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Women, Peace and Security
Chiefs of Defence Network
(WPS CHODS)

WPS CHODS NETWORK

WELCOMES NEW CHAIRPERSON—5 JUNE 2024, STOCKHOLM SWEDEN

GOAL OF THE WPS CHODS

Supporting member countries in realizing the objectives of the UNSCR 1325

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Vice Admiral (VAdm) Antonette WEMYSS GORMAN, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) for the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) succeeded General (Gen) Micael BYDÉN, Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces as the new Chair of the WPS CHODS Network on 5 June 2024.

In an official visit to Sweden, VAdm WEMYSS-GORMAN attended and co-officiated the Handover Ceremony alongside Gen BYDÉN. Several WPS CHODS Network members or their representatives were in attendance virtually.

VAdm WEMYSS-GORMAN, who is the first female officer in the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) to attain Flag rank, began her distinguished military career in August 1992.

VAdm Antonette WEMYYS GORMAN (Left) is pictured beside Gen Micael BYDÉN (Right)

As the incoming Chair, she outlined several key goals for the Network, which focus mainly on strengthening the internal capacity of the Network members, allowing them to advance the objectives of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda in their respective defence force.

She acknowledged the stellar leadership provided by Gen BYDÉN and other predecessors, highlighting their contributions to the accomplishments and achievements of the Network since its inception in 2017. She reiterated her commitment to working with members of the Network to build on the successes while remaining steadfast in her aim to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

Key Leader Seminar on WPS: 3— 4 June 2024, NCGM

From the 3rd to 4th of June 2024 the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) delivered the Key Leader Seminar (KLS) at NCGM in Kungsängen. The theme of this year's KLS was Gender responsive leadership in multi-domain operations and the seminar had 14 attendees (OF-6 to OF-7) from Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Spain, and Sweden.

The Seminar focuses on how to implement a gender perspective in military operations and how this contributes to the achievement of overall political, military strategic and operational objectives.

The overall feedback for the KLS was very positive. All attendees successfully completed the seminar and gained valuable background knowledge of frameworks and guidelines regulating gender perspectives in military operations.

Henrik P. Beckvard
Course Director

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

VICE ADMIRAL (VADM) ANTONETTE WEMYSS GORMAN

Our mission is to ensure that gender equality and the inclusion of women in peace and security become integral to all our Defence establishments.

An all Female Platoon is led by their Platoon Sergeant during a drill display
– Jamaica Defence Force

Dear Members and Colleagues of the WPS CHODS Network,

It is my privilege to assume the role of Chairperson for the Women, Peace, and Security Chiefs of Defence (WPS CHODS) Network, following the stellar leadership of General Micael BYDÉN, Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces.
The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 has guided our collective efforts, acknowledging the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls, underscoring the historical exclusion of women from decision-making processes, and emphasizing the essential role they play in conflict prevention and resolution. As CHODs our mission is to integrate gender perspectives into peace and security initiatives and to ensure the meaningful participation of women in these vital areas.

As Chair my primary goal is to enhance the internal capacity of our Network members, enabling them to further the objectives of the WPS agenda. This focus on capacity-building is crucial as we strive to deepen our impact and broaden our reach. One of our key strategies will involve developing and leveraging online platforms, including our official website and social media channels, to shine a spotlight on the initiatives and achievements of our members. We will use these platforms to highlight women in the armed forces, the opening of non-traditional military roles, and events that promote the WPS agenda. By highlighting these efforts, we aim to inspire and encourage all members to take bold actions that advance our shared goals.

I am committed to fostering a collaborative environment where experiences, best practices, and lessons learned are actively shared. By identifying and leveraging the expertise of countries that have made significant progress in implementing the WPS agenda, we can offer valuable support to those at earlier stages of development. This mutual assistance will be instrumental in driving forward our collective mission.

Promoting a more inclusive approach to the WPS agenda is another critical aspect of our strategy. We will work to resocialize the concept of Women, Peace, and Security, emphasizing that it involves both men and women and requires their joint effort. This includes advocating for gender-responsive training for command and senior leadership and highlighting the indispensable role of women in operations, peace negotiations and conflict resolution.

