys, and the working conditions of men and women security personnel.

At the level of individual MPs:

- Proposing legislation aimed at addressing the security and justice needs of women, men, girls and boys (see Box 34 for an example).
- Making public statements in support of equal access of men, women, boys and girls to effective and accountable security services.
- Raising awareness among constituents on gender and security problems, and bringing the input of their constituency to national debates in parliament.
- Asking verbal or written questions about the impact of particular practices of security institutions or private security actors on women, men, girls or boys across the country or in a particular area.

As a key oversight actor, and by using the different powers at their disposal, parliaments have a responsibility to ensure that the security sector responds to the needs of the whole population, including men, women, boys and girls. Furthermore, parliaments can push for an increase in the representation of women, and for the mainstreaming of gender equality, in security institutions.

Box 33: Parliamentary functions for security governance

As elected representatives of the people, parliamentarians play a crucial part in ensuring democratic governance of the security sector. This role varies from one country to another, but typically includes a mandate to carry out:

- **Legislative functions** – Parliaments pass the laws that govern the security sector, including the mandates, powers and organisation of each institution.

- **Budgetary functions** – Parliaments scrutinise and approve, amend or reject the budgets that allow the security sector to function.

- **Oversight functions** – Parliaments oversee the work of the executive and of security institutions, making sure that these institutions work in accordance with the law. They also oversee the execution of national budget allocation to these institutions.

- **Representative functions** – Parliaments act as fora for public discussion and debate on security issues and ensure that the views of the people are considered in policymaking.

- **Elective functions** – Some parliaments have the right to veto or approve appointments within the security sector, and/or to vote non-confidence if they disagree with government decisions.

7.1.2. Integrating the principles of gender equality throughout the legislative process

Depending on the political system, the initiative to review laws or propose new ones may come from the executive or the parliament, with line ministries playing an important role in revising and drafting legislation. Parliaments play an important role in adopting the laws governing security institutions. As such, they are typically mandated to:

- review and propose amendments to existing bills that are discriminatory or do not adequately take account of the different needs of men, women, boys, girls or gender minorities;
- initiate new bills aimed at filling legal gaps; or
- encourage the executive to develop new draft laws and/or review outdated laws.

Using inclusive or specific language, as relevant

One practical way to make laws more inclusive is to formulate them in a way that does not exclude men or women, or give the impression that they only apply to a part of the population. In order to avoid exclusion and discrimination, security legislation – and policy – should use language which acknowledges that society, as well as any specific institution, is made up of different groups with different needs. Appropriate language may also serve as a reminder that certain positions within the security sector are not reserved for men or women only.

Concretely, this means avoiding terms that exclude women from certain types of employment, for example by using "police officer" instead of "policeman;" or avoiding masculine pronouns in situations where the gender of the subject is variable, for instance by using "she/he" or "he/she" instead of "he;" and using "his/her" or "her/his" instead of "his."

Here are a few other examples of gender inclusive language:
- use "staffing" instead of "manning" positions
- use "personnel," "staff members," or "servicemen and servicewomen" instead of "servicemen"
- use "labour" or "workforce" instead of "manpower"
- use "chair" or "chairperson" instead of "chairman"
- use "ombudsperson" instead of "ombudsman"
- use "troops" instead of "boys"

Depending on the context, gender-specific language that explicitly mentions men and women (and boys and girls, if relevant), can be more appropriate in order to acknowledge that certain threats or risks impact individuals differently due to social characteristics associated with their gender. For example, explicitly breaking down generic terms such as "people" or "population" into "men and women" or "men, women, boys and girls" may help to maintain an awareness of the fact that the group being referred to is not homogeneous, which may have operational implications for security institutions and other actors involved in the delivery of security.

Guiding questions for verifying that the legislative process takes gender equality into consideration

Some guiding questions that can help assess and improve gender equality in the legislative process include (but are not limited to) the following:

- What is the proportion of women in parliament, and how does this affect the treatment of gender-related security issues by individual members of parliament (MPs), in commissions and in the plenary?
- Are women part of decision-making bodies in parliament, such as the Bureau of the Speaker; or do they hold leadership positions in committees and in parliamentary groups?
- Have all MPs benefitted from (at least basic) gender training and awareness raising? Do they have access to documentation and knowledge products on gender and on how it affects state and human security?

- Does the parliament have a gender caucus, a caucus of women parliamentarians, or any similar internal group that could champion the gender equality agenda?

- Do key parliamentary commissions mandated for defence and security affairs have the necessary capacity to mainstream a gender perspective into their work?

- Do parliamentary commissions mandated for gender, women's empowerment, or equal opportunity have sufficient capacity to analyse draft laws on defence, security and justice from a gender perspective? Do they have the access needed to input the outcomes of such gender analysis into the legislative process at a stage at which it can be taken into account?

- Do the parliamentary commissions mandated for the initial review of draft laws have sufficient capacity to systematically assess the potential impact of draft laws submitted to them on the safety and security of men, women, boys and girls?

- Do all MPs and parliamentary commissions have sufficient access to outside expertise, to support them in integrating a gender perspective throughout the legislative process in a substantial manner?

- Does parliamentary leadership take seriously the draft laws initiated by members of parliament on issues related to gender and security?

- Is there a tradition or practice of effective use by MPs of legislative tools, such as amendments, to correct discriminatory laws?

Box 34: Supporting legislative processes with public consultations on violence against women and girls – an example from Togo

Holding public hearings can help parliaments assess and document the need for legal evolutions. In 2010, women parliamentarians in Togo organised national consultations on violence against women and girls, with support from international partners, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Using their leadership positions within parliament, women such as the Vice-Chair of the Parliament and Chair of the Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights mobilised support from international partners as well as from national stakeholders inside and outside of the National Assembly.

The outcomes of this national consultation process, which covered all regions and provinces of the country, informed the development of proposed legislation on violence against women and girls, a first of its kind. An inclusive redaction team, including women's rights activists, independent gender and legal specialists, technical advisers from the Ministry of Women's promotion, and a core group of male and female members of parliament from different political parties, was put in place to develop its content. The final version was reviewed during a one-week retreat of the redaction team, before being presented to the National Assembly. Although the law has not yet been adopted at the time of this writing, this process served to put the issue of violence against women and girls on the agenda of the National Assembly, and provided other stakeholders with an entry point for advocating for legal improvements.

7.1.3. Addressing the challenge of parliamentary awareness and capacity

Limited technical capacity sometimes prevents parliaments from integrating the principles of gender equality into their security-related work in an efficient manner.

When this is the case, several measures may be helpful, such as:

- Training for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, especially members of defence and security committees, on gender and how it affects the security of men, women, boys and girls, as well as how it affects the functioning of security institutions;

- Explicit inclusion of the responsibility to monitor how the security sector addresses gender inequality in the mandate of defence and security committees;

- Awareness raising among all members and staff of parliament (men and women) on gender equality, and on gender roles, gender stereotypes and gender bias that affect the security of men, women, boys and girls and impact parliamentary processes on security.

