

INTERNATIONAL: Doable, Fast-Track Indicators for Turning the 1325 Promise into Reality

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The credibility of the United Nations rests in a major way on its ability and capacity to get the decisions of the Security Council implemented in letter and spirit. When in March 2000 the Security Council expressed for the first time in its history of 55 years its conceptual acceptance that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and affirmed that the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for peace and security, the international community was charged with expectation.

The formal resolution followed this conceptual and political breakthrough in October of the same year through the Council's unanimous agreement of all 15 members including the five permanent ones giving this issue the attention and recognition that it deserves. It was welcomed by one and all with considerable enthusiasm hoping that there would be progress in paying attention and respect to the unrecognized, under-utilized and under-valued contribution by women to preventing war, to building peace and to engaging individuals and societies live in harmony. As such, the implementation of the landmark resolution 1325 of the Council poses a unique and all-embracing responsibility on the international community particularly the United Nations. Adoption of 1325 has opened a much-awaited door of opportunity for women who have shown time and again that they bring a qualitative improvement in structuring peace and in post-conflict architecture.

What then can we do in the coming months and years to move forward in ensuring an effective, real and faithful implementation of 1325 in letter and spirit?

For that, the time has come to prepare a doable, realistic, practical and actionable set of indicators to monitor and measure progress in the implementation of 1325.

WHAT THE INDICATORS SHOULD BE LIKE

Given the deep rooted societal and cultural as well as political challenges that the 1325 implementation has been and will be experiencing, the indicators should be incremental and progressive in nature and with a fast-track time frame. Every dimension of 1325 is not implementable in one go and has to be phased realistically with the support of all actors.

Indicators should be oriented towards engineering global and national policy changes. Those should highlight the spear-heading role of the UN and result in a UN system wide annual work programme for each of the relevant entities for 1325.

Involvement of the wider set of actors, particularly civil society in laying out the indicators which should be user-friendly and easily understandable by all concerned. Those should have willing and enthusiastic participation of all, in particular developing countries that are the overwhelming majority of UN member-states. These countries should be in the forefront of reporting on 1325 indicators and not necessarily consider those as another complex reporting arrangement aimed at showing them in a bad light.

Presenting his set of indicators, the Secretary-General himself accepts that during last ten years implementation of 1325 remains slow. He adds that assessment of the progress of the implementation is constrained by an absence of baseline data, and specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound indicators. These constraints will not go away soon even after the Security Council passes a resolution adopting his indicators proposed in the Report. Availability of the data particularly in the developing countries is a major disincentive to the implementation momentum that we need NOW after ten years.

CRITIQUE OF THE UN SG'S INDICATORS

In response to a Security Council resolution 1889 (2009), UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has submitted on 22 April 2010 to the Council a set of 26 indicators for use at the global level to track implementation of 1325.

The international community had to wait for ten years to receive a set of indicators from the UN (actually 31 in number as five of the indicators come in pairs) that is expected to take, according to the Secretary-General, another two to five years – it would be for sure five years or more in all the developing countries – to be operational. He says that making the indicators operational will require a pilot phase to develop a baseline data collection method.

Secretary-General's set of indicators puts all responsibility in the hands of the governments as data collection and statistical responsibility in most countries are handled by them. 50% of the indicators relate to numbers, percentages and indices that would present the statistical rather than real life change in situation on the ground. These indicators fail to underscore the importance of policy change and policy orientation that could trigger real action for implementation. Some indicators ask for information that is not available realistically in conflict affected countries. Think of indicator 16 which intends to know about "level of women's participation in the justice and security sector in conflict-affected countries."

A number of indicators focus on the numbers and percentages of instructions, codes and regulations – if past experience is any guide, such recommendation will result in shrewd move by the concerned authorities to create and adopt all the needed rules without the will in their real implementation. One can recall cases of countries that have become parties to many human rights treaties but at the same time are the worst violators of those rights.

