

# 5.10 Women, Gender and DDR

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## 5.10 Women, Gender and DDR

### Summary

Although DDR is often associated with male combatants, women play a number of different roles during armed conflict and should be carefully and fully considered in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of DDR processes.

When peace agreements are negotiated, DDR advisers participating in mediation processes should ensure that women's interests and needs are adequately included. They should start by insisting on political space for female representatives at the negotiations, ensuring that those representatives understand DDR-related clauses, and confirming that those clauses include and respond to the specific needs of both male and female DDR participants and beneficiaries.

Planning for DDR should be based on gender-sensitive assessments. Analysis should be gendered and intersectional, taking into account masculinities, femininities, gender roles, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Assessments should also include data that is disaggregated by sex, age and disability. Assessment teams should be comprised of both men and women, and should identify gender-specific obstacles for men's and women's access to DDR (e.g., childcare facilities, caregiving and domestic work responsibilities, transportation, lack of access to information, stigma, shifting gender roles and insecurity). Baseline information on patterns of weapons possession and ownership among women and girls should also be collected to guard against exploitation of women and girls by military personnel, in attempts either to cache weapons or to control access to DDR.

DDR processes should also be accompanied by public information and strategic communication interventions that deliver gender-responsive and gender-transformative messaging. These interventions should address barriers to women's participation in DDR. These barriers may include uncertainty around women's eligibility, the common misperception that a weapon is always required to enter DDR, or community stigma towards female ex-combatants and women and girls formerly associated with armed forces and groups.

Eligibility for DDR processes shall not discriminate on the basis of gender or age. DDR programmes, DDR-related tools, and reintegration support as part of sustaining peace shall recognize and take into consideration the different experiences, roles, responsibilities, needs and capacities of men and women, including those of different ages and those with/without disabilities, and reflect these in the design, implementation and evaluation of DDR processes. If women are not adequately integrated into DDR processes, gender stereotypes – of masculinity associated with violence and femininity dissociated from power and decision-making – may be reinforced. The design of DDR processes shall be gender responsive and transformative, actively working to transform harmful, inequitable gender norms into positive ones and promoting gender equality.

Women and men have an equal right to participate in security delivery and oversight. When DDR processes are linked to security sector reform (SSR), women should be made aware of their eligibility for integration into security sector institutions, and an institutional environment that is conducive to inclusiveness should be cultivated. This may include gender-responsive budgeting, ensuring that gender is mainstreamed throughout institutional policy, and the provision of gender training and adequate equipment and facilities for both men and women.

## 1. Module scope and objectives

This module aims to provide DDR practitioners with guidance on the gender aspects of planning, designing and implementing DDR processes in both mission and non-mission settings. It outlines the specific actions that need to be carried out to ensure that DDR processes are gender responsive and gender transformative. The module highlights female-specific actions because the needs of women and girls have often been overlooked in DDR. However, it does not discount that men and boys also have specific needs, and the module provides guidance on these as well. As this module refers to girls and boys associated with armed forces and groups, it should be used in conjunction with IDDRS 5.20 on Children and DDR and IDDRS 5.30 on Youth and DDR.

## 2. Terms, definitions and abbreviations

Annex A contains a list of the abbreviations used in this standard. A complete glossary of all terms, definitions and abbreviations used in the IDDRS series is given in IDDRS 1.20.

In the IDDRS series, the words 'shall', 'should', 'may', 'can' and 'must' are used to indicate the intended degree of compliance with the standards laid down. This use is consistent with the language used in the International Organization for Standardization standards and guidelines:

- a) 'shall' is used to indicate requirements, methods or specifications that are to be applied in order to conform to the standard;
- b) 'should' is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications;
- c) 'may' is used to indicate a possible method or course of action;
- d) 'can' is used to indicate a possibility and capability; and
- e) 'must' is used to indicate an external constraint or obligation.

**Female combatants:** Women and girls who participated in armed conflicts as active combatants using arms.

**Female and male dependants:** Women, girls, men and boys who are part of ex-combatant households. They are mainly socially and financially dependent on ex-combatants, although they may also have kept other community ties (examples include wives/war wives, children, mothers/parents, female siblings and female members of the extended family).

**Females associated with armed forces and groups:** Women and girls who participated in armed conflicts in support roles, whether by force or voluntarily. Rather than being members of the civilian community, they are economically and socially dependent on the armed force or group for their income and social support (examples include porters, cooks, nurses, spies, administrators, translators, radio operators, medical assistants, public information officers, camp leaders and sex workers/slaves).

**Gender:** The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women, men, girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context and time specific and changeable. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context and includes expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity).

**Gender balance:** The objective of achieving representational numbers of women and men.

**Gender equality:** The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.

**Gender-based violence (GBV):** An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private. GBV may include sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage and harmful traditional practices, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

**Gender mainstreaming:** The process of assessing the 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 as well as 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 perpetrated. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to achieve gender equality.<sup>1</sup>

**Gender-responsive objectives:** Programme and project objectives that are non-discriminatory, equally benefit women and men and aim at correcting gender imbalances.

**Gender transformative:** An approach that actively examines, questions and changes rigid gender norms and imbalances of power.

**Intersectionality:** Overlapping and interdependent systems of disadvantage or discrimination. Intersectionality refers to how expectations connected to gender roles interact with other identities or societal markers – such as race, ethnicity, disability, ethno-religious background, sexual orientation, social class, age and marital status – and places people in different positions of power and privilege, discrimination and exclusion based on the combination or intersection of their various identities.

**Sex:** The biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth.

**Sexual violence:** A form of gender-based violence that encompasses any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comment or advance, or act to traffic, or is otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. Sexual violence takes multiple forms and includes rape, sexual abuse, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, forced abortion, forced prostitution, trafficking, sexual enslavement, forced circumcision, castration and forced nudity.

**Toxic masculinities:** Norms around masculinity that are harmful (to men and more broadly), for example, linking ideas like aggression or violence to "being a man".

**Violence against women:** Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private. This includes violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Introduction

Gender is often not fully considered in DDR planning and delivery. This is despite the passage of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (WPS), nine subsequent resolutions, updates to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against

Women (CEDAW), and the drafting of a set of conflict-sensitive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One reason for this oversight is the assumption that armed men are the focus of DDR. However, while males (men and boys) may more obviously take part in armed conflict and make up the largest number of combatants and victims/survivors, females (women and girls) are also likely to have been involved in violence and may have participated in every aspect of a given conflict. Women and girls are not only peacemakers but also play supporting and combatant roles, either throughout the armed conflict or for brief periods. They also carry out other forms of work that contribute to war. Their specific needs and experiences should therefore be carefully and fully integrated into DDR processes.

Making DDR processes gender sensitive requires intentional and deliberate efforts by UN global leadership,<sup>3</sup> as well as mediators, negotiators, assessment teams, DDR planners and programme staff, and external evaluation and auditing teams. It also requires steadfast and creative political engagement by all UN actors to advocate with every level of national Government, beginning with the most senior. To ensure that the efforts of UN global leadership are translated operationally, there must be accountability mechanisms built into the human resources chain, ensuring that staff at every level work towards the successful implementation of gender-responsive and -transformative DDR processes. Such mechanisms start with intentionality in the recruitment of staff – both those who possess technical knowledge on gender and managers who demonstrate accountability in the operationalization of commitments. Only through steadfast efforts at every level of the UN system can a conducive environment be created where negotiators support gender-equitable access to negotiations and gender perspectives in all ceasefires and peace agreements, gender-responsive assessments and planning are conducted, and DDR staff ensure gender perspectives in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of DDR processes.<sup>4</sup>

## 4. Guiding principles

IDDRS 2.10 on The UN Approach to DDR sets out the main principles that guide all aspects of DDR processes. This section outlines how these principles apply to women, gender and DDR.

### 4.1 Voluntary

DDR processes shall be voluntary for men, women, boys and girls.

### 4.2 People centred

DDR practitioners shall recognize that men and women, as well as those of differing ages and physical ability, have different support needs. They shall design DDR processes that are culturally sensitive, appropriate and relevant, and offer specifically designed services for each group. Gender-responsive DDR processes shall strive to reach objectives that are non-discriminatory, equally benefit women, men, boys and girls, and aim at correcting gender imbalances. DDR processes shall support ways of preventing reprisal or discrimination against, or stigmatization of, those who participate. The rights of the community shall also be protected and upheld.

#### 4.2.1 Criteria for participation/eligibility

When establishing eligibility criteria for entry into DDR processes, no group or individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex, age, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political opinion, or other personal characteristics or associations.

#### 4.2.2 Unconditional release and protection of children

DDR processes for children (boys and girls) shall not be contingent on political negotiations or adult DDR processes. Efforts shall always be made to prevent recruitment and to secure the release of children associated with armed forces or groups, irrespective of the stage of the conflict or status of peace negotiations. Regardless of their potential status as alleged offenders, all children should be treated primarily as victims and in accordance with international law, standards and norms. Special provisions and efforts may be needed to reach girls, who often face unique obstacles to identification and release. These obstacles may include specific sociocultural factors, such as the perception that girl “wives” are dependants rather than associated children, gendered barriers to information and sensitization, or fear by armed forces and groups of admitting to the presence of girls. Any individual under the age of 18 years (boys and girls) should be considered and treated as a “child”, per article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and therefore benefit from the special rights and protection foreseen for children under international law. For further information, see IDDRS 5.20 on Children and DDR and IDDRS 5.30 on Youth and DDR.

