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## Women, Peace and Security: Understanding the Implementation of Gender Stipulations in Peace Agreements



As part of the process of their reintegration into civilian life, members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) receive certificates for laying down their individual weapons from the UN Mission in Colombia and accreditation from the Office of the country's High Commissioner for Peace. Photo: UN photo.

### JOINT BRIEF SERIES: NEW INSIGHTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (WPS) FOR THE NEXT DECADE

On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Several other resolutions followed, which together constitute the normative framework for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. This brief series was initiated in connection to the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and promotes the realization of the WPS agenda through evidence-based policy and practice. It is the result of a collaboration between the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), and UN Women.

The editorial board has consisted of Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs and Sophia Wrede from FBA, Louise Olsson from PRIO, and Katarina Salmela and Pablo Castillo Diaz from UN Women. The views and opinions expressed in the brief series are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the collaborating partners.

### ■ INTRODUCTION

The UN Secretary-General's 2019 Women, Peace and Security (WPS) report underscores the fact that UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) places women's participation at the centre of work for peace. Additionally, there are clear commitments by the United Nations and Member States to promote women's rights and gender equality in conflict resolution. As stated by the Secretary-General, strengthening efforts to realize these decisions are part of moving toward 'impactful action rather than empty rhetoric' (S/2019/800, 1). But how can we better assess whether commitments on women's rights and inclusion result in impactful actions?

Building on in-depth research and data collected by the Kroc Institute's Peace Accords Matrix Barometer Initiative in Colombia, this research brief argues that to achieve meaningful peacebuilding and actual long-term changes in gender equality, women's participation and explicit commitments to women's rights need to be sustained throughout the entire peace process. We need to continue efforts to expand the scope of the WPS agenda beyond the peace negotiation phase to include the peace accord implementation phase. We also need to become even more targeted in our actions to realize the desired objectives.

This research brief presents lessons from Colombia’s Final Accord to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace (hereafter, the Final Accord). These lessons were identified through a rigorous approach that provides useful metrics to evaluate the social, political, and economic consequences of specific actions. The Final Accord, adopted in 2016, has become an example of not only the role women can play during the negotiation process but also how women’s rights and gender equality concerns can be explicitly included in an agreement, referred to here as ‘gender stipulations’ or ‘gender provisions’. In the ongoing implementation process, however, it is apparent that not all gender stipulations have been realized to the same extent. To better understand why this is the case, we begin by discussing the current state of implementation of different categories of gender stipulations in the Colombian Final Accord. To promote nuance on how to achieve long-term change, this brief then looks closer at ongoing implementation in three of the key areas outlined in the UN Secretary-General’s report: a) improving women’s economic rights through the implementation of provisions on rural reform; b) addressing security guarantees through provisions on protection mechanisms for women social leaders and human rights defenders; and c) strengthening the participation of women from different segments of society at the sub-national level through provisions on verification and monitoring of progress. A central lesson from the Colombian implementation process is the fact that the Kroc methodology