Parliamentary awareness raising is particularly important, and best complemented by diversity of representation in the parliament (see section 7.1.4 below).

How civil society can contribute to integrating gender equality into legislative processes
As discussed in chapter 4, civil society actors can advocate for the review of the existing legal framework or the adoption of new legislation to support gender equality in the security sector.

Even laws that do not specifically aim to address gender inequality may have different intended or unintended consequences for women and men, or girls and boys. It is therefore important that those involved in drafting laws – be it ministry staff, members of parliament, or independent legal experts – have the capacity to understand these different effects and take them into account, as to not unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities. Ways to avoid such shortcomings include providing gender training to men and women who take part in the drafting process. Involving different stakeholders in the process can also bring added value; civil society organisations can provide unique input and expertise in this regard, as in the Liberian case described in Box 16. Box 35 also provides guidance on civil society contribution to the legislative process. Other potential partners include ministries responsible for gender, independent gender experts, and male and female staff of security institutions.

Box 35: Making the skills and expertise of civil society available to parliaments

"Parliamentary committees may also request the advice of civil society experts during the drafting and evaluation of legislation, state budgets, or certain public policies. For example:

[...]

If there is a commission specifically responsible for gender, which goes well beyond the issue of women's rights, it can enrich its work by seeking information from research institutes and women's rights organisations on the sex and age distribution of victims of certain crimes, or the factors explaining the prevalence of criminality within certain identified social groups. This information may help committees formulate recommendations to governments for policies for prevention, protection and response that are better adapted to each need."

Source: Augustin Loada and Ornella Moderan, "Civil Society Involvement in Security Sector Reform and Governance" in Ornella Moderan (ed.) *Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa,* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

7.1.4. Improving women's representation in West African parliaments

Awareness raising on the impact of gender on security, and increased representation and participation of women in parliaments, are instrumental to improving the responsiveness of parliamentary oversight to the security needs of men, women, boys and girls. Increasing the representativeness of parliaments also increases their legitimacy and is an important step towards equal participation in security sector supervision at a political level.

Women's representation in West African parliaments is increasing, but remains low, with a regional average of 14.6% women in parliaments in 2016 (see Box 36). Acknowledging the benefits of more inclusive and representative parliaments and taking into account their own unique contexts, West African countries have used various strategies to increase the participation of women in parliaments, including:

- Working with civil society to implement programmes to encourage and equip women to run for office;
- Providing incentives to political parties to nominate women for office;
- Creating women's caucuses through which women parliamentarians can support and cooperate with each other;
- Introducing quotas reserving seats for women in parliament, in the Constitution, political party legislation or election laws, and setting up appropriate support mechanisms to empower elected women to build and sustain credibility with their peers;
- Assessing the gender implications of electoral systems, and modifying them if necessary;
- Mentoring by experienced women parliamentarians for less experienced or aspiring ones.[47]

Box 36: Women in parliament in West Africa in 1995 and 2016

The proportion of women in West African parliaments has increased significantly over the past 20 years.

Senegal has the second highest number of women in parliament in Africa, and ranks sixth in the world. Senegal's 2012 amended election law introduced a quota, requiring that all party lists be composed of equal numbers of women and men, and that they alternate men and women. Lists that do not fulfil these criteria are not allowed to contest elections.

Country	% of women in 2016	% of women in 1995
Senegal	42.7	11.7
Guinea	21.9	7
Cape Verde	20.8	11.1
Togo	17.6	1.2
Guinea-Bissau	13.7	10
Burkina Faso	13.3	8.8
Niger	13.3	3.6
Sierra Leone	12.4	6.3
Liberia	11	5.7
Ghana	10.9	8
Mali	9.5	2.3
The Gambia	9.4	7.8
Côte d'Ivoire	9.2	8
Benin	8.4	6
Nigeria	5.6	3.2
Average	14.6	6.7
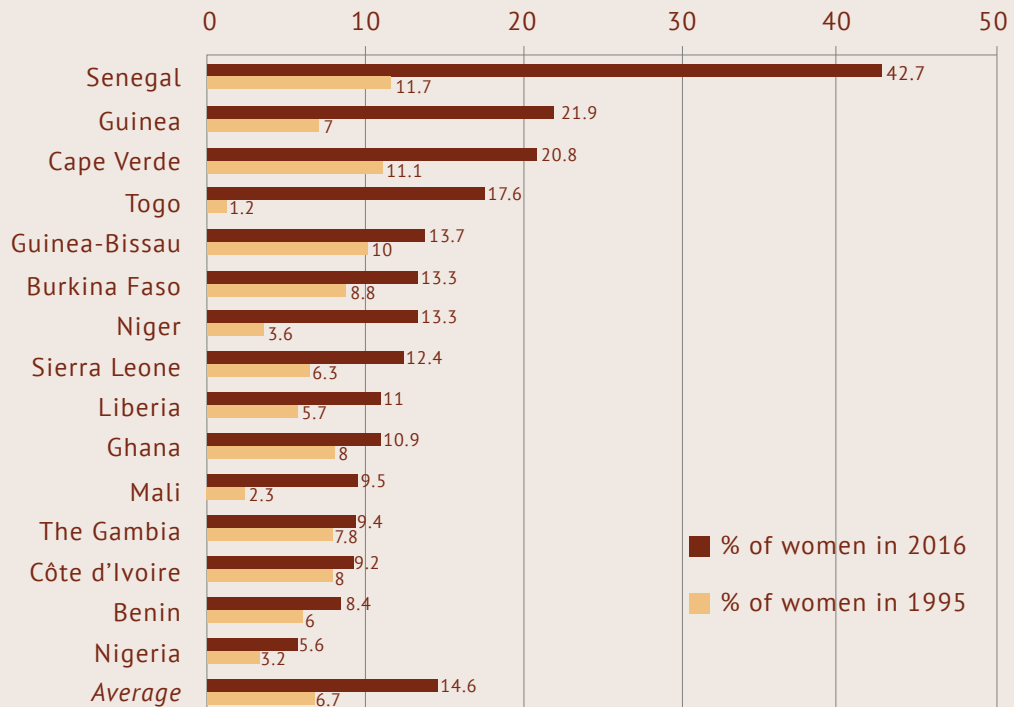
Sources: Interparliamentary Union: "Women in Parliament: 20 years in review" (Geneva: IPU, 2015); Interparliamentary Union: "Women in National Parliaments Statistical Archive," http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm.[48]

7.1.5. Taking into account the security needs of women, men, girls and boys in the national budget process

For laws and policies to be effective, sufficient resources must be allocated to their implementation. This means that the national budget should not aggravate gender inequalities; it should allocate sufficient funds for state response to gender-based violence and gender-related discriminations that result in the increased vulnerability of certain categories of the population to security threats.