### 4.3 Gender responsive and inclusive

DDR practitioners shall recognize and support the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys in DDR processes. This does not imply that women and men become the same, but that DDR processes take into consideration the different experiences, roles, responsibilities, needs and capacities of women, men, girls and boys and reflect these in the design, implementation and evaluation of DDR processes. For DDR processes to ensure the fair treatment of women, men, girls and boys according to their needs, special measures should be put in place to compensate for social or historical disadvantages. Thus, equitable treatment may include equal treatment of all groups or different treatment that is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.<sup>5</sup> It also recognizes equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, and recognizes that they may face discrimination or violence based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, which DDR practitioners shall take into consideration. To check that DDR processes are gender responsive and inclusive in their planning, design, implementation and evaluation, DDR practitioners should consider using existing checklists and tools that help practitioners assess to what extent their project is fully responsive to gender and age sensitivities.<sup>6</sup>

### 4.4 Conflict sensitive

DDR practitioners shall always uphold the “do no harm” principle. This is particularly important to consider when putting in place UN-supported prevention, protection and monitoring



mechanisms (including systems for ensuring access to justice and police protection, etc.) to prevent and punish sexual and gender-based violence, harassment and intimidation, or any other violation of human rights.

#### **4.5 Context specific**

DDR practitioners shall recognize that gender-sensitive DDR needs to be flexible and context specific.

#### **4.6 Nationally and locally owned**

DDR practitioners shall uphold the importance of national and local ownership as a key guiding principle. Targeted efforts for the systematic development of national and local capacity shall be centred around an assessment of the context and the DDR activities to be implemented. For guidance on how to build the capacity of local and national institutions, see IDDRS 3.10 on Integrated DDR Planning: Processes and Structures.

#### **4.7 Well planned**

DDR practitioners shall incorporate gender-specific considerations as part of a well-planned DDR process. These considerations range from safety and security to planning, and from public information and community sensitization to implementation, transition and exit strategies. Exit strategies shall be defined as soon as possible, and focus on how DDR processes will transform into broader and/or longer-term development strategies, including for gender equality.

## **5. Normative frameworks**

DDR operates within a larger environment where many existing international mandates are relevant (see IDDRS 2.11 on The Legal Framework for UN DDR). A non-exhaustive overview of the most relevant international mandates is provided below:

*Security Council resolution 1325, subsequent resolutions and CEDAW recommendations 30 and 35*

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) marked an important step towards the recognition of women's contributions to peace and reconstruction and drew attention to the impact of conflict on women and girls. The 10 Security Council resolutions on WPS – 1325, 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019) – have developed and enforced the implementation of the WPS agenda and established oversight mechanisms. They call for DDR planning to be gender sensitive and to address the “different needs of female and male ex-combatants ... and the needs of their dependants” (S/RES/1325, para. 13) and to provide full access to and address the needs of women and girls associated with armed groups in DDR programmes (S/RES/1889, para. 13).

Resolution 2122 calls on Member States and UN entities to ensure that funding includes provisions for the full range of medical, psychosocial, legal and livelihood services to women

affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations. WPS also recalls the importance of using sex-disaggregated baseline data, including data on sexual violence (S/RES/1960, para. 8), for the planning and implementation of programmes.

Resolution 1820 recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war and a war crime, which means that DDR processes should both provide recovery services for victims/survivors of sexual violence (male and female) as well as support psychosocial and behaviour change programming with members of armed forces and groups who may have been involved in the use of sexual violence in conflict. The impact of conflict-related sexual violence on women's exposure to HIV is noted in resolution 1983, and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS is addressed directly in general recommendation (GR) 30 and resolutions 1325 and 2106. GR30 also calls for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including access to information; family planning services, including emergency contraception; maternal health services; safe abortion services; and post-abortion care. GR35 updates GR19 (1992) in its recognition of the use of sexual violence by armed groups, including rebel forces, gangs and paramilitary groups, which often operate with impunity and use sexual violence as a tool of war.

The adoption of GR30 and GR35 by CEDAW on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations strengthens and articulates the applicability of CEDAW to a diverse range of settings affected by conflict and political crises. Collectively, the WPS resolutions, GR30 and GR35 provide a robust framework to ensure that gender equality is integral to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and accountability. They recognize the various roles women play in combat and their frequent exclusion from mediation, negotiations, reconciliation, conflict prevention and DDR processes at regional, national and local levels.

Resolution 2493 calls for the full implementation of all previous resolutions on WPS; asks the UN to develop context-specific approaches for women's participation in all UN-supported peace processes; and urges Member States to ensure and provide timely support for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace processes.

#### *The Beijing Platform for Action*

At the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, 189 Member States committed themselves to a range of strategic objectives and actions aimed at achieving gender equality. The Member States repeated their commitment to ensuring that women make up 30 per cent of all decision-making bodies and further committed themselves, among other things, to:

- Increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels, and protecting women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation (E.1);
- Reducing excessive military expenditures and controlling the availability of armaments (E.2); and
- Encouraging and supporting women's contributions to fostering a culture of peace (E.4).

#### *The Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security*

The Secretary-General is required to provide an annual report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolutions 1325 and 2122, including updates on progress, challenges and gaps across all areas of the WPS agenda.



In his 2002 study on women, peace and security, the Secretary-General recommended the following actions on DDR:

- Incorporate the needs and priorities of women and girls as ex-combatants, “camp followers” and families of ex-combatants in the design and implementation of DDR programmes.
- Increase the number of programmes for child soldiers, fully include attention to the specific situations and needs of girl soldiers, and identify means to support child soldiers, including girls, who do not enter DDR programmes.
- Recognize the impact of armed conflict and displacement on family relations, and develop awareness of the risk of increased domestic violence, especially in the families of ex-combatants.
- Develop programmes on the prevention and mitigation of domestic violence that are designed for families and communities, and especially male ex-combatants.
- Recognize and use the contributions of women and girls in encouraging ex-combatants to lay down arms and participate in weapons-collection programmes, and ensure that they benefit from any incentives provided for such activities.
- Ensure the full access of women and girls to all resources and benefits provided in reintegration programmes, including skills development programmes.

In 2010, on the ten-year anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325, the Secretary-General’s women, peace and security report included a seven-point action plan for gender-responsive peacebuilding ([S/2010/466](#)). This plan included specific, measurable commitments and indicators in the areas of conflict resolution, post-conflict planning, post-conflict financing, gender-responsive civilian capacity, women’s representation in post-conflict governance, rule of law and economic recovery.

In his 2020 report on women, peace and security (S/2020/946) marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of resolution 1325, the Secretary-General stated: “Although women combatants represent a small percentage of demobilized caseloads in peacekeeping missions, the implementation of community violence reduction projects has shown the positive impact of women in mitigating local conflict, preventing recruitment into armed groups, increasing the sustainability of reintegration and building community resilience” (para. 26). He also stressed that, to support inclusive political transitions, the Security Council should more consistently issue specific instructions and mandates to integrate a gender perspective into security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

#### *Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament and other relevant policies*

There are a number of relevant policy frameworks and developments that reinforce the WPS agenda, including, but not limited to, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically SDGs 5, 8 and 16 ([A/RES/70/1](#)), the [Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament; the Secretary General’s New Agenda for Peace](#); the General Assembly resolution on women and disarmament ([A/RES/65/69](#)) and its successors; the outcomes of the meetings under the [Programme of Action](#) on small arms and light weapons including those in 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2021; the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium ([MOSAIC](#)),<sup>7</sup> in particular the module on Women, Men and the Gendered Nature of Small Arms and Light Weapons; the sustaining peace initiative ([S/RES/2282 \(2016\)](#), [A/RES/70/262](#)); and the two peace and security reviews of 2015 ([A/70/357](#) and

[A/69/968](#)) conducted alongside the [Global Study on 1325](#). The peace and security reviews underscore the principles of resolution 1325, highlighting key gaps in women's engagement and calling for the full participation of women in conflict prevention and early warning, peace negotiations and mediation, and peacebuilding at the regional, national and local levels.

The Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament recognizes the gendered nature of small arms and light weapons (SALW), including the relationship between weapons ownership and use with specific expressions of masculinities, as well as the different ways men, women, boys and girls are affected by the proliferation and use of weapons, noting that women are disproportionately the victims of gender-based violence facilitated by small arms, and men are the majority of homicide victims. The Agenda calls on States to incorporate gender perspectives in the development of national legislation and policies on disarmament and arms control, including the gendered considerations of ownership, the use and misuse of arms, the different impact of arms, and the ways in which gender roles can shape arms control and disarmament policies and practices. The Secretary-General calls for the empowerment of women, ensuring their equal and meaningful participation and leadership in disarmament and arms control decision-making processes, thus establishing guidance for UN entities supporting national Governments in disarmament or other transitional weapons and ammunition management (WAM) programmes.

The [MOSAIC<sup>8</sup> module 6.10 on Women, Men and the Gendered Nature of Small Arms and Light Weapons](#) establishes clear guidance regarding the planning, analysis, design and implementation of gender-responsive SALW programmes.

The Arms Trade Treaty, a legally binding treaty, recognizes the link between the arms trade and gender-based violence and establishes the risk of gender-based violence as an essential criterion in the export assessment that must precede the authorization of any arms exports.

## 6. Negotiating DDR processes

### 6.1 Ensuring women's participation

Negotiation processes may lead to both national-level and local-level peace agreements that include provisions for DDR (see IDDRS 2.20 on The Politics of DDR). Local-level agreements may take a number of different forms, including (but not limited to) local non-aggression pacts between armed groups, deals regarding access to specific areas and community violence reduction agreements. The access that women have to these negotiation processes, at both the national and local levels, can range from none to tokenistic representation, indirect access or direct access. If women are excluded from the political space, or are represented only in a tokenistic manner, then the UN negotiators and mediators should act as a third party to generate access to decision-makers and enable their meaningful input.

Negotiators and mediators should view women's rights and security as complementary to broader security arrangements and peace demands. This orientation requires significant training and the capacity development of deployment-ready expert pools. Donor support and UN investment in pre-deployment training for all experts is essential to fulfilling Security Council resolutions 1325, 1889, 2122 and 2242, General Assembly resolutions 68/303 and 70/304, and CEDAW recommendations 25 and 30. Mediators should be familiar with the UN criteria for female DDR participants and beneficiaries, including female combatants, women associated with armed

forces and groups, and female dependants (see section 8.1). They should also insist on women’s active involvement in the DDR planning phase. Ensuring that peace negotiations and the planning phases of DDR are gender responsive and transformative will lay the groundwork for mobilizing the financial resources required to address women’s and men’s specific needs.

