Tuesday, 8 June 2021

Security sector working to achieve gender equality

Advanced Gender Equality Seminar for the Representatives of the South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs' Forum (SEEMIC) held online



Ten representatives of the South East Europe Military Intelligence Chief's Forum from 7 countries actively participated and learned about various types and forms of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse during the two-day Gender Awareness Seminar.

The seminar was co-organized by UNDP SEESAC and the Regional Cooperation Council. It equipped the participants from the security sector institutions with an improved understanding of gender-based discrimination and knowledge to recognize and address gender-based discrimination to ensure a gender-friendly environment conducive to the overall mandate of their institutions. During the seminar, representatives learned about the relevant international legal framework, various types and forms of gender-based discrimination, and received examples of practical initiatives in the region aiming to address these issues.

Additionally, the draft of the new *Regional Manual on Combating Gender-Based Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Abuse*was presented to the participants. The Manual analyses legal background in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia and presents a unique knowledge tool produced jointly by Ministries of Defence in those countries to tackle those issues.

By advancing gender equality and integrating a gender perspective across all areas, security sector institutions strive to better understand and address security threats from domestic, regional, and global perspectives. Importantly, they strive to become more representative of the populations they serve. Integration of gender perspective enables security sector institutions to have a broader pool of candidates from which to recruit, retain and develop the skills of their staff. Finally, integration of the gender perspective enables security sector institutions to fulfill their obligations of advancing gender equality stemming from the international legal framework, including the obligations under the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs).

Advanced Gender Equality Seminar for the Representatives of the South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs' Forum is organized within the scope of *Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans*, a project financed by the governments of Norway and the Slovak Republic. The project provides the Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces with a platform to exchange ideas and develop policies that ensure long-term and sustainable inclusion of the gender perspective in defense policies and practices.

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