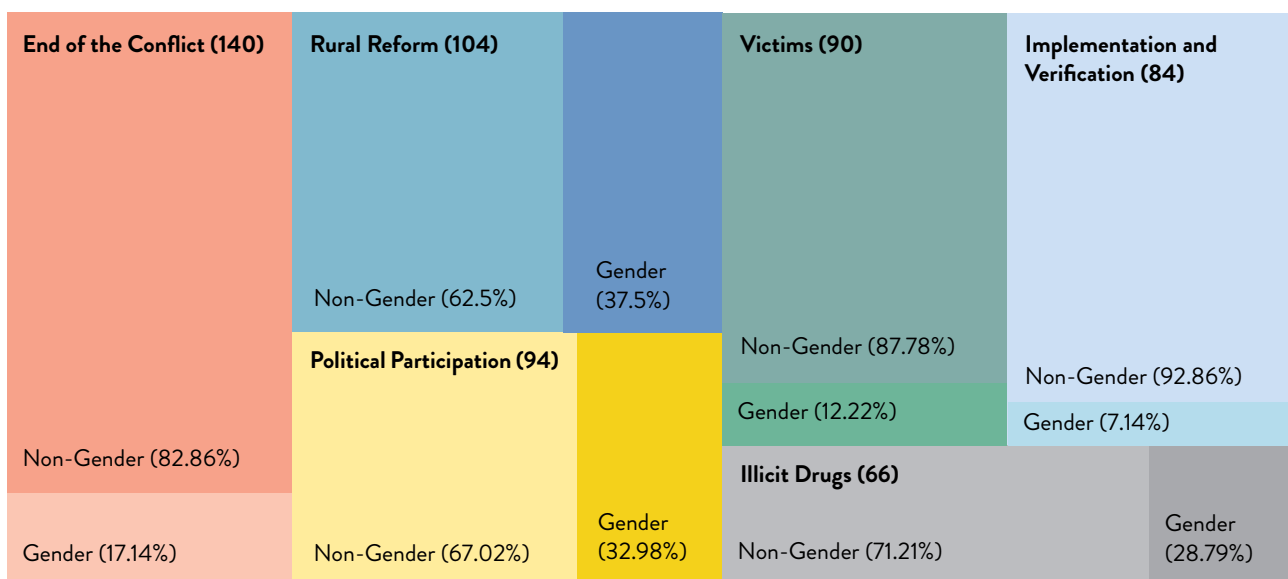
was created through dialogue with Colombian state actors and a broad range of women’s organizations working on peace process issues. In this way, the method forged a consultative space to identify and monitor gender stipulations in peace implementation and demonstrated the rigour necessary to measure WPS-related issues in implementation processes.

## IMPLEMENTING GENDER STIPULATIONS

The Barometer Initiative in Colombia identifies and tracks 578 specific stipulations in the Final Accord. As can be seen in Figure 1, these stipulations can be divided into six points: end of conflict, rural reform, political participation, victims, illicit drugs, and implementation verification. Of the 578 stipulations, 130 (22.5 per cent) are specific measures for gender equality or mechanisms for the participation and representation of women in the implementation process; the other 77.5 per cent are not gender-specific. As can also be seen in the figure, the proportion of gender stipulations across the six points in the peace agreement varies significantly.

Over time, the implementation of gender stipulations has advanced very differently from non-gender stipulations. The data as of November 2019 indicate that 25 per cent of all 578 stipulations have been completed, 12 per cent are at the intermediate implementation stage, 30 per cent have

Figure 1. The distribution of stipulations for each point in the Colombian Final Agreement