<b>BOX 1: GUIDANCE ON UN GENDER-INCLUSIVE MEDIATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use normative and legal frameworks (including relevant regional, national and local frameworks) to promote the effective participation and leadership of women in the peaceful settlement of disputes, particularly in formal conflict mediation processes and verification teams.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop and resource concrete strategies on gender and mediation to increase the meaningful inclusion of women, particularly at the senior level, in formal peace negotiations, including recruiting and training international, regional and national women mediators and providing training on gender to all mediators.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide gender and inclusion expertise to all mediation processes from the outset, including training for all mediators on gender and inclusion of gender advisers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Engage parties to armed conflict in dialogue to seek time-bound commitments to cease all acts of conflict-related sexual violence, in compliance with international law, and require female participants of parties to participate in negotiations. Agreements should also recognize the linkages between security and sexual and gender-based violence, and the disproportionate impact of SGBV on women and girls.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conduct systematic consultations with civil society, women’s organizations and victims/survivors of sexual violence in all peacemaking efforts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Encourage language on DDR to include reference to women, girls and boys, ensuring the distinctions and inclusion of combatants, associated persons and dependants (as established groups).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure that provisions regarding security sector reform pave the way for the inclusion of female ex-combatants and women associated with armed forces and groups.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Encourage parties to increase women’s political participation (elected and appointed), including through the promotion of temporary special measures, such as quotas, where relevant.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Encourage the incorporation of gender-responsive and -transformative language and provisions in all ceasefire and peace agreements.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from United Nations Department of Political Affairs, *Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies* (2017).

## 6.2 Gender-aware interventions

Mediation teams should not only have gender capacity but also have equal representation of male and female negotiators. Ensuring all teams have both male and female experts, not just a token female, is a politically important statement for all parties. Having gender and DDR expertise within the negotiating team, in addition to the presence of women on the team, is essential to bring a gender perspective to the negotiation process. Male leaders on mediation and negotiation teams should also actively work with and support parties to ensure women’s meaningful engagement and leadership in the process, as well as the existence of gender-relevant language and provisions in all ceasefires and peace agreements. DDR advisers participating in negotiations should ensure

that women's interests and needs are adequately included. This should start by insisting on political space for female representatives at the negotiations, ensuring they understand DDR-related clauses, and making sure that those clauses include and respond to the specific needs of female DDR participants and beneficiaries.

Negotiation, mediation and facilitation teams should get expert advice on current gender dynamics, gender relations in and around the armed groups and forces, and the impact the peace agreement will have on the status quo. Formal peace negotiations and consultations related to DDR should ensure representation of women's groups, men's groups, and gender equality advocates and groups. The specific impact of the conflict on men and boys should also be considered, including kidnapping, forcible killing of family members and perpetration of sexual violence, as well as being victims/survivors of sexual violence. All the participants (male and female) at the negotiation table should have a good understanding of gender and DDR issues in the country and be willing to include ideas from female representatives.

To ensure this, facilitators of meetings and gender advisers should organize gender workshops for women and men before the start of the formal negotiation, as well as provide negotiation training for women's groups participating in negotiations. The UN should develop a group of deployment-ready experts in gender and DDR, partnering with national, regional and local experts, using a combined strategy of recruitment and training, and insist on their full participation in the DDR process through affirmative action. In some negotiation processes, it may be useful to establish a subcommission on gender. This commission should ensure the gender mainstreaming of all clauses within the peace agreement and follow up on the implementation of agreed commitments.

### **6.3 Female-specific interventions**

Facilitators, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) and senior UN personnel supporting the peace process should receive an explicit mandate to cater for the needs and interests of women and girls, whether combatants, supporters or dependants. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be set in place to assess the effectiveness of their interventions; relevant SDGs offer easily adaptable language through which to capture the impacts of these interventions (see IDDRS 3.50 on Monitoring and Evaluation of DDR).

Peace process facilitators, SRSGs and envoys should be made aware of the internationally agreed (in CEDAW) minimum standard of 30 per cent female participation in any democratic decision-making forum, and at least 20 per cent of the financial support provided for peace negotiations should be allocated towards women's participation. Women who are familiar with the needs of female combatants, veterans and other community-based women peacebuilders should attend and be allowed to raise concerns in the negotiation process. In circumstances where the participation of women is not possible because it would be too unsafe or might be leveraged as a reason for male aggressors to derail negotiations, DDR planners should hold consultations with women's groups and those working on the engagement of men and boys, and other gender minorities, during the planning and pre-deployment phase and ensure that these views are represented at negotiation forums.

Women in leadership positions at national and local levels, including female local councillors, representatives of women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and female community leaders, all of whom will assist in the return of male and female ex-combatants, associated persons

and dependants to civilian life, are stakeholders in the peace process, and should be enlisted as partners in the DDR process. Furthermore, governmental ministries or departments with gender-related mandates should be included in negotiations and decision-making whenever possible.

To facilitate women's participation, the UN advance team or country team should carry out a risk assessment to evaluate the threat posed to women who take up a public role in the peace process. Adequate protection should be provided by governmental bodies or the UN itself if these women's security is at risk.<sup>9</sup> Facilitators and other participants in the peace process should attempt to create an inclusive environment so that female representatives feel comfortable raising their concerns and needs. Meetings should be held at times of the day when and in places where women can attend safely and without reputational risk.

Women's groups and representatives engaged in negotiations should be provided training on political negotiations and mediations, as well as on gender-responsive and child-friendly DDR, including sharing of regional and international best practices. Trained female leaders will contribute towards ensuring that women and girls involved in DDR (female ex-combatants, women and girls associated with armed forces and groups, wives and dependants of male ex-combatants, and members of the receiving community) understand, support and strengthen the DDR process. Political agreements should also recognize the linkages between security and sexual and gender-based violence and its disproportionate impact on women and girls, as well as ensure that provisions regarding security sector reform pave the way for the inclusion of female ex-combatants and women associated with armed forces and groups in line with Security Council resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106. The release of abducted women and girls, as well as men and boys, from within the ranks of armed forces and groups should be made a condition of the peace agreement.

The requirement for the representation of women in structures established to manage DDR processes, such as a national DDR commission, should also be included in the peace accord. Information about the DDR process should be made available to any subsidiary bodies or subcommittees established to facilitate the participation of civil society in the peace process.

## 7. Planning gender-responsive DDR processes

### 7.1 Assessments

Integrated assessments are the first step in the planning, design and implementation of DDR processes and should include analysis of the overall context, as well as DDR-specific and -relevant elements (see IDDRS 3.10 on Integrated DDR Planning: Processes and Structures and IDDRS 3.11 on Integrated Assessments for DDR). These assessments shall be comprehensive, participatory, gender responsive and inclusive, following the principles of national and local ownership outlined in IDDRS 3.30 on National Ownership and National Institutions in DDR. They shall consider the different roles that men, women, boys and girls played during the conflict and their different needs and capacities. Planners shall also develop a thorough understanding of the legal, political, economic, social and security context of the DDR process and how it affects women, men, girls and boys differently, both in armed forces and groups, and in the communities to which former members of armed forces and groups return.

Assessment teams must include gender expertise, which can bring a gender lens to the work of planning and conducting assessments, including pre-analysis and situational analysis phases to support the DDR strategic planning phase (including conflict analysis; armed group profiling; weapons circulation, possession and use; political situation and governance; security; social dynamics; economy; local capacities; and local/national/regional peacebuilding and mediation efforts), integrated technical assessments, process-informing integrated assessments (planning and implementation of DDR processes), linkage-focused integrated assessments (e.g., SSR, transitional justice, organized crime, natural resources), and risk assessments. When assessment teams do not have gender expertise from the start, it can create significant gaps in understanding the different needs and capacities of all individuals and hinder the efficacy of a well-designed programme (see IDDRS 3.11 on Integrated Assessments for DDR).

In addition to gender expertise, assessments shall always ensure that both men and women are on the assessment team, including women who speak local languages. Due to potential pressure, threats or fear, it is essential that assessment teams ensure that there are safe and confidential spaces to consult with men, women, boys and girls (combatants, associates, dependants and community members) separately.

The facilitator of discussions with women and girls shall carefully consult with the women and girls in question. Assessments should also take place among groups containing members of different ages and abilities, to ensure that the voices and experiences of youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses are considered. Understanding the specific needs of women with disabilities is essential to designing a programme that can best respond to their needs and capacities. Women with disabilities often face a double stigma, experience abuse and social exclusion, and are financially and physically vulnerable. Additionally, women and girls often take on additional caregiving roles for returning DDR participants with disabilities (see IDDRS 5.80 on Disability-Inclusive DDR).

It is also essential to take into account class, ethnicity and religion because intersecting power differentials may influence community assessments. For example, community dynamics may privilege older white men's perspectives and views over those of women, and particularly over those of younger women or younger women of a different race or religion, even if they are equally competent. For more information on assessments, see also IDDRS 5.20 on Children and DDR, IDDRS 5.30 on Youth and DDR, and IDDRS 5.80 on Disability-Inclusive DDR.

## **BOX 2: ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, GIRLS AND AT-RISK GROUPS**

Commitment 4 of the Inter-agency Standing Committee Principals' Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations highlights the importance of enabling affected populations to play a decision-making role in processes that affect them. While this is a valid principle for men, women, boys and girls who are DDR participants or live in receiving communities, the IDDRS recognizes the importance of promoting the active participation of women, girls and at-risk groups (e.g., elderly, disabled, ethnic/religious minorities, victims/survivors of SGBV, sexual minorities) in assessment processes and as staff and leaders in community-based structures, given they are most often not properly consulted or involved in the design of processes in the same way as able-bodied males. Involving women, girls and at-risk groups in all aspects of programming is essential to fulfilling the guiding principles and approaches that are outlined in the IDDRS. However, such involvement – especially as leaders or managers, but even as small business owners – can lead to stigma, discrimination or even violence. Therefore, the best practice in DDR settings is for DDR practitioners to include public information and strategic communication, education, and awareness-raising programming around gender, including masculinities and women's empowerment, that actively engage men and key community, religious and women's leaders (see also IDDRS 4.60 on Public Information and Strategic Communication in Support of DDR). Approaches shall always be carefully contextualized.