Despite similarities in budgetary theory, the institutional practices and habits that govern the budget cycles of countries differ considerably from one to the other. In most cases, the budget process involves the executive, the parliament, and sometimes other state institutions; and more rarely, or less directly, civil society. But the power dynamics at work in this process and the scope of action effectively available to each stakeholder in practice varies widely from country to country. This is why all stakeholders involved should have at least a basic awareness of how gender inequality impacts security and which priority areas of the security of men, women, boys and girls require funding from the national budget.

Budget procedures can serve as effective tools to advance gender equality by setting it as priority goal in the framework of the state budget. When this is done, budget procedures may serve to ensure that allocations are in line with policy commitments on gender equality, increase transparency, and verify if spending is bringing about the desired impact.

The aims of gender equality can be integrated into budgeting for the security sector through a five-step process:

1. Analyse the situation and needs of women, men, girls and boys, including as users of security services and as security sector employees.

2. Assess how these needs are addressed by national policies.

3. Allocate funds for the implementation of policies with a focus on responding to the needs of each group and enhancing equality (or assessing the adequacy of budget allocation if examining an existing budget).

4. Monitor whether the budget is executed as planned and what services and outcomes it delivers to whom.

5. Assess the impact of policy implementation, examining whether needs have been met and whether the initial situation has improved (value for money).

This approach can be used for both budget formulation and budget oversight. Steps 1-3 may be most relevant at the time the budget is drafted and parliament examines it before approval. Steps 4 and 5, which monitor and assess impact, may be relevant to any state actor involved in executing and overseeing the budget.

Although they do not make national budgets, independent and non-state oversight actors such as CSOs may also use this five-step model to undertake their own state budget analyses, to evaluate whether national budgets are adequately serving the interests of all citizens and public service users.

3

For more information on security sector budgets, see Tool 3 on Good Financial Governance of Defence and Security Institutions

7.2. Integrating gender equality into judicial oversight of the security sector

In most West African countries, depending on national legislation, the judiciary has a mandate to oversee the security sector by verifying that it operates with due respect for the law. This requires the ability to take action against security sector personnel who have violated the law to an extent that exceeds the sole competency of security sector special courts. Such actions may include the launching of civil or criminal procedures against security sector personnel suspected of crimes.

In some countries, the judiciary also contributes to security sector oversight at a more strategic level by verifying that laws adopted by the legislature are constitutionally compliant.

> **Box 37: Judicial review and oversight of the security sector according to the ECOWAS Policy Framework on SSRG**
>
> **Article 43:** Member States shall condemn and fight the culture of impunity by empowering judicial institutions to enforce the respect of core principles of democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law by the security sector.
>
> **Article 44:** Member States shall guarantee the full independence of the judiciary from the executive and legislative branches and will provide sufficient funding and resources for the judiciary to fulfil its mandate. Member States will ensure that their judiciary will work in compliance with core principles of non-discrimination, respect for human rights, gender equality and democratic governance norms.
>
> **Article 45:** Member States maintaining military justice systems shall ensure that such systems perform in accordance with the principles of independence, equality before the law, transparency and accessibility.
>
> **Article 46:** Member States shall enact national legislation to limit the legitimate use of coercive force by security institutions and which will hold security actors accountable for violation of such legislation. Exceptional measures such as curfew and state of emergency shall comply with the constitution, applicable national legislations and regional instruments, international human rights and humanitarian law.
>
> *Source:* ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa, 2016.

7.3. Integrating gender equality into oversight of the security sector by human rights commissions and ombuds institutions

Ombuds institutions are independent oversight bodies headed by an ombudsperson, mandated to represent the interests of the public by receiving, investigating, and addressing complaints of maladministration and rights violations.

Human rights commissions are independent institutions established by law to promote and protect human rights in a given country. Rather than having their powers vested in a single person, human rights commissions are usually made up of multiple members.

Ombuds institutions and human rights commissions are both national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and can be accredited by a UN peer review mechanism if they comply with the minimum standards set out by the UN Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions (the Paris Principles). Some countries, such as Mali, have both an ombuds institution and a human rights commission, with different mandates.

The powers and mandates of these institutions vis-à-vis the security sector vary, but usually include:

- receiving, investigating, and sometimes mediating complaints from the public and/or security sector personnel;
- monitoring how security institutions handle complaints;

- reporting to parliaments or the executive; and
- raising awareness on human rights violations.

Gender can be integrated into the work of ombuds institutions and human rights commissions by:

- **Ensuring that the ombuds or human rights institution has the appropriate mandate and powers,** for example by making explicit the institution's responsibility to engage in women's rights and gender equality, requiring balanced participation and representation of men and women in the institution itself, and ensuring that admissibility criteria for cases are flexible enough to allow for protection of the rights of women, including under-educated and poor women.

- **Building institutional capacity to address gender inequality,** by reviewing internal structures and processes, and cooperating with external actors (including government agencies, parliament, ombuds or national human rights institutions of other countries, civil society, and security sector women's staff associations) and with specialised national bodies for gender equality.

- **Making the complaints process more accessible** to the community in general and women in particular. Ombuds and human right institutions can do this by making information about the institution and how to access it widely available, including in local languages; by providing flexible opening hours; by offering the option to file complaints by post or telephone; and by ensuring that representatives of the institution can be contacted locally across the country. Some institutions deploy mobile clinics or convene regular meetings in locations across the country. Civil society can also support these institutions by informing the public about how and when to use their services.

- **Identifying and working to remove the barriers that prevent men, women, boys and girls from reporting** sexual and gender-based harassment, violence, abuse and exploitation committed by security sector personnel.

- **Making complaint handling and investigation more accessible and supportive to women, men, girls and boys** by providing the option that complainants be interviewed by a man or a woman; giving specialised training to caseworkers and enacting special protocols for dealing with cases of gender-based violence or sexual harassment, discrimination or violence; putting rigorous procedures into place to protect the confidentiality of complainants and the security of records, as well as to protect complainants from retaliation.

- **Systematically examining how gender roles, stereotypes and bias affect the functioning of the security sector,** to identify the underlying causes of individual complaints, which may be rooted in institutional culture or practices. This may be achieved through monitoring and collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data, or pooling complaints from a common source or on similar acts, and investigating them together as a trend. Ombuds and human right institutions can collaborate with security institutions on standardising systems for reporting and sharing findings; this represents an opportunity for positive mutual engagement between security institutions and NHRIs.

- **Taking gender into consideration at every stage** of reporting or issuing recommendations.

