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Towards a Strategic Approach in Applying Gender-Sensitive Indicators: Guidance for OSCE Programming

Introduction: Gender Equality in the OSCE

Throughout its twenty years of existence, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has consistently promoted gender equality as a cornerstone of representative, pluralistic, and stable democracies. The equal participation of women and men in all spheres of private and public life is enshrined in OSCE commitments and reflected in its policies, programmes, and activities. The 20th anniversary of OSCE/ODIHR therefore provides an opportunity to assess the progress achieved in promoting gender equality both within the Organization and in its participating States.

Measuring the progress being made in transforming OSCE gender-equality commitments into lived realities for women and men across the OSCE region is a critical component of any organizational policy development or programming process. This article looks more closely at the importance of assessing progress in achieving gender equality and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in all OSCE programmes, projects, and activities. Specifically, the article looks at the development and use of indicators, including gender-sensitive indicators, in OSCE/ODIHR programming. Gender-sensitive indicators are a key tool in the measurement of changes in the situations of women and men in societies over time. Applied systematically, gender-sensitive indicators track progress in securing equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and highlight continuing gender-based disparities in the enjoyment of these rights and opportunities. This information can and should be used systematically to inform future programming.

The authors of this article recognize that the fundamental components for systematically monitoring and evaluating the impact of OSCE/ODIHR programming in the field of gender equality are in place. The OSCE/ODIHR has developed various gender-equality projects in the past and currently implements two programmes¹ aimed at increasing women's participation in political and public life as well as striking a gender balance in the security sector. The OSCE, by and large, has also committed itself to an ambitious project of gender mainstreaming all its policies, programmes, and activities,

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1 These are the programme on "Increased Participation of Women in Politics" and the "Human Rights, Women and Security" programme.

which has resulted in greater organizational awareness of and sensitivity to gender issues.

However, the Organization as a whole can and should develop a more systematic methodology for using indicators in its work in order to properly measure the impact of our assistance and to document women's progress in the political and security spheres within the Organization and in its 56 participating States. An important aspect of this monitoring and evaluation process is the development and application of gender-sensitive indicators to measure progress in achieving gender equality in a context-specific, interconnected, and systematic way. This approach will allow the OSCE/ODIHR to better assist participating States (and the Organization itself) in achieving their gender-equality commitments in the long run.

Following a general presentation of key OSCE commitments in the area of women's participation in politics and in the security sector, the article provides an overview of indicators as understood within the framework of this paper. This is followed by an assessment of relevant indicators currently being used in these sectors, the main challenges in developing and applying indicators, and ways forward in refining and developing new gender-sensitive indicators. The authors then propose a series of principles that may be used to guide the process of developing indicators for OSCE programming. The article concludes with several examples of these principles' application in the work of OSCE/ODIHR in the fields of women's participation in politics and security.

OSCE Commitments on Gender Equality in Political Life and the Security Sector

OSCE participating States have committed themselves to achieving gender equality in all spheres of activity, and in particular to promoting the equal participation of women and men in political and public life. These commitments are enshrined in the Moscow Document of 1992, in which participating States recognize that:

Full and true equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law. [Participating States] recognize that the full development of society and the welfare of all its members require equal opportunity for full and equal participation of men and women.

The critical importance of women's political participation to the peaceful and prosperous democratic development of the OSCE region is highlighted in Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/09 on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life. In this Decision, the OSCE calls on participating States to

ensure women's equal participation in the development of policies, legislation, and programmes. It encourages participating States to consider adopting specific measures to achieve gender balance in executive, legislative, and judicial functions and to promote women's participation in political life, including political parties. The OSCE further commits itself and its participating States to respect and fulfil provisions relating to the equal participation of women and men in political and public life contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Likewise, the OSCE recognizes that effective security institutions, policies, and programmes should reflect the needs and interests of both men and women. There must be equal opportunities for men and women to participate in and shape security institutions and programmes. For women in particular, these aims can be achieved by ensuring their recruitment, retention, and promotion within the ranks, providing for gender parity in decision making, and gender-sensitizing *all* members of security sector institutions, whose ultimate duty is to serve the public in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. OSCE participating States are committed to these international obligations in Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/05 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which underscore support for United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security, subsequent UNSCRs in this vein, and relevant legally binding provisions of CEDAW.