### 7.1.1 Understanding gender roles

A comprehensive gender analysis shall be undertaken as part of any assessment, which shall encompass gender roles in armed forces and groups and in the community. An understanding of the core elements of gender roles and how they shift for a DDR participant or beneficiary shall be applied to the planning, design and implementation of DDR processes.

## **BOX 3: CORE ELEMENTS OF GENDER ROLES DURING CONFLICT**

### **Role of provider**

In conflict settings, identities as providers are typically undermined as economic opportunities stagnate or decline. Limited access to employment opportunities, the destruction of livelihoods, displacement and other changes brought about by transition can have a particularly negative impact on men's ability to earn a living and provide for their families, as their skills may become obsolete or undervalued. In contrast, women's roles often expand as they take on greater responsibility for income-generation activities as incomes decline or men leave home to fight or to find employment elsewhere. These changes in roles may be temporary to cope with livelihood insecurity in conflict, but they may also evoke fundamental changes in gender equality. Men may perceive the expansion of women's roles as providers to be competition, and it may contribute to feelings of disempowerment, particularly if men are unable to fulfil their roles as providers.

### **Role of procreator**



Economic desperation, displacement and violence endemic to conflict settings erode the cultural barriers that sanction and set boundaries for sexual behaviour. These changes can disrupt family structures and transform both men's and women's identities as procreators. Crisis and conflict can disrupt family structures. Men and women who join or are associated with armed forces and groups may be more likely to enter into unconventional marriages or relationships. Men's responsibilities as fathers and husbands can diminish in importance, while the number of girlfriends, partners and offspring becomes a dominant symbol of manhood. Women's attitudes towards sexual relationships and attraction also often change as traditional or cultural norms break down in the face of conflict. As women become more vulnerable in the deteriorating security situation, they may become increasingly willing to risk abuse by seeking protection and economic support from armed groups or male combatants. Often, female combatants and women associated with armed forces and groups (WAAFG) may face social stigma due to their exposure to GBV, to wartime relationships outside of marriage, and to the children born from these circumstances and relationships. While women often face pressure to marry and return to caretaking roles, men's roles as caretakers and fathers may be devalued by the length of time they spent away from their communities and families.

### **Gaining prestige**

The changes associated with conflict can alter men's and women's ability to gain prestige. Social structures break down during conflicts, and the typical opportunities that would provide prestige are no longer available, or at least not as easily accessible. New influences and forms of manipulation coming from elders or political elites, armed groups or States can reprioritize or even distort social values and redefine what constitutes prestige. In conflict settings, typical positive role models can be replaced with those that symbolize radicalized views, power or rebellion, and people who use violence are often celebrated. For many men and women, membership in an armed force or group provides new and alternative ways to achieve status, rank and recognition.

### **Role of protector**

When faced with insecurity, men's and women's identities as protectors may take on increased importance as they respond to threats to their families and communities. Being able to defend one's family and community can become a celebrated aspect of manhood, reinforced by peers, wives and elders. The increased vulnerability of a man's family during conflict can reduce his ability to fulfil his role as protector – often a dominant part of a man's identity across cultures – and evoke feelings of disempowerment. Armed groups or state forces may also play on this vulnerability as a tactic of war, using public attacks on women and children to humiliate men and undermine their role as protector. Conversely, in some contexts, women may take on the role of protector while the men are away or if the men they rely on become injured or disabled from the violence.

*Source: UN Development Programme and the UN Inter-agency Working Group on DDR, **Blame It on the War? The Gender Dimensions of Violence in DDR** (2012).*

With an understanding of the dynamics outlined in Box 3, it should be acknowledged that there may be differences in the life choices made by women and girls, as opposed to men and boys. This is because women, men, girls and boys have different roles before, during and after conflicts, and they face different problems and expectations from society and their families. Those with children born out of wedlock may also face stigma and community exclusion. They may, as a result, have different preferences regarding DDR.

## **7.2 Gender-aware interventions**

Gender expertise shall be considered an essential element of any assessment mission carried out by the UN, specifically those teams with DDR-related mandates, ensuring that analysis is gendered and intersectional, taking into account masculinities, femininities, gender roles, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation, among other relevant factors, and that it is informed by sex, age and other relevant disaggregated statistics. If a national DDR commission has been formed, the assessment team should include an assessment of the commission's skills and capacities related to gender expertise and recommendations for a gender adviser and gender capacity development. Gender analysis and information shall also be adequately reflected in reporting to the Security Council and the UN Development Group that coordinates joint assessment missions before the deployment of a peacekeeping mission.

Assessments shall include an understanding of gender-specific vulnerabilities among men, women, boys and girls and gender-specific needs, capacities, experiences and knowledge, as well as men's and women's access to decision-making positions and resources. Assessments should identify gender-specific obstacles for men's and women's access to DDR (childcare facilities, caregiving and domestic work responsibilities, transportation, lack of access to information, stigma, shifting gender roles, insecurity, etc.). These assessments may include but should not be limited to:

- An overview of armed forces and groups, including disaggregated data on age, sex and persons with disabilities;
- The political situation and intersection with gender dynamics;
- The security situation, including a gendered understanding of the sources, causes and triggers of armed conflict;
- The women, peace and security context, including the role women and girls have played in conflict and in armed groups, the gender situation with regard to political and socioeconomic equality and opportunities, sexual and gender-based violence statistics and patterns, and relevant institutional capacities and legal frameworks; and
- An ongoing assessment of community attitudes towards returning female and male combatants, associated persons and dependants.

Baseline data and analysis should be gathered and then reassessed at various stages of the DDR process.

## **7.3 Female-specific interventions**

The number and percentage of women and girls in armed groups and forces, and their rank and category, should be ascertained as much as possible before planning for DDR begins. The assessment team should identify local capacities of women's organizations already focusing on security-related issues and work with them to learn about the presence of women and girls in armed forces and groups. All interventions should be designed to support and strengthen the existing capacity of such organizations. It is critical for DDR planners to identify and cultivate male leadership to support this process and to consider the safety of women engaged in collecting and storing information. This may require working closely with negotiators, information and

sensitization staff, and key national counterparts to foster an enabling environment to support access to information and women's entry into DDR processes. Measures should also be put in place — in cooperation with existing military structures, where possible — to deal with commanders who refuse to disclose the number of female combatants or associates in the armed forces or groups they command. It is the human right of all women and girls who have been abducted to receive assistance to safely leave an armed force or group, and this shall be factored into planning for assessments.

Baseline information on patterns of weapons possession and ownership among women and girls should also be collected to guard against exploitation of women and girls by military personnel, in attempts either to cache weapons or control access to DDR. Weapons surveys are essential for the disarmament component of a DDR programme (see section 8.2) and for transitional weapons and ammunition activities (see section 8.5.2). Data disaggregated by sex and age is a prerequisite for understanding the age- and gender-specific impacts of arms misuse and for designing evidence-based, gender-responsive programming. It is important to take into consideration the fact that, while women may be active members of armed groups, they may not actually hold weapons. Evidence has shown that female combatants have been left out of DDR processes as a result of this oversight on multiple occasions in the past. A gender-responsive mapping of armed forces and groups is therefore critical to identify patterns of gender-differentiated roles within armed forces and groups, and to ensure that the design of any approach is appropriately targeted. For more information on gender-responsive weapons surveys, see IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament.

Women's organizations, community peacebuilding forums and others working on gender issues should be routinely consulted during assessment missions. They are often a valuable source of information for planners on various topics. For instance, they may have gained information that is useful to DDR planning — for example, through negotiating with armed groups to ensure that their sons and daughters are not recruited. They may also provide insights on the risks that women and girls face during transportation to and from demobilization sites, and identify the obstacles that women can encounter when accessing reinsertion and reintegration support. These obstacles may include an inability to attend training courses due to the need to conduct domestic work and/or care for family members.<sup>10</sup> Women's organizations can also provide information about local perceptions of returning female ex-combatants and of women and girls associated with armed groups and forces, which will be paramount in designing effective reintegration strategies. In order to deal with obstacles to reintegration and better prepare the community and returnees, analysis should focus closely on potential causes of insecurity for returning women and on the extent of gender-based insecurity (e.g., gender-based violence) in communities more generally.

The assessment team's report and recommendations for personnel and budgetary requirements for the DDR process should include provisions for female DDR experts, female interpreters and female field staff for DDR. Female personnel must be properly trained, resourced and mandated. Female interpreters familiar with relevant terminology and concepts should be hired and trained by assessment teams to help interview female ex-combatants and women formerly associated with armed forces and groups.

The assessment team should identify community responses to giving female former members of armed forces and groups the option to join reconstructed peacetime armed forces and other security institutions such as the police, intelligence services, border police, customs, immigration

services and other law-enforcement services. To boost the number of female peacekeepers, women's eligibility for peacekeeping roles in other conflict zones should also be determined.

## **7.4 Public information and strategic communication**

Public information and strategic communication (PI/SC) are key support activities that are instrumental in the overall success of DDR processes. Public information is used to inform DDR participants, beneficiaries and other stakeholders of the process, while strategic communication influences attitudes towards DDR (see IDDRS 4.60 on Public Information and Strategic Communication in Support of DDR).

Both public information and strategic communication interventions should deliver gender-responsive and gender-transformative messaging. These interventions may include public radio, online social media, community events, visual media (television, film, billboards), and print materials and should commence before DDR begins.