- Including the principles and aims of gender equality in **awareness-raising campaigns**.[49]

7.4. Integrating gender equality into civil society oversight of the security sector

> *"Government alone cannot bring about full security of people's lives and properties without the active cooperation and collaboration of the people and all partners... Civil society is able to better monitor government policies and programmes and demand accountability from the government on issues of security and particularly call for the implementation of national, regional or international declarations/agreements/resolutions adopted by the country."*
>
> Ms. Comfort Funke Oladipo, Nigerian Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2010.[50]

Civil society can be understood as the political space that exists between the individual and the government. It is a domain parallel to but separate from both the state and the market, in which citizens freely associate according to their common interests and values. It is a means of organising collectively within the public sphere and enables citizens to coordinate in order to express shared opinions, engage in dialogue with other actors such as the state or the private sector, and take action to influence the development of a society that reflects their values.[51]

Civil society involvement in SSRG strengthens accountability, participation and local ownership. Civil society can provide policy advice and technical expertise to policymakers; provide a link between the state and the broader population; act as a watchdog to hold security sector actors accountable; conduct advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of security issues, human rights violations, misappropriation of funds or misconduct; or even provide security or justice services directly to citizens to complement those provided by the state.

6

For more details on civil society involvement in security sector reform and governance, see Tool 6

Through security sector oversight, civil society actors can enhance gender equality in the sector by:

- **Creating opportunities for women, men, girls and boys to participate in policy processes and push for security policies that account for the needs of all these groups**, for example by initiating discussions with local communities to collect information on their security concerns and communicating these concerns to decision-makers, as well as by pushing parliamentarians to put gender-related issues on the agenda.

- **Supporting the operational effectiveness of security institutions,** by researching security issues; offering support for gender training and capacity development; and informing the public about how to report cases of gender-based violence, sexual offences and crimes, and other security incidents affecting men, women, boys and girls.

- **Holding security institutions accountable for any cases of abuse or misconduct,** including towards their own personnel, by documenting – to the extent possible – cases of violations or misconduct, and alerting the public, heads of institutions and political authorities. The media can be particularly useful in exposing cases of sexual or gender-based harassment, abuse, or exploitation committed by security sector personnel.

- **Organising advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns** on topics such as how to report cases of domestic violence, and engaging media and both men and women in campaigning.

- **Strengthening the capacity and legitimacy of their own organisations,** by ensuring that all staff members have the necessary technical skills and knowledge to carry out their work effectively; that there is no discrimination within the organisation as regard to gender, age, or social class, especially when it comes to decision-making and human resources management; and that there is zero tolerance for sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation.

7.5. Integrating gender into intelligence oversight

The nature of intelligence work requires a high degree of secrecy that can create opportunities for abuse by those within an institution. Intelligence services can thereby become threats to the people and society they should protect.

The requisite secrecy of intelligence operations thus constitutes a challenge for oversight mechanisms. Such mechanisms are nonetheless necessary to ensure that intelligence services are effective and accountable, remain politically neutral, and operate within their legal mandates – in accordance with the rule of law and respect for human rights, including gender equality.

In many countries, parliament has the primary responsibility for overseeing intelligence services; while in others, specialised intelligence oversight bodies are set up for this purpose, in addition to or instead of parliament. Special provisions and measures may be necessary to ensure that oversight actors have access to the resources they need without compromising sensitive operational information. For example, members of parliament who sit on intelligence oversight committees often have to undergo a special security vetting process. Such committees should be composed of both men and women MPs.

Effective oversight of intelligence institutions should include:

- Overseeing the administrative policies and operational activities of intelligence services to ensure that they are operating under the law and do not further victimise women, men, girls or boys on the basis of sex or gender.
- Conducting investigations into specific events or allegations made against intelligence services.
- Randomly sampling information processed and stored by intelligence services to ensure that there are no human rights violations, including the violation of women's rights.
- Inquiring as to the proportion of men and women who make up intelligence personnel, and encouraging the inclusion of women.
- Ensuring equal employment and advancement opportunities for men and women within intelligence services.

7.6. Integrating the principles of gender equality into the regulation and oversight of non-state security providers

In most West African countries, non-state security providers may play an important role in the security of men, women, boys and girls. These actors typically comprise local and traditional structures with a role in ensuring community security and serving justice at the community level, on the one hand; and commercial actors such as international and domestic private security companies, on the other. The operations of both of these types of actors affect the security of men, women, boys and girls in local populations in ways that are often largely underestimated by public policymakers, and appropriate oversight mechanisms are called for.

7.6.1. Taking gender into consideration in the management and oversight of local and traditional justice and security providers

Given specific contexts in West Africa, effective security sector oversight demands that consideration be given to local and traditional justice and security actors. These local institutions vary considerably from one area to another and are typically the result of a unique, context-specific history. Their level of formality also depends on local and national situations and arrangements.

Informal security providers

A context-sensitive approach to integrating gender into SSG in West Africa requires accounting for how gender influences the provision of security to local communities by such actors as community watch and vigilante groups, militias, faith-based formations, or traditional hunters' fraternities. The operations of these groups are often framed by traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Without appropriate oversight, this may result in the exclusion of women in the community from arenas where decisions affecting their security are made. It may also result in increased victimisation of women and girls, and of men and boys who do not conform to traditional conceptions of masculinity. Several instances of human rights abuses by local or traditional security providers in West Africa confirm the need for effective oversight of these structures.

In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, the Dozo are a group of traditional hunters that the UN estimates total some 18,000 across the country.[52] Dozo hunters have played an active role in the successive crises that have struck Côte d'Ivoire since the 2000s, asserting their position as an essential security actor that can either reinforce or hinder the mission of state security institutions. However, their operations have raised issues of accountability as allegations of abuse and misconduct have been reported.

Local justice structures

Either codified or customary, the role of traditional justice structures usually includes the delivery of justice services to the local population. However, unaddressed patriarchal legacies mean that their decisions may end up negatively impacting the security of women and girls. These structures may not be equally accessible to women and men or may deliver justice in an inequitable manner to women and men.

Some of the actions that may help increase the trust of women in local justice systems and/or improve the delivery of justice to women and girls by these systems include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Documenting and analysing the gender dynamics that impact the work of local justice and security systems in a particular context.
- Encouraging local justice systems to work with local civil society organisations, especially women's organisations or associations, to increase transparency and credibility.
- Promoting the participation of women as elders in local courts.
- Raising awareness among local leaders, both men and women, on gender-based violence, including engaging them to take all forms of domestic violence and sexual violence seriously.
- Providing support for the legal empowerment of women in communities, including as it relates to marriage and family law.