Background: Gender-Sensitive Indicators and Their Application

How do we measure progress achieved in implementing OSCE gender-equality commitments across the OSCE region? Indicators are tools used to monitor and assess changes in a given situation over a specified period of time. Whether applied to policies, programmes, or projects, indicators measure results achieved and simultaneously highlight where more progress is needed. When applied systematically, indicators provide a clear track record of societal change, and therefore constitute an important component of any monitoring and evaluation system.

More recently, attention has been focused on increasing the gender sensitivity of monitoring and evaluation systems, recognizing that, due to gendered attitudes, expectations, and beliefs, any changes achieved impact men and women, boys and girls differently. As a result, various national and international bodies have started to develop and apply "gender-sensitive" indicators. The added value of gender-sensitive indicators lies in "their ability to

point to changes in the status and roles of women and men over time, and therefore to measure whether gender equity is being achieved".²

Gender-sensitive indicators can be used to track progress in the implementation of gender-specific interventions. However, indicators in general can also be made more "gender-sensitive" by recognizing that policies, programmes, and activities will impact men and women differently due to their different roles and responsibilities as well as their access to, power over, and the allocation of resources within families and communities. Making indicators for *any* project more gender-sensitive may be as simple a process as distinguishing between male and female participants in a workshop, but the consequences may be profound for international support processes determined to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized in societies. Therefore, we may distinguish between different types of gender-sensitive indicators, which can be developed and applied according to specific programme objectives. The UNDP's Democratic Governance Centre has developed the following classification scheme:

1. *Gender-specific*: These indicators measure practices specifically targeted at women or men, such as policies to increase women's empowerment. An example might be the percentage of seats in a national parliament reserved for women.
2. *Implicitly gendered*: There is no explicit reference made to gender, but the indicator is clearly relevant to either men or women. Examples may include the number of reported cases of domestic violence prosecuted in courts (victims predominantly female).
3. *Chosen separately by men and women*: Such indicators can reflect differences in the priorities, needs, and interests of women and men, as well as differences in perceptions and opinions. An example might be the degree to which men and women feel that their needs are reflected in the priorities of governmental or parliamentary agendas.
4. *Disaggregated by sex*: The value of the indicator is calculated separately for men and women and therefore allows comparisons to be made between the two groups; for example, this may include the level of voter turnout among men to that of voter turnout among women.³

Such a framework provides useful guidance in increasing the gender sensitivity of all measurement tools, whether applied to gender-specific initiatives or initiatives in other sectors.

2 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), *Guide to Gender-Sensitive Indicators*, August 1997, at: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/REN-218124839-P9K>.

3 This configuration is taken from UNDP, *Measuring Democratic Governance: A framework for selecting pro-poor and gender sensitive indicators*, May 2006.

Measuring Gender Equality in Politics and the Security Sector

International, regional, and national actors implementing gender initiatives within and outside the OSCE region have begun to establish and use gender-sensitive indicators in order to gauge the level of impact their activities have on women and men. As the body of indicators developed for application in different sectors grows, so too does awareness of the challenges in systematically gathering data as part of monitoring and evaluation processes. This section explores in greater detail the types of challenges faced in measuring the impact of policy and programme initiatives in general, and specifically in the sphere of gender equality.

(Gender-sensitive) indicators may be developed by institutions to guide and track internal processes of organizational change (for example, the implementation of a gender-mainstreaming strategy), or to assess the impact of policies, programmes, and activities implemented for the benefit of external stakeholders. A key challenge in applying indicators, including gender-sensitive indicators, is effectively measuring change at the *outcome* level. Measuring inputs and outputs may be relatively straightforward, but assessing progress at the levels of outcomes and goals is extremely difficult, not least because the achievement of outcomes most often lies partially outside the control of any given institution. Therefore, it is often difficult to determine *attribution* in any progress achieved.