During the planning phase, PI officers shall work with gender officers to formulate the PI/SC strategy by taking into consideration gender analysis and the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls. This includes understanding the impact of gender roles, gendered power structures in society and relevant institutions, including armed forces and groups, communities and national Government, as well as gender stereotypes, gender expression and sexual orientation. Understanding literacy levels and effective communication channels for each group is an important part of both the initial planning assessment and continued assessments. PI officers may also consider partnerships with female opinion leaders – namely, public personalities who actively produce and interpret multiple sources of information to form an opinion. With the advent of social media, these actors generate viewership and large followings through regular programming and online presence.

### **7.4.1 Gender-aware interventions**

Each piece of information or event that is part of a PI/SC intervention should leverage opportunities to support gender equality and peacebuilding. Just as PI/SC campaigns are not one-off events, and require sustained engagement throughout the entire DDR process, so does the consideration of a gender perspective. If one communication tool or perspective does not work well during testing with an audience, then PI officers should work closely with gender officers to refine their approach to best meet the local context. PI/SC interventions and tools should include messaging on:

- Women's and men's roles as leaders working in partnership;
- Demilitarization of masculinities;
- Positive gender norms, including men's roles in communities as fathers;
- Destigmatization of psychosocial support services and individuals dealing with post-traumatic stress;
- Promotion of non-violent behaviour;
- Destigmatization of female combatants, females associated with armed forces and groups and their children, and male combatants;

- Men's and women's mutual responsibility and awareness around reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS;
- Women's empowerment; and
- Destigmatization of victims/survivors of sexual violence and their children.

**BOX 4: REASONS TO CONSIDER GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS IN PI/SC FOR DDR PROCESSES**

- Rises in intimate partner/family violence are common in post-conflict contexts as combatants and associated groups return, community tensions are high, and combatants lose status and face economic and social pressures.
- Combatants often have a socialization to violence, which may increase the use of violence in the home.
- Unaddressed mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression, may increase the propensity to use violence.
- Negative coping mechanisms, including drugs and alcohol, can exacerbate the proclivity to use violence.
- There is often an increased availability of small arms in the home, which increases rates of gender-based and sexual violence against women and girls.
- Underlying gender dynamics and/or social/cultural norms may have shifted during and after conflict. For example, women's empowerment in post-conflict environments can provoke or intensify men's feelings of resentment or disempowerment, potentially putting women at heightened risk of violence in the domestic sphere.

#### 7.4.2 Female-specific interventions

Before DDR processes begin, it is imperative to work with political actors to gain access to women and girls and to sensitize them to DDR processes. Targeting women takes creativity and innovation, particularly considering that women may not receive the same information as male combatants, as they may be purposely hidden by male commanders or may have self-demobilized. It may require identifying and cultivating male champions among armed forces and groups or engaging local women's groups, community leaders, religious leaders and/or traditional authorities who may be more effective at reaching women. Understanding where to find women and which communication channels are most effective (e.g., in marketplaces, near water pumps, at coffee gatherings/social gatherings, when herding animals/gathering wood around the village, via radio) is essential.

Common issues preventing the participation of women in DDR – which should be addressed when conceptualizing and implementing PI/SC campaigns – include:

- The misperception that a weapon is required to enter a DDR programme;
- Poor female access to communication sources (radios, newspapers, etc.) utilized and/or lower literacy rates than men;

- Females' fear of association with an armed force or group during peacetime, particularly when they were coerced to join;
- Some women choosing to self-demobilize and return to communities for fear of stigma or shame;
- Females' security concerns or the fear of (re-)exposure to sexual and gender-based violence during DDR processes;
- Commanders hiding abducted women and girls for fear of legal and social consequences;
- Commanders of armed forces and groups deliberately holding female combatants because they perceive them as being essential to the group or due to harmful cultural stereotypes;
- Commanders not passing on information related to DDR to women (or passing on disinformation) because they fear that women's participation will negatively impact the number of DDR places available to male combatants.

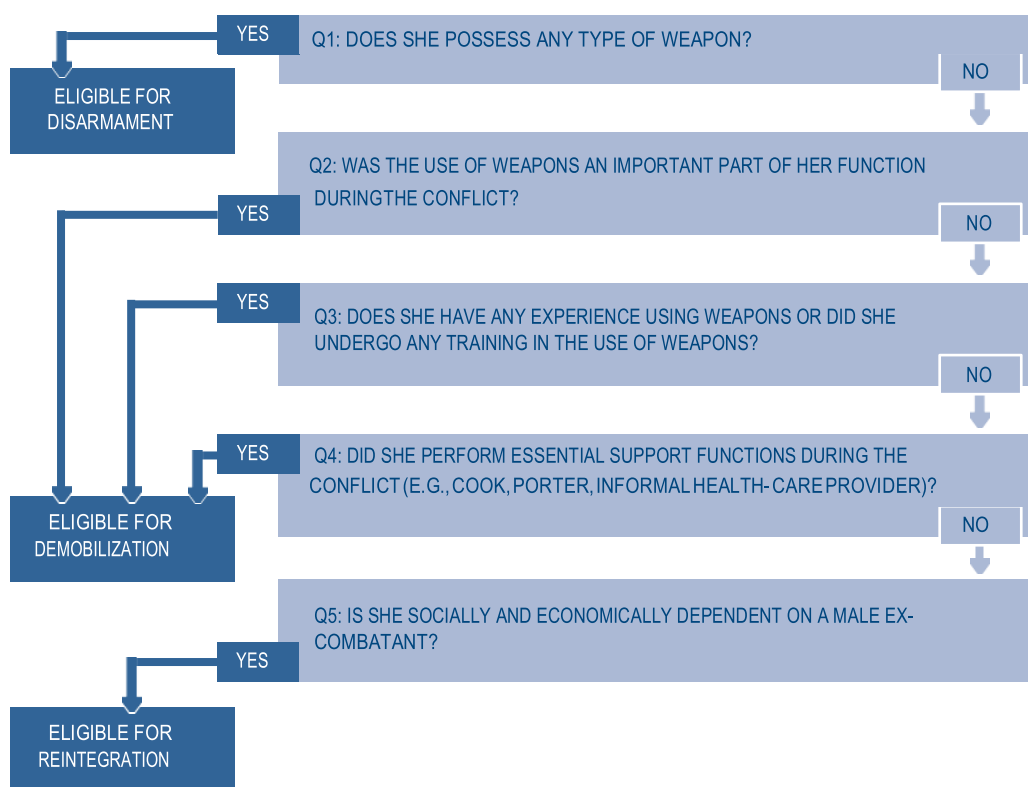
## 8. Gender-responsive approaches to DDR

### 8.1 Eligibility criteria for DDR programmes

Eligibility for a DDR programme may or may not require the physical possession of a weapon and/or ammunition, depending on the context. The determination of eligibility criteria shall be based on the peace agreement or ceasefire, if these documents include relevant provisions. In either case, eligibility for a DDR programme must be gender inclusive and shall not discriminate on the basis of age or gender. For these reasons, DDR practitioners shall be aware of different categories of eligibility and should ensure that proper public information and sensitization with commanders and potential DDR participants and beneficiaries is completed.

As illustrated in Figure 1, women associated with armed forces and groups may be participants in DDR programmes. As these individuals are typically unarmed, they may not be eligible for disarmament, but will be eligible for demobilization and reintegration (see also IDDRS 3.21 on DDR Process Stakeholders). Past experience has shown that women who are eligible to participate in DDR programmes may not be aware of their eligibility, may be deliberately excluded by commanders, or may be deprived of their weapons to the benefit of men seeking to enter the DDR programme. While Figure 1 could also apply to men, it has been designed specifically to minimize the potential for women to be excluded from DDR programmes.

**FIGURE 1: WOMEN’S ELIGIBILITY FOR DDR PROGRAMMES**



## 8.2 Disarmament

All disarmament operations shall be designed and implemented in a gender- and age-responsive manner, including a recognition of the differing impacts and perceptions of such processes on women, men, boys and girls. Such an approach requires gender expertise, gender analysis, the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data, and the meaningful participation of women and girls at each stage of the process.

If women are not adequately integrated into DDR programmes, and disarmament operations in particular, gender stereotypes of masculinity associated with violence and femininity dissociated from power and decision-making may be reinforced. Gender-sensitive disarmament operations are more effective in addressing the impact of the illicit circulation and misuse of weapons than those that do not incorporate a gender perspective (see MOSAIC module 6.10 on Women, Men and the Gendered Nature of Small Arms and Light Weapons). Therefore, ensuring that gender is adequately integrated into all stages of disarmament and other DDR-related arms control initiatives is essential to the overall success of DDR processes.

Disarmament can increase a combatant’s feeling of vulnerability. In addition to providing physical protection, weapons are often important symbols of power and status. Men may experience disarmament as a symbolic loss of manhood and status. Undermined masculinities at all ages can lead to profound feelings of frustration and disempowerment. For women, disarmament can threaten the gender equality and respect that may have been gained through the possession of a weapon while in an armed force or group.

DDR programmes should explore ways to promote alternative symbols of power that are relevant to particular cultural contexts and that foster peace dividends. This can be done by



removing the gun as a symbol of power, addressing key concerns over safety and protection, and developing strategic engagement with women (particularly female dependants) in disarmament operations.

Disarmament teams should be gender balanced and include a national gender specialist. Disarmament operations should also ensure that there are both male and female UN military personnel in leadership roles at pick-up points and mobile disarmament sites, and participating in the destruction of weapons. UN military may also be engaged to monitor and report on security-related issues, including incidents of sexual and gender-based violence. For more information, see IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament and IDDRS 4.40 on UN Military Roles and Responsibilities.

### **8.3 Demobilization**

Demobilization occurs when members of armed forces and groups transition from military to civilian life and has different implications for women and men. For example, while in armed forces or groups women may have earned a higher degree of equality and social recognition as combatants than they previously had in civilian life. Demobilization may mean that these status gains are lost. It is known that women often self-demobilize in order to avoid the stigma associated with being a female combatant, war wife or sex slave. For men, demobilization may also signal a loss of status and respect gained as a fighter. Additionally, high-ranking men may gain key political positions in a new Government, but lower-ranking men may be passed over and experience disillusionment or feel betrayed by commanders.