> **Box 38: Improving community-level justice for women and girls: experiences from Malawi and Sierra Leone**
>
> "In Malawi, [a UK Department for International Development (DFID)] programme [strengthened] traditional courts at the village level. It encouraged chiefs to hear cases in a panel with other village elders, including women. This had reportedly reduced the payment of bribes and encouraged more women to bring their complaints to the tribunal. The programme introduced casebooks for village courts to record their decisions. ...this increased formality in the proceedings [reportedly] helped to reduce arbitrary decision-making."
>
> The outcome of similar activities in Sierra Leone has also been promising. These include work to revitalise and improve the capacity of local arbitration systems, coupled with awareness-raising for women and girls, particularly on marriage and family law.
>
> *Source:* Independent Commission for Aid Impact, *Review of UK Development Assistance for Security and Justice* (London: ICAI, 2015), p. 30, para. 4.32.

7.6.2. Integrating the principles of gender equality into the regulation and oversight of commercial security providers

An important yet often overlooked dimension of security sector accountability relates to the regulation and oversight of private companies that provide armed and unarmed security services and expertise to private and public clients. These services typically range from protecting goods and persons to securing property and buildings, on a contractual basis. The growth of this industry has direct implications for the security of different gender groups; indeed, the privatisation of security services can result in greater security for the wealthy, displacing insecurity to the poor, with disproportionate effects on the security of poor women, girls and boys.[53]

While West African countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone have a history of mercenary incursions dating back to the 1990s Mano River Conflicts, ECOWAS has declared a ban on all mercenary activities in its member states. As such, this section does not address illegal mercenary activities, but rather focuses on the oversight and regulation of legally constituted private security companies operating in ECOWAS member states.

To date, "there is still very limited awareness of the private commercial actors providing security in Africa, [including in West Africa]. Issues such as the size and scope of the domestic industry, its use and management of weapons or training and vetting practices, remain a grey area."[54] A direct implication of this general lack of visibility of the industry is a very limited availability of data to assess the impact of industry growth on the security of women, men, girls and boys in the community. This is particularly problematic as private security firms historically have a poor track record of preventing and responding to sexual abuse and exploitation of the population by their personnel. Reported incidents suggest that there may be unexplored – and therefore unaddressed – correlations between a poorly-monitored private security industry and the development of certain forms of GBV, such as forced prostitution or domestic violence. A lack of transparency regarding the breadth of the industry also favours labour exploitation by private firms, which disproportionately affects men.

Worldwide, including in West Africa, private security personnel (both men and women) have been implicated in GBV, including the sexual abuse of men, women, boys and girls. This affects the credibility and operational effectiveness of the private security industry as a whole, and impacts the security environment for civilian populations in the areas private firms operate. Some of the tools that can help prevent human rights abuses of women, men, girls and boys by private security personnel include training on how gender roles affect the security of communities and clients; proper vetting procedures; the development and enforcement of codes of conduct and other behavioural norms aligned with zero

tolerance policies for sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation; and effective mechanisms for corporate and public oversight of private security companies.

Furthermore, despite the lack of reliable data, it can be inferred that dominant forms of masculinity are prevalent in the private security sector. This is a reasonable assumption not only in "post-conflict contexts where private security represents a [virtually] natural career move for demobilised ex-combatants",[55] but also in stabilising and other developing countries where private security companies recruit the current or former personnel of public security agencies; or are owned, managed or supervised by current or former leaders of public security agencies. Such individuals may bring a culture of dominant masculinity with them, which can negatively impact the security of women and girls, but also that of boys and men whose behaviour does not match stereotypical gender roles.

Effective oversight of private security providers requires a clear legal and regulatory framework, which should be aligned with international laws and standards. In most West African countries, however, private security firms operate mostly in a legal and regulatory environment characterised by gaps and loopholes.

International good practice recommends:

- passing clear regulatory/legislative framework specifically pertaining to private security firms;
- setting up and operationalising designated bodies tasked with regulating and overseeing these companies;
- setting up and operationalising licencing systems that require companies to adhere strictly to human rights standards, including gender equality, as a fundamental prerequisite to be allowed to operate;
- setting up, operationalising and monitoring complaints mechanisms to report abuse; and
- ensuring accountability under national law (criminal, civil, and administrative), and using commercial means of accountability such as contract termination.

Box 39: Gender equality in the Montreux Document and the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers

The Montreux Document and the International Code of Conduct are innovative "soft law" documents that provide guidance for more effective private security regulation. Both documents contain references to principles of gender equality.

The Montreux Document (2008) supports states in their effort to ensure compliance by private military and security companies (PMSCs) with international human rights and humanitarian law, especially – but not only – when PMSCs are present in armed conflicts. The Montreux Document does not create new rules but recalls the existing international obligations of states related to PMSCs and lists good practices designed to help states take national measures to implement these obligations. Sub-sections on good practice for various categories of states, including "contracting states" (which contract directly for the services of PMSCs), "territorial states" (on the territory of which PMSCs operate) and "home states" (where PMSCs are registered or incorporated) all include references to principles of gender equality as part of the "criteria for selection of PMSCs" and "criteria for granting authorization".

More specifically, these sections all recommend as a good practice that states "take into account, within available means, the past conduct of the PMSC and its personnel, which includes ensuring that the PMSC has:

a. no reliably attested record of involvement in serious crime (including organised crime, violent crime, **sexual offences,** violations of international humanitarian law, bribery and corruption) and, insofar as the PMSC or its personnel had engaged in past unlawful conduct, has appropriately remedied such conduct, including by effectively cooperating with official authorities, taking disciplinary measures against those involved, and, where appropriate and consistent with findings of wrongdoing, providing individuals injured by their conduct with appropriate reparation;

b. conducted comprehensive inquiries within applicable law regarding the extent to which any of its personnel, particularly those who are required to carry weapons as part of their duties, have a reliably attested record of not having been involved in serious crime or have not been dishonourably discharged from armed or security forces;

c. not previously been rejected from a contract due to misconduct of the PMSC or its personnel." (Good practices 6, 32 and 60).