Furthermore, to accurately measure changes in a given situation, it is necessary to first establish a *baseline*, a snapshot of a situation as it currently stands before programme implementation (usually accomplished by compiling statistics or other available information). This is especially difficult when measuring changes in gender equality and gender relations in many OSCE participating States, as statistics are not always systematically collected or analyzed, and mostly not disaggregated by sex. Baseline data is even more challenging to collect when an attempt is made to gather *qualitative* data, such as levels of awareness or prevailing perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour. Yet it is precisely such changes that must be measured if a society's progress in achieving gender equality is truly to be gauged. Lastly, as organizations increasingly apply participatory approaches in their capacity-building and support initiatives, it is natural to question how participatory the process of indicator development is and should be. A "bottom-up" approach which engages programme beneficiaries must often be delicately balanced with an organization's own objectives and priorities for programme delivery. Needless to say, as monitoring and evaluation systems and approaches become more nuanced, participatory, and comprehensive, the costs in terms of human, financial, and technical resources also rise, for which a proper budget must be developed.

Many of these challenges are reflected in work which is focused on women's participation in political and public life, including decision making.

The single most important indicator developed thus far for measuring women's political participation and influence is the number of women represented in the (lower house of) the respective national parliament. Yet such an indicator does not measure the *quality* of women's participation in, or the *level of women's influence* on parliamentary processes such as law making, policy review, or agenda setting.⁴ Even when complemented by sub-indicators measuring the number of women holding decision-making positions, such quantitative indicators do not provide a full picture of the scope of women's decision-making power. For example, there is an emerging trend towards nominating or appointing women to "deputy" positions, such as deputy chairs and/or deputy speakers. Whilst technically a senior position, the level of decision-making authority deputies wield can vary greatly. Too often, female deputies are placed in a position of assisting (often male) chairs and speakers in implementing their own agendas. Furthermore, such an indicator also fails to reveal whether the women represented in parliament actively support gender equality and women's empowerment.⁵

Furthermore, relying exclusively on singular, quantitative indicators can actually have a distorting effect, leading analysts, policy-makers, and project/programme managers to draw the wrong conclusions from data sets. For example, several OSCE participating States have introduced legally binding gender quotas in an effort to increase women's parliamentary representation. In some participating States, this has resulted in a marked increase in the number of women parliamentarians, for example in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Kyrgyzstan.⁶ However, if not accompanied by political and public awareness-raising and targeted capacity-development measures, quotas can actually serve to diminish women's decision-making powers, as women elected to legislatures through quotas may be perceived as unqualified, unprepared, and undeserving of public office. In such cases, the number of women represented in parliament, and even the number of women holding senior positions (such as deputy chairs of committees or deputy speakers) may not provide a full and accurate picture of the extent of women's political agency and influence.

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- 4 Cf. Tessa Hochfeld/Shahana Rasool Bassadien, Participation, values, and implementation: three research challenges in developing gender-sensitive indicators, in: *Gender & Development*, 2/2007, pp. 217-230. See also Karen Barnes, *Turning Policy into Impact on the Ground, Developing indicators and monitoring mechanisms on women, peace and security issues for the European Union*. Synthesis report, May 2009, available at: http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/Synthesis_TURNING_POLICY_INTO_IMPACT_ON_THE_GROUND.pdf.
- 5 There are national initiatives that track women MPs' voting record on legislation containing explicit gender dimensions. Such initiatives provide the public with evidence of women MPs' commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. However, this can also be seen as placing the burden of championing gender equality squarely on the shoulders of women.
- 6 See Pippa Norris/Mona Lena Krook, *Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Action Plan*, 2011. Research commissioned by ODIHR, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/78432>.