A good number of indicators has presumed existence of "human rights bodies", "courts equipped to try cases of violations of human rights of women and girls", "transitional justice mechanisms", "national mechanism for control of small arms" etc. In reality not many developing countries, particular those going through or coming out of conflicts, have any such real institutional support system. Even for quite a number of the existing institutions, there is no mandate to cover the areas the indicators are expecting to track progress.

Take indicator 14 that asks for "Index of women's and girls' physical security" and goes on to explain that given the difficulty of collecting reliable data on perceptions of physical security, it is proposed that data on this indicator be collected through consistent, replicable and ethical surveys. The UN secretariat should know better that it is easier said than done.

Indicator 15 seeks to measure "extent to which national laws protect women's and girls' human rights in line with international standards." Given the current global situation, how unrealistic could one be to expect national laws protecting women's and girls' rights in line with international standards which in any case remain ill-defined.

Again, indicator 22 aims at knowing about "extent to which strategic planning frameworks in conflict affected countries incorporate gender analysis, targets, indicators and budgets. It seems that the Secretary-General decided to ignore the reality on the ground in a conflict-affected country.

Most indicators ask for very complex set of data in conflict-ridden countries – such data are unavailable even for many of the normally peaceful countries. For such countries data gathering is one of their last priorities. Even the Secretary-General himself admits that "a number of measurements will require system-wide changes to track the necessary information" and requires "direct data collection and specialized and careful technical and conceptual development."

Indicators mention a good number of times about measuring national level resources and budgetary allocation and disbursement, but not increase in funding. Given the inherent economic and financial distress that most developing countries face, these proposals have the recipe for creating the conscious indifference of commitment by those countries.

Curiously, while a major responsibility has been put at the national level, support to developing countries by the international community through increase in funding has not been put in the indicators – there is no indicator to show the progress in official development assistance (ODA) support for the 1325 implementation.

In short, such indicators are utopian in nature, totally out of reality, oblivious of the situation in developing countries, and will provide an opportunity to the countries to ignore their implementation. A serious reality check is needed here.

Advocates for 1325 implementation believe that the Secretary-General's indicators, if approved by the Council, will result in prolonging the frustration and agony of all concerned about the insignificant implementation of 1325 so far.

PRACTICAL ACTION PROPOSALS IN FOUR AREAS

Articulated below are four major actors that will play crucial role during next five years, as the issues of data collection, national institutions and country programmes/national action plans are being addressed. The particular benefit of these indicators/proposals is that action could be taken right away on these without waiting for years.

1. UN Secretary-General's role

There is an urgent need for the UNSG's genuinely active, dedicated engagement in using the moral authority of the United Nations and the high office he occupies for the effective implementation of 1325.

a.) Number of substantive policy pronouncements and directives on 1325 by the Secretary-General

- b.) Number of dedicated communication sent by the Secretary-General to Heads of State/Government on 1325 – how many responses received and reminders sent to those from whom responses not received
- c.) How many world leaders (various levels) were briefed by SG on 1325 during his round-the-year meetings, visits and participation at global forums like G-20, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Arab League and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)? How many such meetings were followed up in substantive manner? In how many instances the UN Resident Coordinators were instructed to follow up such meetings with respective national governments?
- d) Secretary-General's leadership as the chair of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) to institute system wide priority to be attached to 1325 and ensure regular monitoring of its reflection in policy decisions throughout the UN system
- e) 1325 to be discussed at the Secretary-General's Senior Management Group meetings on a bi-monthly basis as the Under-Secretaries-General take lead in their respective areas to monitor its implementation
- f) Secretary-General's Special Representatives (SRSGs) in charge of the peace operations on the ground should be specifically and clearly entrusted with the full responsibility with regard to prevention and participation as envisaged in 1325 in their respective command areas. Number of sexual abuse and sexual violence taking place under each SRSG's jurisdiction to be reported.
- g) The mandate of the SRSG appointed under Security Council resolution 1820 should also specifically include 1325 implementation. As a matter of fact, her mandate flows directly from the mother resolution 1325.
- h) Development of a public information strategy for global application so that adequate awareness is raised on 1325 with due focus on working with media at the country level. Number of working relationship with country level media on 1325 to be reported.
- i) In his recommendation to the General Assembly on the functions of the new women's entity, the Secretary-General should assign the entity the coordinating role for 1325 implementation. A mere consolidation of existing UN offices dealing with women's issues is not enough, the new entity needs to have a substantive role so that it can make a real difference.
- j) Secretary-General should appoint competent women who have internalized the values of peace, development and human rights for all. It is not only quantity, but quality too.
- k) Secretary-General should ask the Security Council to review every resolution that it has adopted – and would do so in future – to see how it affects women and its impact on women.
- l) Meetings with women's groups on 1325 implementation should be on the agenda of all UN missions undertaken by the Secretary-General, his SRSGs, his Senior Management Group members and Security Council missions.