Good practices 10, 35 and 63 of the Montreux Document also engage states to ensure that PMSC personnel are adequately trained on key issues, including gender. Sierra Leone is the only West African state to officially participate in the Montreux Document as of August 2016.[56]

The International Code of Conduct for Private Security providers sets out international principles and standards for the operations of private security companies, and articulates the human rights responsibilities of these companies. The Code of Conduct includes several provisions relating to gender equality, notably:

- A commitment by signatory companies that they and their personnel will not engage in any form of national or international crimes, including sexual or gender-based violence and human trafficking. (Article 22)

- A commitment that "signatory companies will not benefit from, nor allow their Personnel to engage in or benefit from, sexual exploitation (including, for these purposes, prostitution) and abuse or gender-based violence or crimes, either within the Company or externally, including rape, sexual harassment, or any other form of sexual abuse or violence." (Article 38)

- A commitment that "signatory companies will, and will require their Personnel to, remain vigilant for all instances of sexual or gender-based violence and, where discovered, report such instances to competent authorities." (Article 38)

- A commitment that "signatory companies will not, and will require that their personnel do not, discriminate on grounds of race, colour, sex, religion, social origin, social status, indigenous status, disability, or sexual orientation when hiring Personnel and will select Personnel on the basis of the inherent requirements of the contract." (Article 42)

- A commitment that signatory companies will "establish and maintain internal policies and procedures to determine the suitability of applicants, or Personnel, to carry weapons as part of their duties," specifying that "disqualifying crimes may include, but are not limited to, battery, murder, arson, fraud, **rape, sexual abuse,** organized crime, bribery, corruption, perjury, torture, kidnapping, drug trafficking **or trafficking in persons.**" (Article 48)

- A commitment that signatory companies will adopt "policies which support a safe and healthy working environment within the company, such as policies which address psychological health, deter workplace violence, misconduct, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual harassment and other improper behaviour." (Article 64, d).

- A commitment that "signatory companies will not tolerate harassment and abuse of co-workers by their personnel."

Sources: The Montreux Document On Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States Related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies during Armed Conflict (Montreux: 2008)[57]; The International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers.[58]

Checklist

This checklist is a reminder of some of the key considerations for integrating the principles and aims of gender equality into security sector governance and reform; it is not an absolute or exhaustive list. Specific priorities and entry points should always be identified according to the context.

1. **Integrate gender equality into the national legal and policy framework**
   - Align national laws and policies with regional and international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and the AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.
   - Review the legal framework that governs security institutions and their work to ensure that it is not discriminatory.
   - Make gender equality an explicit goal in national security policy and security sector policies.
   - Ensure that security threats faced by women, men, girls and boys are acknowledged and effectively addressed by national legislation, especially in criminal and criminal procedure law. Pay specific attention to prevention and response to sexual, domestic and gender-based violence.
   - Ensure that policy commitments are matched by adequate budget allocations, and monitor impact.

2. **Integrate gender equality into SSR programming**
   - Make gender equality a core feature and objective of any programming exercise.
   - Account for the security needs of men, women, boys and girls throughout the programming cycle.
   - Ensure that women, men, girls and boys have access to the benefits provided by the programme.
   - Involve men and women in all stages of programming, including assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
   - Match programming needs with adequate funding to respond to the needs of women, men, girls and boys.
   - Use sex- and age-disaggregated data in monitoring and evaluation to measure the impact of the programme on men, women, boys and girls.

3. Enhance gender equality in the work and culture of security institutions

• Base institutional reforms on a systematic audit or assessment of how gender equality is already integrated.

• Ensure the commitment of institutional leadership for effectiveness and sustainability.

• Review internal policies and consider the development of specific policies on gender equality in operations, on equal opportunities, or to prevent sexual discrimination, harassment and abuse.

• Take measures to ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination in human resource management, including in the recruitment, retention and advancement of women and other underrepresented groups.

• Enhance prevention and response to sexual harassment and abuse within security institutions or by security sector personnel towards the public, by improving policies, establishing effective complaints and oversight mechanisms, training staff on their rights and duties, and supporting victims.

• Integrate gender equality as a core principle of all training for security sector staff and provide additional, specific training as relevant, adapted to the roles and responsibilities of personnel.

4. Integrate gender equality into accountability mechanisms

• Provide an explicit mandate for internal and external oversight mechanisms to address gender inequality and sexual and gender-based harassment, violence, abuse and exploitation

• Make oversight bodies more representative by including both men and women.

• Train oversight actors on gender equality and how it pertains to their work.

• Establish effective complaints mechanisms allowing both security sector staff and the general public to make complaints regarding cases of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, abuse or exploitation by security actors. Provide several avenues for making complaints, ensure swift and confidential investigation, and systematically monitor complaints.

5. Integrate gender equality into sector-specific reforms

• Include gender equality as a core goal of any sectoral reforms, such as reform of the armed forces, police, justice sector, penal system or border management.

• Ensure that institutions respond effectively to the needs of the whole population, including women, men, girls and boys, regardless of social background, ethnic origin, religion or place of residence (urban/rural).

• Strengthen governance mechanisms to ensure that security institutions and their staff are accountable and that they operate within their legal mandates and within the framework of the rule of law and respect for human rights, including gender equality.

• Make institutions more representative by guaranteeing equal opportunities for all staff, including men, women, and underrepresented groups and by fighting all forms of discrimination.

• Include gender equality as a core principle in all basic and in-service training.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: References to gender equality and equality before the law in West African constitutions

Gender equality is not a foreign concept; it is enshrined in the national constitutions of all fifteen ECOWAS member states, including explicit references to the principle of equality before the law. Although actual implementation of these constitutional guarantees can be improved, the very fact that these constitutions include provisions on gender equality confirms their relevance and admissibility in West African legal systems.

Benin, 1990 Constitution

Title II, Article 26

"The State shall assure to everyone equality before the law without distinction of origin, of race, of sex, of religion, of political opinion or of social position.

Men and women are equal under the law. The State shall protect the family and particularly the mother and child. It shall take care of handicapped and aged persons."

Burkina Faso, 1991 Constitution (rev. 2012)

Title I, Chapter I, Article 1

"Discrimination of all sorts, notably those founded on race, ethnicity, region, colour, sex, language, religion, caste, political opinions, wealth and birth, are prohibited."

Cape Verde, 1980 Constitution (rev. 1992)

Part I, Title I, Article 1, §2

"The Republic of Cape Verde recognizes the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction as to social origin or economic situation, race, sex, religion, political or ideological convictions, and social conditions, and assures the full exercise by all citizens of fundamental liberties."

Part II, Title I, Article 22

"All citizens shall have equal social status and shall be equal before the law, without privilege, benefit, or prejudice, and may not be deprived of any rights or exempt from any duty by reason of race, sex, ancestry, language, origin, religion, social and economic condition, or political or ideological conviction."

Côte d'Ivoire, 2000 Constitution (rev. 2004)

Title II Article 30

"The Republic [of Côte d'Ivoire] assures to all equality before the law without distinction as to origin, race, sex or religion. It respects all beliefs. Its principle is government of the people, by the people and for the people."

The Gambia, 1996 Constitution (rev. 2004)

Chapter IV, Article 28, §2

"Women shall have the right to equal treatment with men, including equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities."

Chapter IV, Article 33, §3

"Subject to the provisions of subsection (5), no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority."

Chapter IV, Article 33, §4

"In this section, the expression "discrimination" means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject, or are accorded privilege or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description."

Ghana, 1992 Constitution (rev. 1996)
Chapter 5, Article 12, §2
"Every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed or gender shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual contained in this Chapter but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest."