In the security sector, as in the political sphere, there is a tendency to default to (and a near dependency on) basic quantitative indicators such as the number of women within a particular security sector institution or in decision-making positions. Some of the existing National Action Plans (NAPs) for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (1325 NAPs) in the OSCE region rely on number and percentage increases as indicators. For example, the Canadian 1325 NAP outlines several thematic areas, and under each heading, there is an emphasis on measuring the “number and percentage” of female personnel in missions and departments as well as the number of attempts to ensure their participation therein.⁷ In order to promote women in military and civilian peace-building efforts, the Swiss 1325 NAP narrows in on the “total number of supported candidates”, the “number of supported female candidates”, and the “percentage share of female candidates”.⁸ The idea is that if women are present and their numbers are increased throughout the ranks, then that is sufficient for their overall advancement. While strength in numbers is important, it is not the only evidence of progress.

There is a further hurdle for measuring women’s participation in the security sector: an overall absence of indicators. Certain national policies in the OSCE region stress the need to increase the number of women in security, promote them to decision-making and leadership positions, and increase their participation in peacekeeping missions. Such goals are outlined with various degrees of detail in the 1325 NAPs of Bosnia and Herzegovina,⁹ Finland,¹⁰ Norway,¹¹ the Netherlands,¹² and Spain.¹³ However, the plans often fail to pair these goals with indicators. Thus, at the national policy level, even *quantitative* measurements are not referenced. In December 2008, Working Group 1325 commissioned an evaluation of the Dutch 1325 NAP one year after its implementation. Evaluators made several suggestions for improvement and included a list of sample quantitative and qualitative indicators.¹⁴ Further participating States in the OSCE region are being encouraged to undertake such exercises and include indicators directly in their 1325 NAPs

7 Cf. *Building Peace and Security for All, Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security*, 2011.

8 See Swiss Confederation, Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, *Women, Peace and Security. National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*, 2010, p. 8.

9 See *Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010-2013*, pp. 23-31.

10 See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, *UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), Women, Peace and Security. Finland’s National Action Plan 2008-2011*, pp. 15, 20.

11 See *The Norwegian Government’s Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security*, 2006, pp. 5-13.

12 See *Dutch National Action Plan on Resolution 1325. Taking a Stand for Women, Peace and Security*, 2007, pp. 34-35, 39-43.

13 See *Plan de Acción del Gobierno de España para la Aplicación de la Resolución 1325 del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas (2000), Sobre Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad*, pp. 3-5, 7.

14 See *One year NAP 1325. Evaluating the Dutch National Action Plan on UNSC Resolution 1325 After One Year of Implementation*, 2008, p. 49.

in such a way that they can properly measure and document the commitments they are making to and on behalf of women.¹⁵

The UN has undergone an extensive process of setting forth global indicators for tracking the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security worldwide. By means of consultations and a mapping exercise, 2,500 indicators were gathered and narrowed down to a group of 20 organized along specific goals in four thematic areas. The thematic areas focus on

- mainstreaming a gender perspective into all conflict prevention activities and strategies especially for preventing sexual and gender-based violence;
- promoting and supporting women's active and meaningful participation in all peace processes as well as their representation in formal and informal decision-making at all levels;
- strengthening and amplifying efforts to secure the safety, physical and mental health, well-being, economic security, and/or dignity of women and girls; and
- promoting women's equal access to aid relief and recovery.¹⁶

In the area dealing with women's participation in peace processes and decision making, the indicators rely heavily on numbers and percentages.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the UN global indicators for tracking the implementation of UNSCR 1325 are a good start and set the premise for the development of national, context-specific indicators geared towards the systematic measurement of progress in this area.

Towards Comprehensive Indicators for Women in Politics and the Security Sector

The authors of this article would like to propose a selection of measurements that, taken together, can provide a more comprehensive picture of women's participation in and contributions to governance and the security sector. It should be noted that, as with the UN indicators on UNSCR 1325, these indicators are merely suggestions and are meant to provide guidance for more specific measurements that could apply in national contexts within the OSCE region.