Appropriate attention shall be given to the needs of women during demobilization so that (1) they are not excluded from demobilization operations; (2) their security and well-being is assured; (3) demobilization operations respond to their specific needs and leverage their unique capacities; and (4) they are not overlooked in terms of reintegration support and/or security sector reform processes. To fulfil these objectives, demobilization operations shall be based on gender-sensitive eligibility criteria (see section 8.1) and operational protocols that take into account the needs and experiences of women. Where possible, women who are self-demobilized shall be encouraged to join DDR programmes in order to receive ex-combatant status and access to other forms of support. Alternatively, when the stigma of being associated with armed forces or groups prevents women from participating in a DDR programme, other, less visible methods of reaching out to them should be explored.

Women's specific needs at demobilization sites should be considered. Registration forms and screening and profiling tools should be designed to supply sex- and age-disaggregated data on armed forces and groups, and should be responsive to women's specific needs and experiences. In addition, gender-sensitive demobilization sites should:

- Include separate accommodation and sanitation facilities (with locks) for men and women. In some circumstances these separate facilities may be located within the same demobilization site, or separate demobilization sites for men and women may be set up.
- Feature sanitary facilities designed to ensure women's privacy and support their hygiene needs (e.g., sanitary napkins), as well as take into consideration cultural norms.
- Include provisions for childcare.
- Be safe for women and recognize and deal with the threat of sexual violence within the demobilization site, including ensuring locks in facilities, good lighting, information

provided on specific contacts within the camp to address women's security incidents and issues, and, where possible, the presence of female security guards and police (for internal site security). If female security guards are not available, male security guards shall be trained on sexual exploitation and harassment, sexual violence prevention and gender sensitivity prior to deployment, and there shall exist a clear and gender-responsive system at the demobilization site for handling any complaints by women against security guards, as well as policies that call for the immediate removal of any officer about whom security concerns are raised.

- Engage women in consultation regarding food/voucher/cash packages, including the composition of the package, security-related vulnerabilities to how and when they receive food assistance, and the best locations and packaging to receive it.
- Provide for the specific nutritional needs of women of childbearing age, those breastfeeding and pregnant women (see IDDRS 5.50 on Food Assistance in DDR), paying special attention to the nutritional needs of female-headed households.
- Provide basic health care, including reproductive and sexual health care, encompassing voluntary testing and counselling for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, and mental health care, that addresses the different needs of men, women and people of diverse gender identities of all ages going through demobilization (see IDDRS 5.70 on Health and DDR).
- Provide specific assistance for women and girls to meet their hygiene needs, including menstrual supplies and clean birthing kits (ideally, referral to delivery care should be ensured).
- Ensure counselling is available for both men and women who have experienced SGBV (see IDDRS 5.70 on Health and DDR);
- Take protective measures to ensure women's safety during transportation to and from demobilization sites.
- Ensure that demobilization sites are accessible to men and women with disabilities (see IDDRS 5.80 on Disability-Inclusive DDR).

Where possible, female staff should receive and process women at demobilization sites. Gender balance should be a priority among the staff managing demobilization sites. If men do not see women in positions of authority, they are less likely to take seriously efforts aimed at changing their attitudes towards traditional gender roles and women's empowerment. Women should also have the same opportunities to access support as men, and the briefings and information provided should include specific information on the challenges that women may encounter upon reinsertion into their communities.

As female ex-combatants and women formerly associated with armed forces and groups are often stigmatized upon return to their communities, briefings during the demobilization operation should include attention to safety and referrals to support services in civilian life. In particular, the design of reinsertion support, provided as part of demobilization, shall take into account potential protection issues and gender-specific barriers. Irrespective of the type of transfer modality selected for reinsertion support (cash, vouchers, mobile money transfer, public works programmes), this modality shall take into account potential protection issues and gender-specific barriers. It is important that the delivery mechanism chosen permits women to access their entitlement safely and confidently, without being exposed to the risks of private service providers abusing their

power over recipients, or difficulties in the redemption of their entitlement because of numerical or financial illiteracy. A help desk and complaint mechanism should be set up, and this should include specific referral pathways for women.

It should be noted that victims, dependants and community members will not participate in demobilization activities. However, where dependants (male and female) have accompanied armed forces or groups in the field, provisions may be made for them during demobilization, including for their accommodation or transportation to their communities. These provisions shall be gender sensitive. For more information, see IDDRS 4.20 on Demobilization.

## **8.4 Reintegration**

The reintegration of ex-combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups is a long-term process and has economic, social, psychosocial and political dimensions. Reintegration programmes shall be planned, designed and implemented in a gender-sensitive manner, based on sex- and age-disaggregated data. They shall also be gender responsive and transformative, actively working to transform harmful, inequitable gender norms into positive ones and promoting gender equality.

Reintegration programmes shall also take into account that, in many societies, women still carry the burden of unpaid work, including care and domestic work. This burden limits the amount of time that women are able to participate in economic, social and political reintegration opportunities. In order to ensure women's full participation, the burden of unpaid work should be assessed and factored into the design of reintegration support. Where possible, the burden of unpaid work should also be reduced and redistributed, including through cultural changes, greater involvement of men, and strengthening the community infrastructure and services required to meet domestic and care work needs.<sup>11</sup>

### **8.4.1 Economic reintegration**

Employment can contribute to peace by increasing social contact between different groups, by increasing the opportunity costs of engaging in violence, and by addressing the grievances that often arise from precarious work in exploitative conditions.<sup>12</sup> Ex-combatants in many contexts have also consistently identified an alternative livelihood and the ability to generate income as key factors in their successful reintegration.

#### *Gender-aware interventions*

As outlined in IDDRS 4.30 on Reintegration, there are many different economic reintegration options. These options are designed to help ex-combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups (both male and female) to receive an education and improve their employability (e.g., through training, apprenticeships and small business loans). All economic reintegration options shall be based on the collection of data that is disaggregated by sex and age, and that elucidates the unique and varying capacities, interests, priorities, power relations and roles of women, men, boys and girls. For example, in many societies, the production of crops and animal husbandry is divided among household members according to sex and age. This division of labour should be assessed and considered when providing reintegration assistance that is aimed

at reviving the agricultural sector, improving food security, and securing livelihoods for ex-combatants and associated persons. Similarly, gender dynamics should be taken into account regarding access to land and housing, which may also impact economic reintegration. The overall objective of integrating gender into analysis is to build efficiency and equity into reintegration programmes.

Research has shown that there are positive shifts in household income usage when involving household members in economic decision-making. Frequency of communication between spouse and former armed force/group member regarding choice of reinsertion and reintegration assistance positively correlates with more successful economic reintegration. Therefore, DDR practitioners should consider how to involve families in household decision-making in order to maximize the economic conditions of the household.

Another critical consideration for economic reintegration is to understand the numbers of male and female persons with disabilities and their gendered needs and capacities, and to focus on developing specific economic opportunities for their reintegration (see IDDRS 5.80 on Disability-Inclusive DDR).

### *Female-specific interventions*

Women and girls may have acquired skills during the conflict that do not fit with traditional ideas of appropriate work for women, so female DDR participants and beneficiaries often find it more difficult than males to achieve economic success in the reintegration period. Women often find it more difficult to gain access to credit, especially the larger amounts needed to enter the formal sectors of the economy. With few job opportunities, particularly within the formal sector, women and girls have limited options for economic success, which has serious implications if they are the main providers for their dependants. Furthermore, the burden of care that many women and girls shoulder, including for young children and disabled family members, means they are less able to take advantage of education, training and capacity-building opportunities that could offer them better chances for economic self-sufficiency.

Special measures shall be put in place to ensure that female DDR participants and beneficiaries have equal education, training and employment opportunities, and to ensure that economic reintegration options do not exacerbate gender inequalities. Funding should be allocated for childcare, and for education and training opportunities to be conducted as close as possible to where women and girls live. This will also reduce the chances of irregular attendance as a result of problems with transport (e.g., infrequent buses) or mobility (e.g., cultural restrictions on women's travel). Flexible or part-time training schedules should also be considered. DDR practitioners should take into account if women are the sole provider for a family. In such cases, both transitional assistance (as part of reinsertion) and reintegration support should take into account the number of children/adults.

Women and girls should be given a say in determining the types of skills they learn. They should be provided with options that allow them to build on useful skills acquired during their time with armed forces and groups, including skills that may not usually be considered "women's work", such as driving or construction jobs. They should be taught vocational skills in fields for which there is likely to be a long-term demand, which may include farming and agriculture. Those successfully completing vocational training should be issued with certificates confirming this. Barriers such as employers refusing to hire women who were previously members of armed forces or groups, or narrow expectations of the work women are permitted to do, should be taken into

account before training is offered. Potential employers should be identified for sensitization training to encourage them to employ females. Security should be provided for women on their way to work or to the marketplace, particularly to protect them from banditry in places with large numbers of small arms.

Good coordination with development agencies and women's NGOs that carry out projects to assist women, such as adult literacy courses, microcredit facilities and family planning advice, is essential to make reintegration sustainable and to reach all DDR participants and beneficiaries. DDR planners should coordinate with national programmes and institutions that can include women and help to address structural barriers to women's participation (help to issue identity cards to access credit from institutions, provide special financial packages for women, etc.).

Where needed, particularly in rural areas, women should be provided with training in agricultural methods and should have the right to farm cash crops and own and use livestock, as opposed to engaging in subsistence agriculture. Women should have equal access to communally owned farming tools and water-pumping equipment and have the right to own such equipment.

Women and girls often directly manage communal natural resources for their livelihoods. However, they often lack tenure or official rights to the natural resources they rely on. DDR practitioners should pay special attention to ensuring that women are able to access natural resources, especially in situations where this access is restricted due to lack of support from a male relative. DDR practitioners should ensure that employment opportunities and necessary skills training are available for girls and women in natural resource sectors, including non-traditional women's jobs. For further information, see IDDRS 6.30 on DDR and Natural Resources.

