

## *Chapter 1*

### **Why integrate a gender perspective into statebuilding?**

*This chapter sets the scene by defining key concepts that are used in this publication and by reviewing the rationale for integrating a gender perspective into statebuilding programmes. It explains how a more gender-sensitive approach can enhance statebuilding outcomes. It also shows how a more politically informed approach to gender equality can improve the effectiveness of interventions.*

## Key concepts

### *Gender and gender equality*

Gender inequality is reflected in gaps between men and women in terms of outcomes, opportunities, resources or entitlements. While many donor countries display higher levels of gender equality than FCAS, no society has yet reached full gender equality. Even developed countries continue to be plagued by violence against women, wage gaps and inequalities in domestic responsibilities. Pursuing gender equality is a long-term undertaking because it involves fundamental social transformation over generations.

In most poor countries, the inequalities between different groups at different levels of society are huge. Research has also highlighted the significance of

#### Box 1.1. Key concepts: Gender and gender equality

**Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles associated with being male and female and the relations between men and women and boys and girls. Unlike sex, which is biologically determined, gender roles are learned and change over time and across cultures.

**Gender analysis** is the systematic analysis of the impact of a programme or policy on men/boys and on women/girls. A gender analysis enables donors to address gaps or opportunities that impact the ability of men/boys and women/girls to benefit equitably from the programme or policy. When broader political economy and conflict analyses incorporate gender, they can provide valuable insights into the interplay between gender relations and statebuilding processes in a given context and can highlight opportunities to develop more equitable, targeted and effective programming.

**Gender equality** refers to a goal, objective or approach aimed at closing gaps between men and women in the social, political and economic spheres. Gender equality approaches should and often do use gender analysis as a way to formulate strategies that benefit men and women. Promoting gender equality requires a range of actions over a long period of time, such as integrating a meaningful gender analysis into a range of programmes and policies and directly supporting the political, social and economic empowerment of women.

**Gender-sensitive** approaches integrate the findings of a gender analysis of the gender-related differences between men/boys and women/girls into all aspects of programme planning, design and delivery, and monitoring and evaluation.

*Sources:* El-Bushra, J., M. Lyytikäinen and S. Schoofs (2012), “Gender Equality and Statebuilding”, Framing paper for the OECD DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility; UN Women (n.d.), “Concepts and Definitions” web page, [www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm) (accessed 1 June 2013).

horizontal inequalities between different groups in contributing to conflict and insecurity (Stewart, 2010). Much development assistance, especially in FCAS, is therefore geared to reducing social, economic and political inequalities for both men and women.

### *Statebuilding*

State-of-the-art analysis reflected in the OECD Statebuilding Guidance and the 2011 World Development Report understands statebuilding as processes involving political bargaining between key power holders to identify common interests and to agree on the institutional arrangements through which to pursue those interests. At the heart of statebuilding is some form of ongoing agreement between elite groups about the underlying “rules of the game”. These may be embodied in one-off formal peace agreements or constitutions but will also be reflected in less formal and continually contested arrangements that govern access to political power, economic resources, jobs and status. Statebuilding is thus a largely endogenous and highly political process. It will play out differently in different contexts but some concept of sequencing is helpful: in a post-conflict environment the priority is likely to be re-establishment of territorial control and political order based on institutions that command a degree of legitimacy and consent.

The central goal of statebuilding should be to create effective, legitimate and accountable public institutions capable of providing security from external threats and peaceful resolution of internal conflicts; upholding rights; and facilitating or delivering core public goods and services. Historically this has proved hugely challenging, and it is much easier to define the goal than to know how to achieve it. Statebuilding processes remain imperfectly understood and contested (see for example North, 2009; Bates, 2001).

The Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) that were agreed as part of the New Deal for International Engagement in Fragile States identify five priority areas to facilitate progress towards achieving the MDGs in FCAS. Along with the new ways of engaging that are enshrined in the New Deal commitments, the PSGs encapsulate many of the priorities and principles that are key to effective statebuilding.<sup>1</sup> The five PSG priorities are:

- **Legitimate politics:** foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution
- **Security:** establish and strengthen people’s security
- **Justice:** address injustices and increase people’s access to justice
- **Economic foundations:** generate employment and improve livelihoods
- **Revenues and services:** manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery.