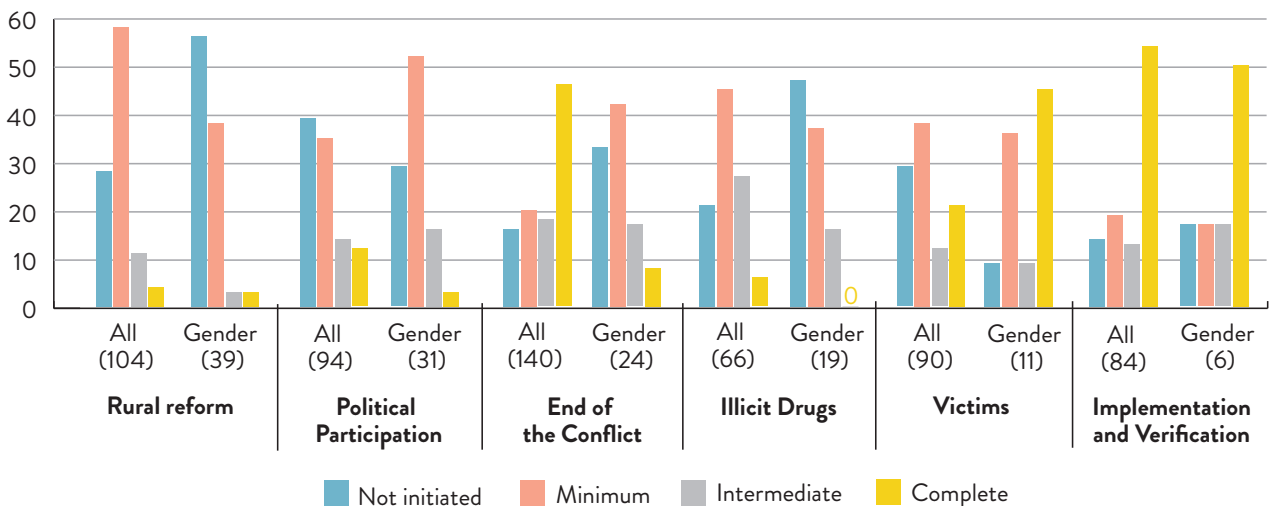


been implemented minimally, and another 33 per cent are yet to be initiated. In comparison, for gender stipulations, only 9 per cent (out of 130) have been completed, 12 per cent are at the intermediate implementation stage, another 41 per cent have been minimally implemented, and 47 per cent are yet to be initiated. In short, the gender stipulations are falling behind in terms of implementation, and a higher percentage of gender stipulations are yet to be initiated. As we see in Figure 2, one potential reason for this gap is that many of the stipulations that were completed in the first three years after the agreement reflected more short-term conflict termination commitments, such as the process of disarmament and demobilization, a category of commitments that did not include a large number of gender stipulations. In contrast, many of the gender stipulations have to do with structural reform and societal transformation, which have timelines of 10 to 15 years for completion. However, this gap is still worth highlighting. Although the long-term priorities are meant to be achieved gradually, long periods without the initiation of reforms can produce negative cascading effects in the implementation of related gender provisions affecting women's agency.

In addition, it is noticeable in Figure 2 that there is variation between different categories of gender stipulations. For example, in the area of 'rural reform' we find the most gender stipulations, but also the highest percentage of general stipulations that are yet to be initiated. 'Political participation', one of the substantive points of the Final Accord that provides for security guarantees and mechanisms for political participation, has the second-highest number of gender stipulations. While only 3 per cent of gender stipulations have been implemented in this category compared to 12 per cent of all the category's stipulations, progress is significantly higher in political participation than it is in rural reform. A more successful point is the implementation of monitoring and verification mechanisms in the Final Accord, where 50 per cent of the gender stipulations have been implemented and only 17 per cent are yet to be initiated.

Data from the Peace Accords Matrix (PAM) Barometer Initiative in Colombia thus show that implementing gender provisions might meet different challenges and opportunities compared to general provisions. In addition, challenges and opportunities can also vary between different categories of

Figure 2. Comparison of implementation of all stipulations versus gender stipulations



gender stipulations. Below we provide qualitative assessments of this pattern by taking a closer look at three of the substantive areas that we identified above: a) rural reform; b) security guarantees and protection mechanisms for women social leaders and human rights defenders; and c) strengthening the participation of women throughout verification and monitoring.

### **Stipulations on Rural Reform**

One of the pathways for economic recovery in societies emerging out of armed conflicts is the promotion of women's economic rights and access to resources, as pointed out by the UN Secretary-General in his report (2019/800, 16). The Final Accord is important, as it contains significant commitments to work towards structural transformation of the countryside, to resolve underlying conflict issues such as access to land, and to close inequality gaps for rural communities, especially for women, children, and ethnic peoples. One example of what this means in practice is the creation of the Land Fund. This fund is charged with distributing three million hectares over 12 years to benefit small-scale farmers, with an emphasis on rural women without land or with insufficient land. The creation of the Land Fund was an important step forward, as the normative framework included affirmative measures for the allocation of land to women and female-headed households. So far, however, only a small number of hectares has been distributed, and the fund's official allocation system has yet to become operational. One of the reasons why this is difficult is that the distribution of land to women should be accompanied by affirmative measures to improve their understanding of land and property rights and should also be accompanied by technical support so they can succeed in the use of this land. Additionally, the amount of land distributed per beneficiary, so far, is smaller in the case of female beneficiaries.

Another example of rural reform is the Development Programmes with a Territorial-Based Focus (PDET). These programmes involve 16 areas prioritized based on levels of poverty level, impact from the armed conflict, administrative institutional weakness, and presence of crops for illicit use and other illegal economies. The Final Accord stipulates that these programmes must include women and women's organizations in all their phases, from design to implementation and