As we move forward together, I am deeply committed to building on the successes achieved by my predecessors and addressing the challenges that lie ahead. Our mission is to ensure that gender equality and the inclusion of women in peace and security become integral to all our Defence establishments. I look forward to working closely with each of you to further our shared vision and create a safer, more inclusive CHODS
Network

Warm regards,

Antonette WEMYSS GORMAN
Vice Admiral
Chief of Defence Staff
Jamaica Defence Force
Chairperson—
Women Peace and Security
Chiefs of Defence Network

BREAKING BARRIERS

A GENDER ADVISOR'S JOURNEY—Dr ELISABETH SCHLEICHER

One of the many primary reasons why the role of the Gender Advisor was established is to increase the effectiveness of military operations. I am convinced that Gender and specifically a Gender Perspective, is a critical asset to improve operational effectiveness and is a force multiplier.

A Gender Perspective is recognizing if and when an operation will affect men and women, boys and girls differently due to the different roles they have in society. In other words, implementing a gender perspective means that, with every operation we do, we ask ourselves the question: How does this affect men, women, boys and girls differently? Also, as many societies in the world have a formal patriarchal structure which places much emphasis on the roles of men, we can easily overlook not only how our operations may impact women and children, but also, very importantly, we could overlook the ***influence*** of women.

Gender Advisors are trained to have an external focus and are responsible for supporting the operation in its mandate and tasks by maximizing information gathering and dissemination. By making sure to address men and women and all the different groups in the society the Gender Advisor provides key insights to increase situational awareness.

My journey in the Gender field began in 2011 when I was selected as the second Gender Advisor to the KFOR Commander. Although the concept of Gender in Military Operations was not new, actually putting it into practice in an active military theatre was very new.

Over the years, it has become clear that being mission focused is one of the keys to success in the field. Commanders have an infinite number of demands on them and you don't want to add to their burden. Rather, you want to 'take up an oar' and help them achieve the mission.

Also, understanding how a military staff works is paramount. If you don't understand operations orders and the military decision-making process, you could easily be 'out of the loop'. It could be that you are doing interesting work and writing articles and reports but that you are not actually affecting how the command goes about its work. That is, you would not really be implementing a Gender Perspective within the command.

This leads to the idea that you need to be able to 'talk the talk and walk the walk'. Early in my work as a Gender Advisor, I was offered assistance by an experienced officer who had worked training commands prior to their being deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Although I had a very good understanding of military operations, his insight and experience greatly accelerated how quickly the operational concept was developed and implemented.
In briefings with senior members of staff, we were able to demonstrate an in depth knowledge of their operations and explain how a Gender Perspective could be used to improve operational effectiveness. We showed that it was a 'combat multiplier' and should not be ignored.

Much has changed in the decade plus that I've worked in the field and I can definitely see progress. However, fast forward to 2024, there are still a lot of misperceptions of what a Gender Advisor does. A trick I learned years ago is to start with what a Gender Advisor does NOT do. For instance, the KFOR Gender Advisor Office is not responsible for internal relations within the force, internal equality matters, disciplinary issues, sexual harassment or equal opportunity matters. These are functions of other offices and require specialized training in how to handle them.

A Gender Perspective can act as a Force Multiplier benefiting both, the local population and the operation. I am convinced that a lasting peace in Kosovo will only be achieved by fully engaging all members of Kosovo society in the peace process.

— Elisabeth Schleicher, PhD
Staff Officer Gender Advisor
GENAD Office at HQ KFOR

Dr Elisabeth Schleicher

Gender Advisors are trained to have an external focus and are responsible for supporting the operation in its mandate and tasks by maximizing information gathering and dissemination.

Dr Schleicher meets with military and civilian engineers to discuss an upcoming project

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND THE NEED FOR A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Paula Iwanowska

Paula Iwanowska

War impacts men, women, boys and girls in unique ways. For instance, women and girls are at higher risk of conflict-related sexual violence, while men and boys are more often perceived as legitimate military targets due to their presumed affiliation with armed forces or armed groups. While overall gender inequality tends to increase in times of war, armed conflict also impacts and changes existing gender norms and roles.