Widows, widowers and dependants of ex-combatants killed in action may need financial and material assistance. They should be assisted in setting up income-generating initiatives. Widows and widowers should be made active participants in reintegration training programmes and should also be able to benefit from credit schemes. Single or widowed women who are former members of armed groups should be recognized as heads of household and permitted to own and rent existing housing and land. Measures should be taken to protect women ex-combatants, associated persons and war widows from being forced into casual labour on land that is not their own.

#### 8.4.2 Social and psychosocial reintegration

The success of any individual's reintegration is not only related to their ability to earn a sufficient livelihood, but is also intimately tied to their ability to transition to living in a community with non-violent civilian norms. Former combatants and those formerly associated with armed forces and groups (both male and female) may face a number of personal challenges during their reintegration, including:

- Separation from the social support networks they relied on while members of an armed force or group;
- Stigma and rejection by communities of return;
- Psychosocial needs, including trauma-spectrum disorders;
- Physical health issues, such as living with a disability or a chronic illness; and
- Losses or shifts in gender roles and norms.

In addition to these issues, while individuals are members of armed forces and groups they may be socialized to the use of violence and develop internalized norms that condone violent activity. Violence may be carried from the battlefield to the home and the community, where it can take on new forms and expressions. Compounding these issues, former members of armed forces and groups may also find it difficult to renegotiate their societal and gender roles within both the public and private spheres. Male ex-combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups may return home to discover that women have taken on traditional male responsibilities in their absence, such as the role of the “breadwinner” or “protector”, challenging men’s place both at home and in the community. Equally, female former members of armed forces and groups may return home only to find that they are expected to revert to traditional gender roles, though they took on non-traditional gender roles during their time with their armed force or group. They can also face stigma for having been associated with armed forces and groups or bearing children out of traditional wedlock or as the result of “bush marriages” or rape. For more information, see IDDRS 4.30 on Reintegration.

#### *Gender-aware interventions*

Social reintegration programmes should be accompanied by strong PI/SC components that foster non-violent, healthy expressions of masculinities and femininities. These components can be part of peer education programming around gender-based and sexual violence prevention, fatherhood and parenting campaigns, reproductive health or other innovative programming. PI/SC campaigns should also raise awareness of war-related trauma, contribute to destigmatization, and disseminate information on where and how to seek support. Radio dramas, print campaigns and community events should use both men and women as actors seeking services, breaking down gendered taboos related to mental health needs.

Socially constructive support networks, such as peer groups and men’s and women’s groups, in addition to groups formed during vocational and life skills training, should be encouraged and supported with information, training and guidance, where possible and appropriate. Families should also be supported, as part of reintegration programmes, to adjust to the return of relatives who are former members of armed forces and groups.

Adult female and male ex-combatants and WAAFG should be provided with appropriate forms of psychosocial support, which may include individual care, group counselling or collective healing, taking into account the specific considerations of women and men. The participatory engagement of communities in supporting the development of psychosocial referral programmes, including community rituals, where appropriate, is essential to developing interventions that suit the needs of the community and DDR participants.

Female and male victims/survivors of sexual violence often require physical and psychosocial treatment during reintegration programmes. Special attention should be paid to the differences in the needs of men and women in care, including the specific needs of women bearing children out of rape (e.g., difficulty marrying or being accepted by family members) and the fact that many men are reluctant to seek care due to social and cultural taboos. Sexual violence recovery services, including medical and psychological treatment and public information and outreach campaigns, should be provided to both female and male DDR participants and beneficiaries. All victims/survivors should be offered counselling services that are culturally acceptable and appropriate. See also IDDRS 5.70 on Health and DDR.

In building reliable and confidential psychosocial referral chains and training community counsellors, DDR practitioners should work closely with national and local Government to identify appropriate cadres (e.g., midwives, nurses, teachers) to be trained. Female counsellors should always be available for female participants. However, it is essential to utilize assessments to understand if there are gender preferences for DDR participants and beneficiaries in seeking counselling support.

It is often critical to involve (and provide capacity development where needed) to families, male and female community health workers, and religious leaders to provide a strong support system for individuals dealing with psychosocial issues. Community mental health practices (such as cleansing ceremonies) may be used to contribute to the long-term psychological rehabilitation of former members of armed forces and groups and to address women's and girls' specific suffering or trauma (often a result of sexualized violence), as long as they encourage and support rather than undermine women's and girls' human rights and well-being.

More generally, DDR practitioners should promote social reintegration through initiatives that encourage reconciliation, including through transitional justice programmes. In particular, reintegration programmes should explore communities' needs and expectations with respect to reconciliation and seek to identify – always in consultation with communities and all relevant stakeholders – entry points for the reintegration process to contribute to broader reconciliation. Both women and men shall meaningfully participate, including at the decision-making level, in all stages of DDR and transitional justice. DDR practitioners advising national actors on transitional justice should include gender experts and ensure gender mainstreaming at all levels (see IDDRS 6.20 on DDR and Transitional Justice).

#### *Female-specific interventions*

As part of the broad consultation carried out with a wide variety of social actors, community awareness-raising meetings should be held to prepare the community to receive female DDR participants. Women and women's organizations shall be included in these processes. Radio networks should include women's voices and experiences when educating local people about those who are being reintegrated, to prevent tensions from developing.

Female ex-combatants' reintegration should be connected to broader strategies aimed at women's post-conflict development in order to prevent resentment against combatants as a "privileged" group. The establishment of formal/informal network groups among female ex-combatants and women formerly associated with armed forces and groups should be encouraged, with support from women's NGOs. This will give women an opportunity to support each other and foster leadership. Particularly for those who decide to go to a new place of residence rather than their hometown, such support will be essential.

DDR programmes should provide funding for women's organizations to be implementing partners for reintegration activities (e.g., providing life skills training, gender-based violence prevention and recovery services, reconciliation activities, or other peacebuilding programmes). Engaging women's groups as partners in implementing the DDR programme supports women's empowerment and broader gender-transformative work in the community. This may require providing capacity development and training to community-based partners, including women's organizations.

Girls and women who have suffered sexual violence should be assisted by female staff, who are trained in trauma management. Brutal forms of sexual violence may leave female



victims/survivors with severe physical ailments such as incontinence, difficulty walking, infertility and other reproductive health disorders, which require specific services to be made available in reintegration. Female ex-combatants and those formerly associated with armed forces and groups should have equal access to legal aid or support to assist them in combating discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence.

The expertise of female ex-combatants and associated persons — which may be non-traditional expertise — should be recognized, respected and utilized by both DDR and other violence prevention programmes as well as by women's groups.

Women's groups should be engaged in the design and implementation of psychosocial interventions. Their role as leaders in the community should be harnessed effectively to support community healing and recovery services. WAAFG or female ex-combatants who worked in nursing and/or medical capacities may be trained as key leaders and support providers in the provision of mental health intervention and referral systems.

Women and girls may face stigma and isolation as well as specific shifts and changes in their gender roles, which can affect their mental health. While social reintegration interventions should support gender equality and women's empowerment, psychosocial support is also needed to address their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

Given the use of sexual violence as a tool of war, and inaccessibility of health services, reintegration may be the first opportunity that many women and children have to seek psychosocial support services for abuse or assaults. It is essential that counsellors receive training on working with sexual assault victims/survivors and understand when and where to refer patients. Given the well-established links between post-traumatic stress disorder and intimate partner violence, where women and children are usually the victims/survivors, DDR programmes should ensure gender-responsive counselling and referral services are available for women and their families and that there is targeted programming for men.

Often women and girls are expected to support psychosocial reintegration due to societal expectations of women as caregivers. However, this work should not be uncompensated, and women's organizations should be paid implementing partners for psychosocial programmes. Women providing peer counselling services should also receive compensation for their work.

#### 8.4.3 Political reintegration

Political reintegration is the involvement and participation of ex-combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups in decision- and policymaking processes at the national, regional and community levels (see IDDRS 4.30 on Reintegration). It is specifically focused on engaging DDR programme participants and beneficiaries in the political processes of their communities and countries at both the individual and group levels. Effective political reintegration at the individual level involves empowering citizens by providing them with the knowledge and tools to voice their opinions, vote and take part in governing their country without fear of intimidation, discrimination, retaliation or violence. At the group level, aiding former armed groups to transform into political parties is a form of political reintegration based on a thorough analysis of the political context and of the armed group in question.

### *Gender-aware political reintegration*

DDR practitioners should seek to strengthen and consolidate equal political capacities for both male and female DDR participants and beneficiaries.

### *Female-specific political reintegration*

Some women in armed groups gain access to a form of power and political capital that they did not have prior to the conflict. If the DDR process does not recognize this, and views women only as victims, not as decision-makers, women are likely to feel disenfranchised and deprived of their agency.<sup>13</sup> Based on careful assessments, DDR practitioners may put in place mechanisms to ensure the recognition and political participation of female former members of armed forces and groups. They may also seek to support activities that equip female DDR participants and beneficiaries to participate in democratic civil and political structures.<sup>14</sup> In some contexts, the formulation of women's political empowerment and citizenship-building projects as part of DDR has proven to be effective in strengthening women's autonomy and freedoms.

## **8.5 DDR-related tools**

### **8.5.1 Community violence reduction**

Community violence reduction (CVR) is a DDR-related tool that directly responds to the presence of active and/or former members of armed groups in a community and is designed to promote security and stability in both mission and non-mission contexts (see IDDRS 2.30 on Community Violence Reduction). CVR interventions ensure community-driven priorities inform the identification of projects, which are selected through the project selection committee (PSC). To ensure CVR takes a gender-responsive approach, it shall include proportional gender representation within DDR/CVR sections, among CVR project implementing partners, within PSCs (or equivalent bodies), and among individual and community beneficiaries. To mitigate challenges related to gender dynamics and power, which can impede women's ability to participate in selection committees or have their specific needs prioritized, DDR practitioners have introduced quota systems requiring a minimum level of female participation (30 per cent) in PSCs and among selected projects (at minimum 30 per cent of projects must directly support women's specific needs). These quota systems shall be discussed with national counterparts at the outset of UN engagement in CVR and explained to all personnel and partners working on CVR programmes at the subnational and local levels.