The PSGs and the OECD’s statebuilding framework are mutually reinforcing, and address many of the same priority issues for statebuilding. The issues outlined in the PSGs are similar to those addressed in the context of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It is worth noting, however, that they are lacking in that they do not adequately reflect a gender perspective (Cordaid, 2012). Applying a gender perspective to these two key statebuilding frameworks is therefore a critical first step towards supporting states that are responsive, and accountable, to both women and men. The Annex provides concrete examples of integrating gender issues across the PSGs.

### Box 1.2. The three dimensions of the OECD’s statebuilding framework

1. *The political settlement*, which reflects the implicit or explicit agreement (among elites principally) on the “rules of the game”, power distribution and the *political processes* through which state and society are connected
2. *The capability and responsiveness of the state* to effectively fulfil its principal functions and provide key services
3. *Broad social expectations and perceptions* about what the state should do, what the terms of the state-society relationship should be and the *ability of society to articulate demands* that are “heard”

Source: OECD (2011), *Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility: Policy Guidance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264074989-en>.

### ***What does it mean to integrate a gender perspective into statebuilding?***

Integrating a gender perspective into statebuilding implies that donor agencies and local policy makers recognise that conflict, peacebuilding and statebuilding are all “gendered” processes. This means that policy makers pay attention to the different ways in which men and women are affected by and engage with conflict, peacebuilding and statebuilding processes, and to differences in terms of their access to and control over resources and decision-making. It also calls for an understanding of how gender roles, identities and relations shape the possible outcomes of statebuilding itself. This includes recognising the role of social expectations associated with being male (see Box 1.3). Gender analysis helps uncover the ways in which these processes and institutions are “gendered” and is the starting point for identifying and addressing gender disparities.

Beyond an understanding of how donor policies and programmes affect men and women differently, integrating a gender perspective into statebuilding

also implies promoting gender equality in the context of statebuilding. This translates into donors and local policy makers identifying strategies and programmes that seek to level the playing field between men and women in FCAS and that provide direct support for the empowerment of women in key areas of statebuilding. However, it is important that those pursuing gender equality goals recognise that gender is a fundamentally political issue requiring an in-depth understanding of local political and institutional contexts and dynamics. Promoting gender equality calls for particular attention to the interests of women and girls within any social group because prevailing formal and informal institutions (or “rules of the game”) will otherwise tend to disadvantage them.

### Box 1.3. Masculinities, conflict and post-conflict statebuilding

Integrating a gender perspective also means recognising the ways in which conflict, peacebuilding and statebuilding shape and are shaped by men and masculinities (the set of characteristics or roles that men are expected to live up to in a particular historical and cultural context). These constructs affect everyone: both men and women stand to benefit or suffer from the norms to which men are supposed to conform in society.

Men tend to come under stress when they are unable to meet these social expectations of masculinity – for example, by failing to assume the roles of breadwinners, heads of households and leaders that societies often prescribe as ideals of masculine success. Such frustration can translate into alcohol and drug abuse and socially-condoned violence. In particular, failure to live up to social norms of masculine leadership and domination can generate increased violence against those individuals over whom men do have power: women and children within households.

The characteristics of conflict and post-conflict environments often fuel such stress and tensions around masculinities. Conflict reduces access to desirable jobs, which are often a strong basis for masculine status and sense of identity. In some situations post-war interventions to empower women risk further aggravating these anxieties. Armed violence tends to intensify the association of masculinity with physical strength and aggressiveness, which may increase the chances of frustrations spilling over into violence.

*Sources:* Bouta, T., G. Frerks and I. Bannon (2005), *Gender, Conflict and Development*, World Bank, Washington, DC.; Cahn, N. and F. Ní Aoláin (2010), “Gender, Masculinities and Transition in Conflicted Societies”, Hirsch Lecture, *New England Law Review*, Vol. 44, Issue 1, George Washington University Law School, Washington, DC; Sweetman, C. (2013), “Introduction: Working with Men on Gender Equality”, *Gender & Development*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 1-13.