Chapter 5, Article 17, §2
"A person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status."

Guinea, 2010 Constitution
Title I, Article 1
"It assures the equality before the law of all the citizens without distinction of origin, of race, of ethnicity, of sex, of religion and of opinion."

Title II, Article 8
"All human beings are equal before the law. Men and women have the same rights.
No one may be privileged or disadvantaged by virtue of their sex, of their birth, of their race, of their ethnicity, of their language, of their beliefs and of their political, philosophical or religious opinions."

Guinea-Bissau, 1984 Constitution (rev. 1991)
Title II, Article 23
"All citizens shall be equal before the law, shall have the same rights, and shall be subject to the same duties, without distinction regarding race, sex, social, intellectual or cultural level, religious belief, or philosophical conviction."

Liberia, 1986 Constitution
Chapter III, Article 11, §b
"All persons, irrespective of ethnic background, race, sex, creed, place of origin or political opinion, are entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, subject to such qualifications as provided for in this Constitution."

Mali, 1992 Constitution
Title I, Article 2
"Every Malian shall be born and remain free and equal in rights and obligations. All discrimination founded on social origin, colour, language, race, sex, religion and political opinion shall be prohibited."

Niger, 2010 Constitution
First Title, Article 8
"The Republic of Niger is a State of Law.
It assures to all equality before the law without distinction of sex, or of social, racial, ethnic or religious origin.
It respects and protects all beliefs. No religion, no belief can arrogate the political power or interfere in the affairs of State.
All particularist propaganda of a regionalist, racial or ethnic character, all manifestation of racial, social, sexist, ethnic, political or religious discrimination, are punished by the law."

Title II, Article 22
"The State sees to the elimination of all forms of discrimination concerning women, young girls and handicapped persons. [Public] policies in all the domains assure their full development and their participation in the national development."

Nigeria, 1999 Constitution
Chapter IV, Article 42, §1

"A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person:

a. be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religions or political opinions are not made subject; or

b. be accorded either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any such executive or administrative action, any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religions or political opinions."

Senegal, 2001 Constitution (rev. 2009)
Title I, Article 1

"[The Republic of Senegal] assures the equality before the law of all the citizens, without distinction of origin, of race, of sex [and] of religion. It respects all beliefs."

Title II, Article 7

"All human beings are equal before the law. Men and Women are equal in rights."

Sierra Leone, 1991 Constitution (rev. 2008)
Chapter 3, Article 27, §1

"Subject to the provisions of subsection (4), (5) and (7), no law shall make any provision which is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect."

Chapter 3, Article 27, §2

"Subject to the provisions of subsections (6), (7) and (8), no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority."

Chapter 3, Article 27, §3

"In this section the expression "discriminatory" means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, tribe, sex, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject, or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description."

Togo, 1992 Constitution (rev. 2007)
Title I, Article 2

"The Togolese Republic assures the equality before the law of all citizens without distinction of origin, of race, of sex, of social condition or of religion."

Title II, Sub-title I, Article 11

"Men and women are equal before the law."

Annex 2: National policies or strategies supporting the aims of gender equality in West Africa (as of 2016)

Country	Main Policy or Strategy document defining an agenda for gender equality
Benin	National Policy for Gender promotion in Benin (Politique nationale de Promotion du Genre au Bénin), 2009-2025
Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso National Gender Policy Document (Document de la Politique Nationale Genre du Burkina Faso), 2009
Cape Verde	National Plan for Gender Equality (Plano Nacional de Igualdade de Género), 2015-2018
Côte d'Ivoire	National Policy Document on equal opportunity, equity and gender (Document de politique nationale sur l'égalité des chances, l'équité et le genre), 2009
Gambia	Gender and Women Empowerment Policy 2010-2020
Ghana	National Gender Policy: Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment into Ghana's Development Effort (May 2015)
Guinea	National Gender Policy (Politique Nationale Genre), 2011
Guinea Bissau	National Gender Equity and Equality Policy (2012)
Liberia	National Gender Policy (2009)
Mali	National Gender Policy (Politique Nationale Genre), 2009
Niger	National Gender Policy (Politique Nationale Genre), 2008
Nigeria	National Gender Policy, 2008
Senegal	National Strategy for Gender Equality and Equity (Stratégie nationale pour l'égalité et l'équité de genre), 2015
Sierra Leone	National Policy on the Advancement of Women (2000) and National Gender Mainstreaming Policy (2000);[59] Sierra Leone National Gender Strategy Plan 2010-2013
Togo	National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity (Politique nationale pour l'égalité et l'équité de genre), 2011

Annex 3: Gender in ECOWAS normative instruments for peace and security – a non-exhaustive overview

ECOWAS plays an important role in providing member states with normative guidance, through regional instruments on peace and security. Gender equality is an essential feature of the normative principles that have been increasingly emphasised by the Community. Several of ECOWAS' normative documents call upon member states as well as ECOWAS institutions to take steps towards greater equality in the security sector (see Box 15). In addition to these documents, ECOWAS also adopted a Gender Policy in 2004 and a Regional Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 in 2010, which should guide the organisation in its work on peace and security.

Year	Instrument	Provisions relating to gender equality
1993	ECOWAS Revised Treaty	Article 63 calls on member states to identify, assess and address constraints that inhibit women from maximising their contribution to regional development, including through regional cooperation.
1999	Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security	Article 40 (4) calls on ECOWAS to "recognise, encourage and support the role of women in its initiatives for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security".
2001	Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance	Article 40: "Member States agree that the development and promotion of the welfare of women are essential factors for development, progress and peace in the society. Consequently, they undertake to eliminate all forms of discrimination and harmful and degrading practices against women."
2008	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF)	The ECPF contains an elaborate section on Women, Peace and Security (articles 81-84), calling on both ECOWAS and its member states to increase representation of women in senior positions on peace and security matters and to strengthen the capacity and role of women's organisations. It also calls on ECOWAS to adopt policies to combat discrimination against women and gender-based violence, and on member states to promote the recruitment of women into the armed forces and other security agencies, among other things. The ECPF further identifies benchmarks for assessing progress.
		Under the specific section on "Security Governance", the ECPF further engages member states to integrate a gender perspective into the management of prisons (art. 74, §i) and to ensure that "recruitment, promotion and entitlements of members of the armed forces and other security agencies are transparent, equitable and on merit, and that reflect ethnic balance and gender sensitivity" (art. 74, §j).