DDR practitioners shall ensure that women and girls are adequately represented in the identification of priorities and implementation strategies, by making sure that:

- Assessments include separate focus group discussions for women, led by female facilitators;
- Women's groups are engaged in the consultative process and as implementing partners;
- The project approval committee, project review committee or equivalent entity is at minimum 30 per cent female;
- A minimum of 30 per cent of CVR projects within the broader CVR programme directly benefit women's safety and security issues;

- The entire CVR programme integrates and leverages opportunities for women's leadership and gender equality;
- Public information and sensitization are gender transformative and inclusive, having a balance of voices and visual representations of men, women, boys, girls, minorities and other vulnerable groups, and their active involvement in leadership and implementation of outreach and education activities; and
- Staffing of CVR projects includes female employees.

All CVR projects should report on the gender and age dimensions of PSCs as well as on CVR projects themselves. Introducing gender- and age-specific quotas in CVR project tenders should also mitigate discriminatory practices. Likewise, DDR practitioners shall ensure that any public works projects selected for support are designed in a way that respects the rights and specific needs of every person.

Gender components of CVR may include gender-transformative projects, including education and awareness-raising programmes with community members on gender, women's empowerment, and sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response, and include measures to challenge harmful notions of masculinity and engage with men and boys to promote behaviours and attitudes that value gender equality and non-violence.

The inclusion of women across all aspects of CVR strengthens the overall legitimacy and credibility of the enterprise. Developing the agency of women, girls and youth will enhance their political and social influence in civic associations and their authority in relation to economic productivity, thereby reducing violence.

### 8.5.2 Transitional weapons and ammunition management

Transitional weapons and ammunition management (WAM) is a set of interim arms control measures that can be implemented by DDR practitioners before, after and alongside DDR programmes. Transitional WAM can also be implemented when the preconditions for a DDR programme are absent. The transitional WAM component of a DDR process is primarily aimed at reducing the capacity of individuals and groups to engage in armed violence and conflict. Transitional WAM also aims to reduce accidents and save lives by addressing the immediate risks related to the possession of weapons, ammunition and explosives (see IDDRS 4.11 on Transitional Weapons and Ammunition Management).

DDR practitioners should involve women and men from affected communities in the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation phases of transitional WAM. Women can, for example, contribute to raising awareness of the risks associated with weapons ownership and ensure that rules adopted by the community, in terms of weapons control, are effective and enforced. As the owners and users of weapons, ammunition and explosives are predominantly men, including youth, communication and outreach efforts should focus on dissociating arms ownership from notions of power, protection, status and masculinity. For this type of gender- and age-transformative transitional WAM to be effective, it should be linked to other DDR-related tools, such as CVR, pre-DDR and DDR support to mediation.

To ensure that transitional WAM is gender and age responsive, DDR practitioners should focus on the following areas of strategic importance: (a) the involvement of both men and women at all stages of transitional WAM, as well as children and youth where appropriate; (b) the

collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender and age analysis as a baseline for understanding challenges and needs; (c) the measurement of progress through the development of age- and gender-sensitive indicators; (d) the enhancement of gender competence and commitment to gender equality among programme staff and national partners, including the national DDR commission and other relevant bodies; (e) ensuring organizational structures, workflows and knowledge management are responsive to different environments; (f) working with partners to strengthen age and gender responsiveness, including women's, men's and youth networks and organizations; and (g) gender- and age-sensitive programme monitoring and evaluation exercises. Specific guidance can be found in MOSAIC module 06.10 on Women, Men and the Gendered Nature of SALW and MOSAIC module 06.20 on Children, Adolescents, Youth and SALW.

## **8.6 Reintegration as part of sustaining peace**

The parallel resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council on the review of peacebuilding architecture ("sustaining peace resolutions") (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282) adopted in 2016 emphasize the importance of women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. In order to support and strengthen the foundation for sustainable peace, the reintegration of former members of armed forces and groups should not only be supported after an armed conflict has ended. Instead, reintegration support should be considered at all times, even in the absence of a DDR programme. The guidance provided above on gender-sensitive reintegration support also applies to reintegration as part of sustaining peace. For additional information, see IDDRS 2.40 on Reintegration as Part of Sustaining Peace.

## **9. Gender, DDR and security sector reform**

Women and men have an equal right to participate in security delivery and oversight. Though men continue to be vastly overrepresented in security and oversight bodies (such as parliament and the judiciary), security sector institutions that reflect societies at large in terms of sex, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, religion and sexual orientation are more likely to be trusted and considered legitimate. Representative institutions are also more responsive to the concerns of the entire population. The increased participation of women in security sector institutions has been shown, in part, to improve their functioning in areas such as SGBV reporting rates, intelligence gathering and the treatment of female witnesses, victims and suspects. To fully integrate women into SSR processes that are linked to DDR, they should be made aware of their eligibility for DDR through PI/SC campaigns (see section 7.4).

Furthermore, once integrated into security sector institutions, an institutional environment that is conducive to inclusiveness should be cultivated. This may include gender-responsive budgeting, ensuring that gender is mainstreamed throughout institutional policy, the provision of gender-training for both men and women, and the provision of adequate equipment and facilities for both men and women. It also is important to ensure appropriate protection mechanisms exist for women within security sector institutions, including policy frameworks, ombudsman, and appropriate enforcement policies related to sexual harassment and sexual and gender-based violence. For more information, see IDDRS 6.10 on DDR and SSR.

Given the socialization into violence that combatants and associated groups have experienced, as well as a militarization of gender identities, integration within the security sector should include specific support to mental health screening and support services as well as social and gender-transformative support programmes, including peer education groups rather than a one-off screening or training.

The involvement of women and women's groups from civil society in SSR processes that accompany and follow DDR should be deliberately planned from the start. Security needs should also be defined in a gender-sensitive manner.<sup>15</sup> Where possible, peace agreements should outline specific provisions on the integration of both males and females into representative and inclusive security sector institutions. It is important that the process for including women is not tokenistic, but rather is implemented in a considered and systematic manner.

## 10. Gender, DDR and organized crime

Organized crime is gendered at its core, affecting men and women differently in both conflict and post-conflict settings. Although notions of masculinity may be more frequently associated with engagement in organized crime, and males (men and boys) may more obviously take part in the conflict and make up the largest number of combatants, females (women and girls) who engage in criminal activities and conflict (both in combat and non-combat roles) can face discrimination on the basis of gender from both ex-combatants and communities.

Women are more frequently victims of certain forms of organized crime, particularly human trafficking for sexual exploitation, and can be stigmatized or shamed due to the sexual exploitation they have experienced. They may be rejected by their families and communities upon their return, leaving them with few opportunities for social and economic support.

Men and boys who are trafficked, either through sexual exploitation or otherwise, may face a different set of challenges based on perceived emasculation. In addition to economic difficulties, they may face stigma in communities that may not view them as victims at all. DDR processes should therefore follow an intersectional and gender-based approach in providing social, economic and psychological services to former members of armed forces and groups (see IDDRS 6.40 on DDR and Organized Crime).

## 11. Monitoring and evaluation

Gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation is necessary to find out if DDR processes meet the needs of women and girls, and to examine the gendered impact of DDR. At present, the gender dimensions of DDR are not monitored and evaluated effectively, partly because of poorly allocated resources, and partly because there is a shortage of evaluators who are aware of gender issues and have the skills needed to include gender in their evaluation practices.

To overcome these gaps, it is necessary to create a primary framework for gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation. Disaggregating existing data by sex alone is not enough. By identifying a set of specific indicators that measure the gender dimensions of DDR processes and their impacts, it is possible to come up with comprehensive and practical recommendations for future programmes. For more information on gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation, see IDDRS 3.50 on Monitoring and Evaluation of DDR.

## Annex A: Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CVR	community violence reduction
GBV	gender-based violence
MOSAIC	Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium
PI/SC	public information and strategic communication
PSC	project selection committee
SALW	small arms and light weapons
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	security sector reform
WAAFG	women associated with armed forces and groups
WAM	weapons and ammunition management
WPS	women, peace and security

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Defined by the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Economic and Social Council in 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Defined by the UN General Assembly in the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

<sup>3</sup> Global leadership refers to Secretariat and regional commissions, field operations, funds and programmes, country teams and other entities.

<sup>4</sup> “‘Gender perspective’ is a way of seeing or analysing which looks at the impact of gender on people’s opportunities, social roles and interactions. This way of seeing is what enables one to carry out gender analysis and subsequently to mainstream a gender perspective into any proposed program, policy or organization.” “Gender perspective”, UN Women Training Centre Gender Equality Glossary. Available at <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36> (accessed on 10 November 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Definition of “equitable treatment” adapted from International Labour Organization, *ABC of Women Workers’ Rights and Gender Equality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Geneva, 2007), p. 92; and UN Equal and Free, an initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights.

<sup>6</sup> See the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender with Age Marker. Available at <https://www.iascgenderwithagemarker.com/en/home>.

<sup>7</sup> **MOSAIC** has been adopted by the UN’s mechanism Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), which includes more than 20 UN entities. CASA ensures that the United Nations as a whole consistently delivers the highest-quality advice and support on small arms and light weapons control to Member States.

<sup>9</sup> S/2021/827.

<sup>10</sup> UN Women Colombia, “Minimum Care Economy Standards in Economic Reintegration Contexts” (2021).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> PBSO/ILO/UNDP/World Bank Comprehensive Review. [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_535663/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_535663/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>13</sup> Phoebe Donnelly, “Gender and DDR: Lessons Learned from DDR Research” (Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> Vanessa A Farr, “Gender-aware Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: A Checklist” (UNIFEM, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Henri Myrtilinen, *Security Sector Governance, Security Sector Reform and Gender*, Gender and Security Toolkit Tool 1 (Geneva, DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN Women, 2019). Available at: [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/1/440834\\_0.pdf](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/1/440834_0.pdf).