2. United Nations system

- a) Number of Executive Boards of Funds and Programmes for operational activities and governing bodies of the UN Specialized Agencies that adopted substantive policy directions in respect of 1325 within their relevant mandates.
Heads of these entities should take leadership responsibility in this regard.
- b) Number of areas in which UN Resident Coordinators have been working closely with national level partners to include 1325 implementation in their respective country programmes along with needed resource allocation.
As a country programme process is long – special supplementary country programmes should be presented to relevant governing bodies by 2011 for all interested countries. Donors and civil society should be mobilized for making the country programmes meaningful for 1325.
- c) The global and regional programmes of the Funds and Programmes should launch a 1325 Capacity Development Initiative with a special priority
- d) The Peacebuilding Support Office, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Political Affairs and the University for Peace should set up special units aimed at giving priority to 1325 implementation
- e) The UN Regional Commissions ensure important policy focus on the implementation of 1325 in their respective regions.

3. UN Member States

- a) Number of countries according substantive commitment and support at Heads of State/Government level to 1325
Number of countries that placed 1325 at the cabinet meetings agenda for discussion and decisions for country level implementation.
- b) Number of countries that adopted national action plans, that are preparing national plans on a top priority basis and countries that are in the preliminary stages of preparation.
UN Secretary-General should write to member states requesting attention to 3 a & b and raise these with the country leaders when he meets them. (ref. UN SG's role)
- c) Number of national parliaments that considered substantive implementation of 1325.
- d) National coordination for 1325 implementation should be in the responsibility of a high level body, preferably headed by the Head of Government
- e) Number of national delegations that make substantive references to 1325 at the General Assembly, Security Council, ECOSOC and Specialized Agencies as well as at other major international forums
- f) Law enforcement and justice system authorities as well as defense and military forces should internalize the full implications of 1325 in their work.

4. Civil society and other actors

We should not forget that when civil society is marginalized, there is little chance for 1325 to get implemented in the real sense.

- a) UN Secretary-General needs to take the lead in setting up six-monthly inclusive consultative process for 1325 implementation with the civil society organizations at all levels for relevant UN entities.
- b) All relevant NGOs are to be mobilized at country level by the national coordination body supported by the UN Resident Coordinator.
- c) UN Regional Commissions Executive Secretaries will take lead in forming regional networks with civil society and other partners for advancing regional implementation process for 1325.
- d) Organizations like NATO and the African Union that are engaged in peace operations either independently or as part of the UN operations should internalize 1325 both from the victims and participation perspectives in their work.
- e) The private sector and business community should ensure that their profit-motivated activities at least do not work against the objectives of 1325 implementation.
- f) As increasingly deeper involvement of private companies and individuals are taking place in the war and security sectors, albeit wrongly, they should fully respect the 1325 implication in their work.
- g) Universities and other academic institutions, relevant research organizations and think tanks should be encouraged to expand the knowledge base for 1325 in all its implications. University for Peace can take the lead in this process.
- h) Intergovernmental and regional organizations other than the UN system should be approached by the Secretary-General and, as appropriate, by UN Regional Commissions to link up the formers' activities with the implementation process for 1325.

Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury took the initiative for the adoption of a statement by the Security Council on 8 March 2000 as its President on women, peace and security that served as precursor to 1325

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