Year	Instrument	Provisions relating to gender equality
2011	Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services of ECOWAS	Article 1: "Recruitment and management of [Armed Forces and Security Services] personnel shall be conducted without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, ethnicity, regional or religious affiliation." Article 7: "In the exercise of their duties, personnel of the Armed Forces and Security Services shall provide to all persons in need, adequate protection, assistance, and refuge. …There should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, age, identity, religion or political views." Article 9: "Personnel of the Armed Forces and Security Services shall refrain in all circumstances from the following acts: murder, torture, corporal punishment, rape, sexual abuse, mutilation, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, hostage taking, collective punishment, intimidation and threats and all other conduct aimed at impairing the physical and psychological well-being of the individual."
2016	Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG)	As per article 16 (f) gender equality is one of the core principles of the Policy Framework (this article is quoted in section 3.2. this Tool). Articles 61 and 62 are dedicated to gender mainstreaming and SSRG. Article 61 sets out specific objectives for national SSRG programmes in order for them to be sustainable and compliant with the principles of gender equality, and article 62 encourages member states to adopt national action plans for implementing UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1882, 1888 and 1960.

Annex 4: Ratification, accessions and successions of the CEDAW by ECOWAS member states

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women entered into force on 3 September 1981. All ECOWAS member states are officially parties to the convention, as shown in the table below.

Participating states	Signature	Ratification, accession (a), succession (d)
Benin	11 Nov 1981	12 Mar 1992
Burkina Faso		14 Oct 1987 a
Cabo Verde		5 Dec 1980 a
Côte d'Ivoire	17 Jul 1980	18 Dec 1995
Gambia	29 Jul 1980	16 Apr 1993
Ghana	17 Jul 1980	2 Jan 1986
Guinea	17 Jul 1980	9 Aug 1982
Guinea-Bissau	17 Jul 1980	23 Aug 1985
Liberia		17 Jul 1984
Mali	5 Feb 1985	10 Sep 1985
Niger (with reservations)		8 Oct 1999 a
Nigeria	23 Apr 1984	13 Jun 1985
Senegal	29 Jul 1980	5 Feb 1985
Sierra Leone	21 Sep 1988	11 Nov 1988
Togo		26 Sep 1983 a

Source: United Nations Treaty Collection
https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&clang=_en

Annex 5: Gender in the penal system

How is gender relevant to the penal system?

Within the framework of good SSG, the penal system should provide effective service delivery in an accountable manner. Gender equality is important in the penal system in order to:

- ensure that penal institutions meet international and national human rights standards, including the right of children deprived of their liberty to be treated "with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person";[60]

- prevent and respond to sexual violence in prison environments, including that committed by prison staff;

- ensure that the needs of female and male inmates, youth, children and other marginalised groups are addressed and reflected in procedures and policies;

- ensure that rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives address and accommodate the needs and capacities of both male and female inmates, as well as the realities of the society in which they live;

- promote better public health by addressing sexually-transmitted diseases among male and female inmates and providing adequate reproductive health services to female inmates, including those who may be pregnant; and

- ensure a healthy and equitable working environment for both female and male staff.

International guidelines for the treatment of male and female prisoners*

The Bangkok Rules (also known as the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders) were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2010 to guide UN member states, including all fifteen ECOWAS member states, in addressing the needs of women and girls in the criminal justice system. These rules supplement the standard minimum rules (SMRs) for the treatment of prisoners from 1955, which already required prisons to:

- separate male and female detainees, as well as young prisoners and adults;

- have specific accommodation for pre- and post-natal treatment and a nursery; and

- use women officers to supervise women prisoners.

The Bangkok Rules complement the SRMs by emphasising the range of needs specific to female adult and juvenile prisoners, and by considering related needs at other stages of the criminal justice process. Topics covered include:

- Non-discrimination
- Admission, registration and allocation of female prisoners
- Personal hygiene
- Healthcare
- Searches
- Contact with the outside world
- Disciplinary measures
- Institutional personnel and training
- Prison regime, classification and individualisation
- Pregnant women, breast-feeding mothers and mothers with dependent children
- Juvenile female prisoners
- Foreign nationals
- Minorities and indigenous groups
- Prisoners under arrest or awaiting trial
- Non-custodial measures
- Parole
- Complaints and inspection
- Research, planning and evaluations
- Raising public awareness and training

*Source: Caroline Pradier, "Penal reform and Gender: Update on the Bangkok Rules", annex to International Centre for Prison Studies, "Penal Reform and Gender", in Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008).

Annex 6: Training on gender equality and security for West African stakeholders

West African stakeholders wishing to strengthen their knowledge and skills on gender and security may benefit from regional training opportunities such as:

- The Certificate in Gender, Peace and Security – a course offered every year at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra. Calls for candidates are published on the website: www.kaiptc.org

- The Gender and Post Conflict course (delivered in French) – offered twice a year at the Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping School in Bamako. Calls for candidates are published on the website: www.empbamako.org

The following training opportunities are also available online:

- I Know Gender, Module on Women, Peace and Security (offered by UN Women) – The "Gender, Peace and Security" module is an option of the I Know Gender course that can be accessed after completing modules 1-3. All modules are available at no cost and can be accessed at the user's own pace, from anywhere and at any time. See: https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/

- The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (I Know Politics, http://iknowpolitics.org/en) is an interactive network of women in politics who share experiences, resources, advice and collaborate on issues of interest. Among other resources, the platform offers access to online courses and webinars, including on "Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality Programming", "Gender sensitive budgeting", and "Women, Peace and Security", among other relevant topics. An updated e-learning calendar is available at: http://iknowpolitics.org/en/learn/online-courses

Online training resources

The **DCAF website** offers a wide array of publications on gender and security, available at: http://www.dcaf.ch/Series-Collections/Gender-Tools-and-Resources

These include training resources specifically aimed at women's civil society organisations, such as:

- Megan Bastick and Tobie Whitman, *A Women's Guide to Security Sector Reform* (Washington DC: Inclusive Security & DCAF, 2013), available at www.dcaf.ch/Publications/A-Women-s-Guide-to-Security-Sector-Reform (French and English)

- Nana Pratt, *Gender and SSR: Training Manual for Community Women in Sierra Leone*, eds. Anike Doherty and Lorraine Serrano (Geneva: DCAF and IOM), 2014, available at http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Gender-and-SSR-Training-Manual-for-Community-Women-in-Sierra-Leone (English only)

Training resources are also available free of charge on the DCAF Gender and Security Sector Reform Training Website http://www.gssrtraining.ch/index.php/en/

This website includes links to further training resources: http://www.gssrtraining.ch/index.php/en/addiional-training-resources

Additional resources

Megan Bastick, *Gender and Complaints Mechanisms: A Handbook for Armed Forces and Ombuds Institutions to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Related Discriminations, Harassment, Bullying and Abuse* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015), http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Handbook-on-Gender-and-Complaints-Mechanisms.

Megan Bastick, *Gender Self-Assessment guide for the Police, Armed Forces and Justice Sector* (Geneva: DCAF, 2011), www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Gender-Self-Assessment-Guide-for-the-Police-Armed-Forces-and-Justice-Sector.

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