In the political sphere, one area of fruitful research in the OSCE region would be on levels of *women's political solidarity* at local, national and, if possible, international levels. By women's political solidarity, we mean the

15 A good example is the *Austrian Action Plan on Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*, 2007.

16 Cf. UN Secretary General, *Women, Peace and Security. Report of the Secretary-General*, S/2010/173, 6 April 2010, p. 3.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

degree to which women politicians support, mentor, and encourage each other as a deliberate strategy to empower women as political actors. Such a topic might include quantitative indicators on the number of women who entered politics as a result of support from other women; the number of parliamentary bodies established to provide professional support and development opportunities to women; and/or the number and type of mentoring programmes available to women. Qualitative indicators might include the level of support to enter politics women received from members of their family, women in their community, and other professional women; the degree to which women politicians feel they succeeded in politics because of support networks; the degree to which women perceive other female political actors as competitors; and levels of satisfaction with the support opportunities provided by parliamentary institutions.

The number of women represented in national parliaments is likely to remain the standard indicator for measuring gender equality in politics.¹⁸ However, this indicator can and should be accompanied by several other types of indicators to provide a more complete picture of women's political empowerment. For example, the bulk of parliamentary work is usually carried out in committees. Women are often well-represented in committees dealing with social issues, including health, gender equality, family affairs, and education. They are often under-represented in committees mandated to cover foreign policy, national security, defence, infrastructure, and the economy. If women are members of such committees, their role may be limited to carrying out secretarial functions rather than providing substantial input. Furthermore, qualitative gender-sensitive indicators can provide critical information on changes in levels of confidence among women MPs, and point to substantive changes in gendered attitudes and behaviour. Such information could be collected by means of perception surveys, focus group sessions, and face-to-face interviews. Examples of relevant indicators might therefore include:

- the number and position of women in each of the committee structures;
- the level of confidence women MPs and parliamentary staff feel in voicing their concerns, opinions, and suggestions;
- the degree to which women MPs feel their views and suggestions are integrated into policy-making processes;
- the level of confidence female MPs and staff express in the parliamentary rules of procedure;

18 Women's participation in political parties is also receiving increasing attention, as opportunities for women to stand for election to the national parliament are often directly controlled by political parties. Indicators for measuring women's participation in political parties are discussed in greater detail below.

- the degree to which women MPs and staff feel that the organizational culture of the parliament promotes a gender-sensitive working environment.

The responsiveness of the Parliament to women as citizens and voters should also be taken into consideration. Indicators might include:

- the degree to which women voters feel that their needs, interests, and priorities are represented in Parliament;
- the level of confidence women voters have in women parliamentarians to represent their particular needs, interests, and priorities;
- the degree to which women voters feel that their needs and priorities correspond to issues prioritized in national agendas.¹⁹

Women's participation in political and public life at local level is another area deserving of more attention. Women's opportunities to access political power at national level are often influenced by their access to politics at local level. Measuring women's representation in local government and council structures can therefore provide a more complete picture of women's political opportunities and indicate where increased levels of international support may be warranted. On a related note, "governance" in many OSCE participating States is exercised through both formal institutions and informal processes, especially at local level. Women's access to political power as mediated in and through informal processes is admittedly much more difficult to measure accurately. However, informal institutions and political actors may hold the key to political power for women as well as men, and may help explain levels of women's participation in national governmental and parliamentary structures. More effort could be made to assess women's participation in informal processes such as community-based dispute resolution and local planning. Similarly, we might measure opportunities for women to access political power through the support of informal power brokers such as religious and business leaders (or the degree to which such power brokers can block women's political access).