The objective of international humanitarian law (IHL) is to protect humanity from the worst excesses of war. This objective is best – and arguably, only – fully realized when warring parties understand and take into consideration how the direct and indirect consequences of military operations and actions affect all segments of a population; men, women, boys and girls.

With this in mind, the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross, has examined the overlaps between IHL norms and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, and how implementing IHL with a gender perspective can strengthen its effectiveness during military operations. The **resulting report** was published in March 2024, and is based on exchanges with military experts and practitioners from across the globe.

The findings suggest a number of practical measures that military organisations can implement when planning and conducting military operations in order to better understand, prevent and reduce the different risks faced by men, women, boys and girls during armed conflict. Leadership commitment is of primary importance - just as the military commander bears responsibility for ensuring that units observe IHL norms more generally, they should also be responsible for personnel understanding and integrating a gender perspective throughout the various stages of military operations. Leadership commitment can be conveyed by modelling appropriate behaviour – including leading by example – and by requesting information regarding the gender dimensions of an area of operations.

Further, it is imperative to appreciate that internal discipline influences external conduct. Military personnel are less likely to have the skills, understanding, and motivation to apply a gender perspective externally, if misconduct is tolerated within the organization. More broadly, conducive law, doctrine, policy and procedure are critical to institutionalize a gender perspective throughout the planning, execution and evaluation phases of an operation. Likewise, military education, exercises and training should reflect the importance of implementing a gender perspective.

On the tactical level, data and intelligence collection are the cornerstone of understanding a military operation environment. In order to collect better data, operational staff should, at the minimum, disaggregate data by sex and age. They can further analyse different considerations when assessing patterns of life, including to understand how civilian behaviour differs by age, gender, and other relevant criteria. Finally, military Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points can ensure that gendered dynamics are properly understood. Such personnel have subject-matter expertise regarding how the roles and needs of men, women, boys and girls influence conflict and its impacts.

The report also examines the overlap between IHL norms and the WPS agenda. IHL is embedded within all ten UN Security Council WPS resolutions. Additionally, IHL today features in a number of WPS National Action Plans adopted by states at the domestic level. Finally, the report provides practical recommendations on how to incorporate a gender perspective in partnered military operations. As such support relationships proliferate across today's conflicts, they offer both opportunities and challenges to increase the understanding of IHL obligations, with a view to prevent gendered harms.

—Paula Iwanowska
Legal Expert
Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM)

On the tactical level, data and intelligence collection are the cornerstone of understanding a military operation environment.

NCGM'S WORK ON WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY AND GENDER IN MILITARY OPERATIONS

Julia Dalman

Adopted in 2000, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 recognises the disproportionate impact crises and conflicts have on women and girls, and calls for the incorporation of gender perspective in operations. As of 2024, ten WPS resolutions have been adopted and constitute a comprehensive framework which builds upon, develops and makes the content of UNSCR 1325 more concrete. The WPS resolutions set the agenda to ensure women's equal participation on issues of peace, security, and armed conflict; prevention of violations of women's rights; protection of women and girls from sexual violence in conflict; and adoption of gender-equal relief and recovery measures.

The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Organisations is an international military organisations with more than 10 years of experience on implementing Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and gender perspective in operations, missions and activities. NCGM was founded in 2012 by the NORDEFCO nations Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Since then, Australia, Canada and the Netherlands have joined the centre. Being an Expert Centre, NATO Department Head for the Gender in Military Operations discipline, and a NATO-accredited Education and Training Facility, NCGM works extensively on the military implementation of WPS and gender perspective. This includes the provision of education and training, analysis, cooperation and relevant concept development, aiming to enable NATO and other military actors to integrate a gender perspective across military organisations and operations, in order to increase operational effectiveness and implement the WPS agenda.

