

Gender Equality in the Military and Agenda 2030

Agenda 2030 for sustainable development is the plan of action for people to make the world a better place for all. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

Ending all discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, it's crucial for sustainable future; it's proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development.

We cannot hope for sustainable development without peace, stability, human rights and effective governance, based on the rule of law. Yet our world is increasingly divided. Some regions enjoy peace, security and prosperity, while others fall into seemingly endless cycles of conflict and violence. This is not inevitable and must be addressed.

Armed violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on a country's development, affecting economic growth, and often resulting in grievances that last for generations. Sexual violence, crime, exploitation and torture are also prevalent where there is conflict, or no rule of law, and countries must take measures to protect those who are most at risk

The SDGs aim to significantly reduce all forms of violence, and work with governments and communities to end conflict and insecurity. Promoting the rule of law and human rights are key to this process, as is reducing the flow of illicit arms and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

Everyone is needed to reach these ambitious targets. The creativity, knowhow, technology and financial resources from all of society is necessary to achieve the SDGs in every context.

The importance of Gender Equality in the Military

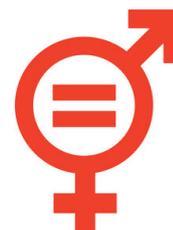
UNDP SEESAC has made gender equality central to its work. The Gender Equality in the Military, by linking the Global Goals on Gender Equality to achieving Peaceful societies, Justice and Strong Institutions, fully acknowledges that no true development can be achieved if half of the world population is left behind.

Ministries of Defence in the Western Balkans, supported by UNDP SEESAC, embarked on the long-term mission to make security institutions fit for gender equality. Now, more personnel are aware of the importance of gender equality in the armed forces, human resources policies have been reformed to strengthen career prospects of women officers, and there are mechanisms in place to ensure gender equality. Also, the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers is working with their colleagues to make gender the norm in their institutions.

Building upon the successful implementation of Phase I (2012-2016), UNDP SEESAC and Ministries of Defence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia - with the aim of consolidating and ensuring the sustainability of results achieved during Phase I - began the implementation of Phase II (2019-2021) of the **Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans** project, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



5 GENDER EQUALITY



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Regional Network of Gender Trainers

Our current work on gender equality in the military

Phase II envisaged actions are:

- Place regional cooperation at the core of fostering gender equality in the military;
- Develop regional platforms focusing on mainstreaming gender equality in the Ministries of Defence (MoDs) and Armed Forces (AFs) institutions of the Western Balkans;
- Strengthen the capacity of Gender Equality Mechanisms in the MoDs and AFs to achieve better results through information exchange and knowledge sharing across the region, technical advice and expert support for small projects;
- Work with Human Resources Departments in the MoDs and AFs to collect and analyze sex and age disaggregated data and offer the necessary expertise for these departments to provide advisory services on gender equality to their staff;
- Take all the necessary measures for the armed forces to prevent and respond to gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment including reviewing gaps in policies and procedures, development of guidelines, toolkits and training;
- Make the Regional Network of Gender Trainers stronger by providing support for further capacity building of the network and knowledge sharing;
- Ensure the next generation of armed forces staff understands why gender equality is key to fulfilling their mission by developing a gender-sensitive curricula;
- Enhance knowledge of armed forces commanders and MoD decision makers through tailor made "Gender Coach Programme".

Sharing practices and expertise

The Ministries of Defence in the Western Balkans are regularly sharing knowledge and practical examples on how to integrate women in the Armed Forces and enable a working environment free from discrimination. To improve the capacities of developing gender responsive policies and gender equality mechanisms, they share experiences, policies, regulations, and lessons learnt.

Today, members of the Regional Network on Gender in the Military trainers are being invited around the world to share their expertise on making gender equality the norm in the institutions they serve. For example, Gender in the Military trained their peers from Ministries of Defence and the Armed Forces from Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Rwanda. These knowledge and experience exchange from the Western Balkans were enabled through the Regional Security Sector Reform Platform. Find out more about this global expertise sharing mechanism [here](#).

What did we previously achieve?

Increased regional cooperation

Regional cooperation, knowledge exchange and information-sharing, and enhancing capacities for gender responsive approach to gender mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans. Unique regional platform of gender in the military in the Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia was created that enabled regional cooperation on various topics of relevance for MoDs and AFs.

A network for change

Our gender equality in the military project enabled the creation of a network of gender in the military trainers. 33 trainers delivered gender briefings and seminars for over 4,700 officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers and civilians in the Ministries of Defence and the Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. These learning initiatives advanced gender awareness as well as knowledge on how to integrate the gender perspective in defence policies across the region.

Breakthrough initiative

Within the framework of this project, the Gender Coach Programme has been piloted for the first time. The aim of the programme is to boost the gender-responsiveness of institutions by developing competencies and fostering commitment among the senior management through a tailored one on one programme, between



Women Leaders - Ms. Radmila Shekerinska, Minister of Defence, North Macedonia



Experts on gender in the military from the Western Balkans - Military officers from the Armed Forces of Montenegro



Gender Trainer and Expert - Military officer from Armed Forces of BiH



Women in Military - Serbian Armed Forces

gender expert, the Coach and high-level representative of MoD or AF. The programme has been already implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro for presidents of small arms and light weapons (SALW) commissions, by SEESAC gender and SALW expert, with visible results, including the development of gender sensitive policies based on sex and age disaggregated data.

Infrastructure for gender equality

One of the reasons for limited career progression of women in the military, is their poor physical fitness due to women's lack of access to physical fitness training. With the aim of enabling equal access of women to physical fitness training, for improving conditions of their professional development, the project supported the purchase of sports equipment for women in the Bosnia and Herzegovina armed forces. Between 400 and 500 women are now using this gym.

Enhanced professionalization

To enhance the professionalization of Ministries and Defence and the Armed Forces personnel in the Western Balkans, study visits to Sweden, the Netherlands, or Spain were organized. Also, 22 women officers from the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans to participate in a variety of short specialized defence and security courses thus strengthening their knowledge and skills and contributing to their professional development.



Gender Trainers from the Western Balkans with Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations

South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse
for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
(SEESAC)

Bulevar Zorana Đinđića 64
11000 Belgrade
Serbia
Telephone:
(+381) 11 415 5300
Fax: (+381) 415 5499
E-mail: seesac@undp.org

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