monitoring. In the design phase, the consultation process was carried out through village and town meetings, building up to regional meetings. It became one of the largest participatory processes seen so far in the implementation of the Final Accord. In these meetings 65,000 women participated, accounting for 32.5 per cent of all participants. Some 4,606 of the initiatives that emerged out of this consultative process include a gender perspective.<sup>1</sup> It is important that this momentum be maintained in subsequent phases. Whilst the representation of women was an important element of the success of these local processes, the next challenge is to ensure that their voices are equally heard in the phase of local public policy and planning. Concretely, these 4,606 initiatives need to be prioritized in the development of the PDET actions plans. So far, these plans do not have an approved methodology that includes women or a gender-sensitive approach. Additionally, despite national-level efforts, there is no clear evidence of consistent inclusion in the realization of the PDET initiatives in the four-year local development plans, although the original initiatives were designed by the communities. While the rural reform initiatives and priorities carry the potential for transformative change with respect to women's access to resources and even ownership of land, the impact is likely to be diluted if the implementation process drags out over a long period of time.

### **Stipulations on Security Guarantees for Social Leaders and Female Human Rights Defenders**

As demonstrated by the Secretary-General's 2019 report on WPS, female peacebuilders and human rights defenders at the local level must be better recognized and supported for their work on the "frontlines to prevent and resolve conflicts" (S/2019/800, 8). In the case of Colombia, ensuring their security remains a considerable challenge, in spite of the fact that the Final Accord contains explicit commitments to strengthen protection through affirmative actions for ethnic peoples and women. In rectifying this, it is central to note that threats directed at female leaders tend to be different from those directed against male leaders. These threats more often include references to women's bodies, including degrading insults of a sexual nature or aim at reinforcing stereotypes and traditional gender roles. Moreover, these threats and intimidation tactics are not only aimed at the women themselves but also at their families. The commitments made

in the agreement constitute an important opportunity to develop individual and collective prevention and protection measures that reflect the different risks that women face compared to men.

We must also recognize that risks can vary depending on what problem women leaders are seeking to address. For example, threats have been particularly severe in the case of the implementation of the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Crops Used for Illicit Purposes (also known as PNIS in Spanish). Here, women have been key allies for the State in its implementation efforts, as the leadership of women has encouraged families and communities to support the signing of local-level agreements for substitution programmes.<sup>2</sup> The effect has been substantial. In the area of Putumayo, on the border between Colombia and Ecuador, over 20,000 families have signed agreements to substitute crops used for illicit purposes and to join the peace agreement programme, offering them alternative economic options.<sup>3</sup> While this has come at the cost of exposing them and their families to new threats from armed groups,<sup>4</sup> these women's groups are committed to continuing with the programme and looking for economic alternatives for income generation for their communities.

Finally, and centrally, in efforts to achieve effective prevention and protection, women themselves play a key part in their own security and that of society. For example, in the Cauca region, one women's group has been creating its own self-care protocols to ensure participants' safety whilst staying in the territory and working on peacebuilding efforts. As part of this exercise, women have made progress in establishing measures, developing a monitoring system to raise alerts about the local security situation, and serving as a primary source in the early warning system of the Ombudsperson's Office and local governmental institutions with responsibilities to guarantee safety<sup>5</sup>.

### **Stipulations on Implementation and Verification**

An inclusive verification process is imperative not only for advancing the overall implementation process but also for sharing ownership with local, national, and international stakeholders. The Final Accord contains a large number of provisions designed to promote inclusion and ownership in monitoring and verification. Among these stipulations, two focus specifically on the implementation of gender

provisions by aiming to create both an international and a national mechanism. The International Accompaniment Group mechanism is made up of UN Women, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), and Sweden. In the Final Accord, international accompaniment is defined as 'an endeavour to contribute to strengthening the guarantees for the fulfilment of the agreements' and to 'support and endorse the joint efforts for the implementation'<sup>6</sup>. This provision was fully implemented in the first year through the actions of the signatories of the Final Accord. Through the establishment of this mechanism, the intention was to invite the international community to fulfil their monitoring role and ensure their commitment and support for the peace process. The result of the mechanism's work has been better access to the policymaking process at the national level.