In the security sector, there has to be a move away from simply counting the number of women in the ranks and in decision-making positions. For example, countries could start to measure whether progress has been achieved on behalf of female soldiers and law enforcement officers by noting the number of references made to gender equality in laws and regulations that govern these particular security sector institutions. Furthermore, tracking the percentage of national budgetary resources allocated to UNSCR 1325-related initiatives would begin to shed light on the level of a government's commitment to promoting women and addressing women's issues in the security

19 Cf. UNDP, *Measuring Democratic Governance*, cited above (Note 3). These indicators are included under the section "Electoral systems and processes".

realm. In the Austrian 1325 NAP, an annex lists all of the women-related peace and security projects overseas that were funded by the Austrian government between 2001 and 2007. An overall tally of this funding that was dedicated to the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in other countries' security sectors per year could be compared with national spending on other issues and, in this way, transformed into an indicator.²⁰ For countries where women's participation in the security sector at national level is an issue and needs to be increased, national spending on their recruitment, retention and promotion could be similarly tracked.

Several indicators which could be regarded as a set pertain to human resources within the security sector and, if taken together, could provide a more complete picture of whether women are being included and whether discrimination against them is taking place. These are the number of reviews carried out in order to evaluate and eliminate bias from recruitment policies and selection criteria; the existence of lateral entry schemes to encourage qualified individuals from under-represented groups (such as women) to enter at higher positions; and the number of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment complaints filed against a particular security sector institution.²¹

Attitude surveys and interviews are paving the way for much-needed qualitative indicators in the security sector. Such efforts would track the knowledge of and positive attitude towards gender issues expressed by members of security sector institutions, the commitment on the part of management to advance women, and the propensity to promote non-discriminatory and family-friendly working environments. Furthermore, open public surveys can track the perceptions of ordinary citizens towards security-sector actors, such as police officers, and gauge whether the public thinks they are providing services in a gender-balanced manner.²² Public hearings, participant observations, and focus group discussions on women in security also help to develop qualitative indicators.²³

20 See *Austrian Action Plan on Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*, 2007, pp. 16-24.

21 For examples of how these indicators work in practice, see Megan Bastik/Kristin Valasek (eds), *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit, Tool 2: Tara Denham, Police Reform and Gender*, DCAF/OSCE-ODIHR/UN-INSTRAW, Geneva 2008, p. 12-14, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/30652>.

22 For examples of how these indicators work in practice, please see Megan Bastik/Kristin Valasek (eds), *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit, Tool 6: Angela Mackay, Border Management and Gender*, DCAF/OSCE-ODIHR/UN-INSTRAW, Geneva 2008, pp. 12-13, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/30652>.

23 Cf. United Nations/International Alert, *Planning for Action on Women and Peace and Security. National-level Implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000)*, 2010, p. 70.

Guiding the Monitoring Process: Principles for Making SMART Indicators Smarter

Quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring women's progress should generally follow the SMART criteria: indicators have to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. If such indicators are to paint a more complete picture of women's status in politics and the security sector, they should be included in gender NAPs. These policy mechanisms are a first, key step towards translating women's equality aims into practice. A coalition of European NGOs assembled in September 2009 by the Initiative for Peacebuilding, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, and International Alert emphasized a few elements that could be applicable to plans that cover women's political representation and participation as well as the presence of women in security in the OSCE region. In a joint statement, civil society organizations recommended that:

All NAPs should contain as standard the following *key components*: specific and realistic goals, objectives and priority actions, timelines, a budget, indicators, benchmarks and targets, and clear lines of responsibility to specific individuals, units or functions. They should also include a results-oriented and transparent reporting and monitoring mechanism, including a system for tracking funds allocated to the implementation of the action plan.²⁴

A results-oriented plan, with proper monitoring and evaluation in place, requires dynamic and interlinked indicators. This goes beyond simply meeting the SMART criteria. Consequently, the authors of this article propose a set of principles to *guide* the selection of gender-sensitive SMART indicators. To gauge impact and results better, these measuring tools should be:

- *Comprehensive*: By comprehensive, we mean defining indicators that capture the spectrum of issues within a given sphere that may impact on women's participation. This means including those indicators that would measure women's participation at local levels of governance, in formal and informal structures (the latter where possible), in civil-society bodies (associations, councils, NGOs, etc.), and in both formal and informal decision-making roles during conflict prevention or resolution processes.
- *Strategic*: The indicators and criteria chosen to measure women's participation in politics and the security sector should be chosen strategic-

24 EPLO/Initiative for Peacebuilding/International Alert, *Civil Society Recommendations on the Implementation of UN SCR 1325 in Europe*, p. 1 (emphasis in the original), at: <http://www.pacedifesa.org/public/documents/Recommendations%20for%20MS%20meeting%20FINAL.pdf>.

ally, also in relation to one another. This should ensure that the resulting data can be used to inform future planning and programming and that the indicators shed light on women's participation in different political and security arenas that are *not* captured in indices that focus on formal structures at national levels.

- *Comparative:* Single indicators serve to capture important gender-equality measurements. However, taken as a set, indicators can reveal patterns and trends in women's involvement in the political and security spheres; trends that can be important for planning and programming (e.g. high levels of women's participation in informal community associations and local election structures but low participation in formal local or national governance structures may influence programming decisions).
- *Tailored:* This refers to the importance of tailoring gender-related criteria and indicators to the sector being measured and to the specific context. Women's participation in parliament may be a relevant criterion for assessing women's political participation, but is not necessarily the best measurement indicator or criterion for correlating the stability of a country where more emphasis might be placed on the number and role of women in security structures at community and national levels. Tailoring further refers to taking the national context into consideration when designing indicators. UN global indicators on reaching the goals of UNSCR 1325 need to be adapted within the context of each country that seeks to comply with international obligations on women, peace, and security.
- *Systematic:* As in any monitoring and evaluation process, the measurement of indicators must be consistent and undertaken at regular intervals. For example, regular and repeated evaluations of recruitment policies and selection criteria for the armed forces or law enforcement agencies can serve to eliminate gender-based bias if the methodology is correctly structured and consistent from evaluation to evaluation.

The principles noted above are meant to act as a preliminary "check list" for those designing indicators to measure gender equality in politics and the security sector at national levels and, comparatively, at the OSCE regional level. This is by no means a closed list and it will gradually improve as we begin taking steps towards setting forth proper measurements that will provide evidence of women's progress over time.

The Way Forward: Using Indicators to Inform OSCE Programming

Measurement tools such as gender-sensitive SMART indicators are not an end in themselves. They should rather be used to inform planning and pro-

gramming. The above checklist, coupled with the suggested combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, can be used to plan and programme OSCE gender-equality interventions more strategically at national and regional levels in the political and security spheres.

The OSCE Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality (2004) clearly outlines the gender-mainstreaming process for all OSCE policies, processes, programmes and activities. The two-pronged approach contained in the Action Plan highlights that gender mainstreaming must occur internally within the Organization (e.g. gender sensitization in processes of strategic planning, human resource management and development, monitoring, and evaluation) as well as in the development of programmes, projects, and activities to assist participating States.

One obvious recommendation for better guiding gender mainstreaming within the OSCE is to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework with clearly identified indicators for each aspect of the Action Plan. A second, related recommendation is to ensure the systematic development of indicators and gender-sensitive indicators for *all* OSCE policies, programmes, and projects (not just gender initiatives). Here the framework developed by the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, which introduced indicators which are sex-disaggregated, gender-specific, gender-implicit and chosen by women, can provide a useful starting point.²⁵ For OSCE projects and programmes in the areas of democratization and politico-military affairs, for example, all indicators should be *sex-disaggregated* to track the number of women and men benefiting from capacity-building activities such as training, workshops, and round tables. Consultation of both men and women stakeholders in participating States would allow *women to choose* specific indicators to measure progress. Gender-implicit indicators may help to draw out the previously undetected gender dimensions of different issues that may result in new and innovative programming initiatives.