Implementing WPS and integrating a gender perspective in military contexts is prompted by two objectives. First, military actors are required to abide by norms and principles of international law, as well as those enshrined in UN Security Council Resolutions - including those on WPS - in order to ensure that the needs, rights and protections of all parts of the population are equally ensured. The promotion of gender equality, also in times of crisis and conflict where gender inequality is often exacerbated, is at the heart of the WPS agenda. Through the WPS resolutions, this also applies to the military. Secondly, integrating gender perspective, gender analysis and WPS norms and principles in military operations, missions and activities (including policy, doctrine, planning, conduct and evaluation of military operations) contributes to operational effectiveness and mission success. This approach has evolved over the past two decades, and is outlined in various strategic and operational directives and/or guidelines from UN, NATO, EU and OSCE as well as in National Action Plans on WPS. Shortly, it is based on the understanding that gender perspective enables a more holistic and nuanced understanding of areas, actors, dynamics and other aspects of a crisis or conflict by considering how diverse women, men, girls and boys affects or are affected by that situation differently. This enhances the situational awareness and contributes to better informed decision-making, in turn contributing to the ability to meet the operation or mission mandate, desired effects and end state, and/or task completion.

—Julia Dalman
Legal Analyst
Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM)

As of 2024, ten WPS resolutions have been adopted and constitute a comprehensive framework which builds upon, develops and makes the content of UNSCR 1325 more concrete.

Belize Defence Force Welcomes First Female Pilot

on January 8, 2023, 2Lt PEURTO was sent to Jamaica to pursue her aviation dreams. After one year and eight months, she received her wings and became the first female pilot for the Belize Defence Force. Her message for other female aspirants is….

"*I hope that my journey inspires and opens doors for other women who want to venture into this career, proving that, yes, it is possible for women to excel in the military and achieve anything they set their minds to*".

—2Lt PEURTO"

2Lt PEURTO
Belize Defence Force

WPS CHODS NETWORK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2024—2025

CHAIRPERSON

VICE ADMIRAL
ANTONETTE WEMYSS-GORMAN

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF
JAMAICA DEFENCE FORCE

DEPUTY CHAIR

LIEUTENANT GENERAL
SEÁN CLANCY

CHIEF OF STAFF
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

GENERAL CHARLES
MURIU KAHARIRI

CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES
KENYAN DEFENCE FORCES

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

GENERAL MICAEL BYDÉN

SUPREME COMMANDER
SWEDISH ARMED FORCES

Women, Peace and Security
Chiefs of Defence Network (WPS CHODS)

Address:
Headquarters
Jamaica Defence Foce
Up Park Camp
Kingston 5
Jamaica, W.I.

Phone: +1 876 926-8121
Email: wpschods.secretariat@jdf.mil.jm
andre.dennis@jdf.mil.jm

We are on the Web

www.wpschods.com

The purpose of the WPS CHODs Network is to provide a collaborative platform for CHODs who have committed to advance the WPS agenda within their defence force.

The Network supports members' efforts to build internal capacity and expertise.

By sharing experiences, lessons observed and best practices, members will enhance their shared understanding and knowledge thereby increasing their ability to move the WPS agenda forward within their own defence force.

Since its inception in 2017, the Network has grown rapidly to include membership from over 60 Armed Forces internationally. —WPS Charter 2021

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Strategic Objectives for WPS CHODS Network 2024—2025

It will remain the mission of the WPS CHODS Network to advance the WPS Agenda. To achieve this, clearly established strategic priorities are required. These priorities will provide a unified direction, ensuring that collective efforts are focused on the most critical objectives. It also allows the Network to effectively prioritize resources, clarify the goals for the Network, and provide a framework for making consistent decisions aligned with WPS initiatives.

Some of the planned objectives include:

1. Implementing a strategic communications campaign to raise the profile of the Network by developing and using online platforms, including the official WPS CHODS website and social media platforms, to highlight the presence of the CHODS Network and its impact
2. Promote member actions that advance the WPS Agenda by encouraging network members to monitor and report on their progress regarding pledges made towards advancing the WPS agenda in areas such as the advancement of accountable governance, gender equality, inclusion, and respect for diversity and human rights.
3. Promote cooperation and mutual assistance between Network members on WPS-related matters by encouraging network members at more advanced stages in their WPS Agenda implementation to work with network members who are at more junior stages of development to build their capacity.