A milestone in policymaking has been the involvement of the Women's Special Forum: i.e. the national mechanisms that include representatives from national and regional women's organizations in the design of the indicators for a 15-year Framework Plan for Implementation and its systematic work to engage local governments. The Forum's mandate is to 'assist with monitoring the [gender] approach and guaranteeing the rights of women in the implementation'.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Forum acknowledges the role that women in civil society and their organizations have played in advocating for peace, both today and historically, as well as the experience of Colombian women and their organizations in peacebuilding. This has been a successful mechanism, as it has supported the participation of women from national and regional platforms in peace agreement pedagogy and has served as an accountability body. Nonetheless, the forum has faced challenges in sustaining a 'permanent dialogue' with the Commission to Monitor, Promote and Verify the Implementation of the Final Accord, due to its high-level political profile. Continued involvement in monitoring at the national and subnational levels should provide more opportunities for women's groups to influence the implementation process.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Recognizing the importance of the Peace Accords Matrix Barometer Initiative in Colombia, the UN Secretary-General notes that the lack of full implementation of gender stipulations is a challenge shared by several peace processes: for example, those in Libya and South Sudan (S/2019/800, 8). In addition, although the use of gender stipulations has grown over time, research indicates that the mere inclusion of gender stipulations in an agreement is not effective in improving gender equality or achieving durable peace in a post-war society.<sup>8</sup> This research brief contributes to this debate by demonstrating that in the case of the Final Accord in Colombia – in many ways a model case of the inclusion of gender stipulations – these stipulations tend to have a lower level of implementation compared to many of the general provisions, indicating that we are not yet fully utilizing their potential.

In working to realize their potential, we must recognize that gender provisions are used to address a range of diverse issues. This research brief brings to light on how implementing different categories of gender stipulations entails different forms of challenges. Understanding this is key for moving toward the more impactful actions that the UN Secretary-General has called for. Some of these challenges pertain to the overall progress of the peace process. For example, provisions on rural reform in Colombia involve deeply transformative processes, and this is an area of implementation where progress so far has been very slow. For this reason, gender stipulations in this area are also lagging behind.

This indicates that gender stipulations sometimes face specific challenges compared to gender-neutral provisions. For example, when it comes to security for female leaders and human rights defenders, we must start from the realization that women face specific threats compared to their male counterparts, and the form and degree of threats vary depending on what issues women are seeking to address. A concrete example from Colombia concerns women's inclusion in successfully realizing crop substitution programmes. This example showed that developing effective measures to ensure the protection of both men and women is imperative. In this, women's own knowledge and efforts for societal security must be recognized. This brief also highlights the importance of considering the dynamics during the transition between phases of implementation. It is

critically important that commitments to women's meaningful inclusion be sustained throughout the reform process. This means that not only do women need to be included during the design of reform programmes but that reforms affecting them need to be prioritized and integrated into subsequent action plans to realize the intended effects.

Finally, concerning the implementation of gender stipulations in the area of monitoring and verification mechanisms, our research has found that both the international and the national mechanisms set up have contributed to increased access to political processes for women. However a remaining challenge concerns the extent to which these mechanisms are able to affect high-level political decision-making processes in the country. A further complication is discussed in Kroc Institute's fourth comprehensive report that sustaining women's participation might become an issue when implementation priorities shift from national to regional levels<sup>9</sup>. For this reason, it is essential to bolster the implementation of gender stipulations by amplifying the impact of the WPS agenda. To do so, women's organizations and networks in Colombia have long aimed to have the government adopt a National Action Plan (NAP).<sup>10</sup> As the UN Secretary-General points out, such mechanisms for the monitoring and verification of WPS reforms are key to their realization (S/2019/800, 3). The Colombian Government has declared it intends to create a NAP, as highlighted by the UN Security Council's Informal Expert Group on WPS, which visited Colombia on 14 September 2020. The Group's co-chairs – the Ambassadors of the Dominican Republic, Germany, and the UK – jointly recommended that the Council members support the Colombian government's intention to develop the NAP in a participatory and inclusive manner (see S/2020/899). A Colombian NAP could assist in forming an overarching picture of WPS-related implementation and complement women's inclusion in regular monitoring and verification mechanisms for the peace agreement implementation. In formulating such a NAP, the Peace Accords Matrix Barometer Initiative can be useful as it demonstrates the importance of inclusive processes in developing the methodological rigour necessary to measure WPS in peace implementation progress. ■

## ENDNOTES

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- 5 Interview by Kroc Institute team, 18 August, 2020.
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## HOW TO REFER TO THIS BRIEF:

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**UN Women** is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

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