African Peace Support Trainers Association
Working together to improve capacity for peace support operations in Africa

ROUNDTABLE

WOMEN IN PEACKEEPING LEADERSHIP:
EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS

4 JUNE 2020
11:00 AM
INTRODUCTION


BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

2. Since the first UN Peacekeeping mission established on 29 May 1948, peacekeeping has progressed, integrating an increasingly larger number of women peacekeepers, in reflection of the population served. Estimates indicate that about a million women and men have served in 72 UN peacekeeping operations, with varying impacts on the lives of millions of victims of violent conflicts. Twenty years ago, exactly on 31 October 2000, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted, advocating the expansion of the role and contribution of women in its operations. On 28 March 2018, the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative was launched, which significantly reinforced calls for implementation of the Women Peace and Security Agenda.1

3. However, in 1993, women made up only 1% of deployed uniformed personnel. In 2019, women constituted just 4.7% of military contingents and 10.8% of formed police units, out of approximately 95,000 peacekeepers deployed in the 13 UN operations, 7 (54% approx) of which are in Africa. At present, estimates show that only 6% of all uniformed personnel are women. While the civilian side looks brighter with the percentage of female Heads and Deputy Heads of Missions in peacekeeping operations put at 35%, they are however only 3 Heads of mission and 5 Deputy Heads of Mission currently in service. Yet, women peacekeepers are on the frontlines as integral part of response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as implementing mission mandates within the excruciating hostility of a COVID and post-COVID ‘new normal’ mission environment.

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1 See UN Action for Peace, Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations 28 March 2018
4. Moreover, gender disparity in deployment negates the avowed fact that the deployment of female personnel boosts effectiveness according to the UN Secretary General, Antonio Gutierres. Women in peacekeeping have been noted to improve relations and performance, better access to population, enhance trust and confidence building as well as facilitate the reduction of conflicts and confrontations among other importance. Thus, key initiatives in the UN Department of Peace Operations have included requests for Member States to nominate a minimum of 20% women for individual police officer positions and 30% for justice and corrections government-provided personnel. In addition, the UN Military is also introducing Engagement Teams consisting at least 50% women. In spite of these, women’s full participation in peace processes and making peacekeeping more gender-responsive as stipulated in A4P Declaration still remain critically challenged.

5. It is against this background that the Roundtable will interrogate the theme: “Women in Peacekeeping Leadership: Experiences and Lessons”, with a view to unearthing constraints to deployment of women in peacekeeping despite favourable policy frameworks, including UNSC Resolutions as well as numerous Declarations.

OBJECTIVES

5. The main objective of the Roundtable therefore is to interrogate the participation of women in peacekeeping especially at strategic-leadership levels, through experiences and lessons, with a view to enhancing female peacekeeping both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. The specific objectives are to:

   a. Identify, document and share experiences and lessons on the participation of women in peacekeeping at the mission leadership level;

   b. Interrogate gender differentiated roles in peacekeeping and how it affects women deployment to or participation in missions;

   c. Evaluate challenges militating against the implementation of existing policy frameworks in favour of female participation in peacekeeping.

METHODOLOGY

6. The Roundtable will be conducted virtually, but coordinated from the Conference Room of the Africa Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA) Secretariat, Bastos-Golf, Yaounde Cameroon. Guest Speakers will each address the theme within a specified period of time, after which comments, observations and contributions will be entertained from the participants, joining in via Zoom.
DATE: Thursday 4 June 2020
TIME: 11AM
VENUE: Secretariat of African Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA), Bastos - Golf, Yaounde, Cameroon.

EXPECTED OUTCOME
7. The Roundtable is expected to generate a Communiqué with actionable recommendations for governments and the larger peacekeeping community. The Roundtable proceedings as well as the Communiqué will be accorded wide dissemination via various media.

CONCLUSION
8. The Roundtable is intended to commemorate the year 2020 International UN Day for peacekeepers, dedicated towards enhancing the participation of women in peacekeeping, by interrogating the dysfunctional gaps militating against female deployment to missions. The approach adopted for the Roundtable conversation is identifying, interrogating and sharing critical lessons and experiences towards elevating the capacity for female participation in peacekeeping missions, and making it adequate both for the COVID and the post-COVID ‘new normal’ mission environment.

Contact
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