



Submission No 5

**Review of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Annual Report 2009 - 2010**

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Review of the Foreign Affairs and Trade Annual Report 2009-2010

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and
Trade

Submission of the Australian National Committee for UN Women

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Introduction: The Australian National Committee for UN Women

The Australian National Committee for UN Women, known as UN Women Australia (formerly UNIFEM Australia) is one of 19 National Committees supporting the core programs of UN Women around the world. The National Committees do this through engaging with government, membership programs, raising public awareness on gender and development issues and supporting regional UN Women programs through fundraising.

UN Women Australia's vision is a world where men and women have equal opportunities and capacities and the principles of gender equality are embedded in development, human rights, and peace and security agendas. UN Women Australia focuses its activities on fostering women's empowerment and gender equality both domestically and internationally. This is achieved through initiatives aimed at reducing women's economic exclusion, eliminating violence against women and supporting women's leadership and political participation.

Summary of Key Points

The purpose of this submission is distinctly related to evaluating DFAT Program 1.1 Objective. It is in relation to this objective that UN Women Australia believes DFAT has not adequately responded to gender concerns and recommendations both with its internal and external policy focus.

Gender mainstreaming and integration into foreign policy endeavours such as security, peacekeeping, trade and development assistance, requires reassessing the differential impact of these policies and related programmes on women, men, girls and boys at every stage of a programme system. As such, UN Women Australia is concerned about the lack of reporting against progress made towards compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

The 2008 Inquiry into the role of Australian peacekeepers stated the following: *The committee urges government departments and agencies to further advocate the role of women and to lead by example to encourage other peacekeeping partner countries to increase women's participation and leadership in peacekeeping missions.*¹

The subsequent DFAT 2009/2010 Annual Report however, fails to address exactly what steps have been taken towards ensuring this consistency. UN Women Australia acknowledges an increase in attention from both AusAID and DFAT about the importance of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (SCR 1325) and more widely the importance of assessing gender in conflict situations. What remains unclear and of concern to UN Women Australia is the lack of reporting and follow-up surrounding concrete policy implementation of SCR 1325 which encompasses both themes.

Finally, UN Women Australia notes the visible progress made towards ensuring women's participation within DFAT postings, both in Australia and in overseas postings. Ensuring women's participation within a whole-of-government approach is one necessary step to delivering programs and services that are responsive to gender issue. However, UN Women Australia notes a remaining concern about the gaps that remains in Senior Executive Service.

Summary of Recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee:

- 1. Require** DFAT to report on the *status* of implementation to UN Security Council Resolution 1325;

¹ Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (2008) 'Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations' pg.262.

2. **Encourage** reporting that reflects a *process* that is participatory, transparent and inclusive of civil society with political leadership from all relevant government agencies;
3. **Recommend** the inclusion of clear *targets* and indicators (quantitative and qualitative) to measure progress and clearly identify responsibility within a whole of government approach.
4. **Investigate** targeted gender programs and address the gender disparity remaining for Senior Executive Service.

Status of Implementation

First and foremost, we second the following recommendation made by the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade regarding Australia's involvement in Peacekeeping operations:

The committee recommends further that DFAT provide in its annual report an account on the whole-of-government performance in implementing this resolution. The report should go beyond merely listing activities to provide indicators of the effectiveness of Australia's efforts to implement Resolution 1325.²

As per the above recommendation, the 2009-2010 DFAT Annual Report has failed to provide any reporting on government performance in relation to SCR 1325. Therefore, this recommendation and a particular focus on SCR 1325 remains elusive.

UN Women Australia understands that a National Action Plan for SCR 1325 has been drafted and is currently being circulated throughout relevant government departments. However, our concern rests in the delay of its release and the lack of community and civil society consultation in the process as this is an indicator of transparency in the development of National Action Plans.

Recommendation:

1. Fully comply with the recommendation of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade to report on the status of implementation and adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This should be considered in each DFAT Annual Report.

Process of Consultations

According to INSTRAW guidelines³ and as has been highlighted on numerous occasions, the necessity and process for establishing a National Action Plan are:

Comprehensiveness – an opportunity to assess current implementation, identifies gaps, good practice, choose strategic priorities and select specific initiatives;

Coordination – preventing duplication and ad-hoc approaches, bringing together government and civil society actors;

Awareness-raising – through the exchange of information, conduct of seminars and training, the process of developing the plan itself strengthens understanding;

Ownership – a participatory process enhances ownership and maximizes the prospects for implementation;

² Recommendation 24, pg. 262.

³ United Nations INSTRAW (now UN Women), 'Securing Equality, Engendering Peace: A guide to policy and planning on women, peace and security'.

Accountability – a clear plan will identify specific actions, who is responsible and provide timelines for implementation (essentially “what, what for, who and when”).

From the above, while a National Action Plan represents a more coordinated and accountable approach to integrating gender in DFAT programs, it similarly is an area of analysis that can be reported on with a National Action Plan in place. A lack of reporting on this issue more generally is disconcerting as a reflection of efforts made to encourage gender analysis within DFAT programming.

Recommendation:

2. DFAT ensures the reporting on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 reflects a process that is participatory, transparent and inclusive of civil society with political leadership from all relevant government agencies. This requires a proactive effort on the part of DFAT to include such details within its Annual Report.

Indicators and Targets

SCR 1325 is the first of a series of resolutions that have become known as the ‘Women, Peace and Security Agenda’.⁴ Since the adoption of SCR 1325 in 2000, four subsequent resolutions have called upon different and distinct actions to ensure that the women, peace and security agenda is advanced, therefore when adopting and implementing SCR 1325 it must be considered as a part of a wider agenda which incorporates a series of resolutions around this issue.

Resolution 1960 (2010) calls for establishing monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangements specific to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Resolution 1889 (2009) references the needs for indicators that understand and track the progress that is being made towards implementing SCR 1325. As a compliment to a transparent and accountable practice, indicators and targets provide a platform to identify gaps in the agenda and evaluate the effectiveness of a National Action Plan.

Recommendation:

3. The Joint Standing Committee Recommend the inclusion of clear targets and indicators (quantitative and qualitative) to measure progress and clearly identify responsibility within a whole of government approach. This would be specific to the area of policy responsibility that DFAT holds within a SCR 1325 National Action Plan when released and is in accordance with the recommendation of the Senate Standing Committee.

Women’s Participation

UN Women Australia notes significant gains detailed through Table 17 which focuses on Employees by location and gender. Indeed, locally engaged female staff exceeds that of male staff and Australian-based female staff are almost at par with male. Further to this, we were encouraged to note DFAT’s Workplace Diversity events. Events focusing on and highlighting women’s leadership are a positive step forward for overcoming common sexual harassment and gender barriers in the workplace.

However, UN Women Australia remains concerned with the remaining differences among Senior Executive Service positions with female senior executives counting for 58 positions out of 210 as oppose to 162 male. International Women’s Day events are a program that can raise general awareness about barriers to women’s leadership however, does not ensure systems of accountability and a merit based process behind women’s participation in senior positions.

Recommendation:

⁴ Resolution 1325 adopted 2000, Resolution 1820 adopted 2008, Resolution 1888 adopted 2009, Resolution 1889 adopted 2009 and Resolution 1960 adopted 2010.

4. Recommend in the 2010/2011 Annual Report detail efforts towards greater gender programming within DFAT human resources procedures and recommend the implementation of rigorous efforts to correct the gender disparity remaining for Senior Executive Service positions.