In the sphere of OSCE/ODIHR activities to promote the equal participation of women and men in political and public life, ODIHR can contribute to the development of appropriate indicators in two innovative ways. Firstly, by assisting participating States in developing quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring women's participation in political parties and electoral bodies. Secondly, by promoting "cross referencing" of data collected by applying indicators to OSCE projects and programmes. In the first case, examples may include indicators to measure the number of women represented in electoral bodies at different levels, the degree to which women members of electoral bodies influence agendas, and/or women members' role in developing public awareness and voter campaigns. In the second case, the data collected through the systematic application of indicators should be compared across indicator sets to produce new areas of potential OSCE programmatic activity. For example, if monitoring reveals an increase in women's

25 Cf. UNDP, *Measuring Democratic Governance*, cited above (Note 3).

representation in central election commissions, it may be worthwhile to compare this with changes in public attitudes towards women candidates, with the number of women holding decision-making positions within political parties, and with the number of cases seeking adjudication of gender-related electoral disputes. Any correlations noted, even if causation cannot be determined, may point to fruitful areas of further programming and research.

In Tajikistan, the State Committee on Women and Family Affairs, in conjunction with the gender NGO community, and supported by several international organizations such as UN Women, the OSCE, and the Asian Development Bank, are in the process of drafting a gender NAP for 2011-2015. The draft plan includes indicators and covers a range of issues including women's participation in decision-making, politics, and the security sector. The inclusion of comprehensive, strategic, comparative, tailored, and systematic indicators would make for better women's initiatives in the political and security spheres. In the sphere of political and public life, the NAP focuses specifically on improving gender balance at all levels of public administration, with indicators to measure women's participation at all levels, in leadership positions, and in professional versus administrative positions. A number of initiatives could be introduced to promote women's participation in political and electoral life, including political parties, complemented by indicators to measure women's influence and decision-making powers better. Indicators to assess changes in women's political and electoral participation may include the number of women on candidate selection/nomination boards within political parties, the adoption of political party platforms that address gender issues, the adoption of voluntary political party quotas, the number of women selected as party candidates, gender-sensitive media depictions of women candidates, changes in public perceptions about women candidates, the number of amendments to electoral and political party laws aimed at increasing equal participation of women and men, the number of amendments adopted, etc.

In the security sector, the draft NAP's goal to increase the number of women employees in institutions such as law enforcement, border agencies, and armed forces could be tracked by a combination of human resources-focused indicators. These could include the number of reviews of gender bias in recruitment policies and selection criteria, the number of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment complaints, and commitment on the part of management to advance women (via surveys or interviews). Follow-up programming in Tajikistan as a result of these measurements could include a redrafting of the security sector's recruitment policies and selection criteria to include a gender-balanced approach; training measures to sensitize *all* members of the security sector to the negative effects of gender-based discrimination; instituting a clear procedure for addressing sexual harassment cases and establishing a redress mechanism for affected individuals; and creating

incentives for management to implement gender-equality schemes within all ranks, for example, by requiring all management reviews to address gender).

Conclusion

This article has explored the importance of developing gender-sensitive indicators as a means of systematically measuring progress towards achieving the OSCE's gender-equality commitments. It has looked more closely at the traditional challenges to indicator development and application. The authors have proposed the *expansion* of gender-equality indicators to provide a more comprehensive picture of the progress being achieved towards, and the remaining gaps in increasing women's participation in politics and the security sector. The article has also made a proposal on how to enhance the *methodological framework* for developing and applying indicators, and indicated some preliminary areas where indicators could be used to strengthen OSCE/ODIHR programming internally and externally. Measuring progress on gender-equality goals requires a context-specific, interconnected, and systematic approach. Systematically applying indicators, and meeting or falling short of the intended goals as measured by indicators, creates a written record of progress and relapse in achieving women's equality with men; a record that some day will help to answer larger questions regarding correlations between women's empowerment, democracy, and peace.