## The rationale for integrating a gender perspective into statebuilding

Donors have tended to support statebuilding in FCAS in a gender-blind way, focusing on re-establishing traditional political and social order as the priority at early stages. They see this as a precondition for pursuing other development goals, but fail to recognise that men and women may experience these processes differently. More recently statebuilding guidance has recognised the need for a better understanding of the political relationships and processes at work within a given context, the way these are influenced by social and economic structures and institutions, and the interplay between security, institutional legitimacy and development. This paper argues that a gender perspective is an essential dimension of this wider approach. It can help policy makers see opportunities to pursue gender equality alongside statebuilding objectives, while avoiding unintended harm and ensuring that structural obstacles to women's engagement in these processes in particular are addressed. It can also help them frame more effective approaches to promoting gender equality by recognising the ways in which wider political dynamics influence these approaches.

There are four key arguments for integrating a gender perspective into statebuilding:

**i) Gender equality and women's rights are important goals in their own right, and statebuilding processes offer opportunities to pursue them.** The international community has adopted a number of key commitments that reflect the intrinsic value of gender equality and women's rights as human rights. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). In relation to statebuilding more specifically, in 2000 UNSCR 1325 affirmed the right of women to be involved in these processes and the importance of their equal participation in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. Since setting the agenda with the core principles of resolution 1325, the UN Security Council has also adopted a series of supporting resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960 and 2106). The international community has a vital role to play in championing and upholding these and other universal human rights, even in contexts such as FCAS where the challenges are often particularly stark.

The early stages of statebuilding may offer opportunities to advance women's rights and reshape gender relations. Following the end of violent conflict and in the early stages of statebuilding, power relationships are often in flux, providing space for debate and negotiation about fundamental issues relating to power, authority and resource distribution. There may also be opportunities then to advance women's rights and interests, and to accelerate the reshaping of institutions and practices in a way that supports greater gender equality. Such openings may appear in the course of negotiating

peace settlements or formal constitutions, for example, or arise through support for women's political demands and mobilisation for peace. Just as the Second World War ushered in a shift in the gendered division of labour, peace processes in countries such as Rwanda and Nepal have created space for a levelling of the playing field for women in political life.

**ii) Gender-sensitive approaches can enhance the achievement of internationally agreed peacebuilding and statebuilding goals.** The fundamental aim of statebuilding should be a state that is legitimate, responsive and accountable to all its citizens, and tackling the exclusion and marginalisation of women and girls is a key requirement for realising this overall goal. At the same time, applying a gender perspective can enhance the achievement of peacebuilding and statebuilding goals. For example, in the area of security, one of the five PSGs, it is rarely acknowledged that there are multiple dimensions of security beyond the narrow definition of “public security” that require nuanced responses. Women and men have different experiences of insecurity as well as different needs and priorities in relation to the provision of and access to security. Women and girls face specific security threats linked to sexual and domestic violence, and particular obstacles in accessing security services. To develop effective programme responses that can capture the full range and nature of security threats in fragile and conflict-affected contexts it is critical to understand the complex relationship between gender inequality and insecurity.

While women and children make up the vast majority of survivors of gender-based violence, linked to their unequal status in society, it is also important to acknowledge and address gender-based violence against men, including sexual violence such as rape, sexual mutilation, being forced to commit rape, forced conscription and sex-selective massacre. Men have a right to protection against these abuses. Addressing them and associated trauma can also help reduce gender-based violence against women and girls (Carpenter, 2006).

Gender inequalities can also be a driver of conflict. Understanding these links is central to designing effective interventions that benefit both men and women and reduce conflict. For example, in South Sudan, the dowry economy and the associated prevalence of cattle raiding have a negative impact on women and girls; they also drive conflict and violence within and between communities (see Chapter 3, Box 3.1).

**iii) A good understanding of gender dynamics in statebuilding processes is essential in order to avoid negative impacts on women and girls.** Statebuilding interventions can have a negative impact on women and girls if they fail to incorporate a gender perspective. Gender analysis is essential for “do no harm”<sup>2</sup> approaches, helping donors understand the possible direct and indirect impact of their interventions on the lives of men

and women. To protect or uphold the rights and interests of women, it is particularly important to understand the nature of women's interactions and relationships with the state, and how they are mediated through religious, customary or other informal institutions (Castillejo, 2011; Cornwall et al., 2011). Donors for example risk unintentionally doing harm if their failure to advocate for and support rights for women in peace negotiations or constitutional reforms contributes to the curtailment of women's rights as compared to the pre-conflict period. Egypt and Libya in the post-Arab Spring are recent examples where new governments took prompt measures to curtail women's rights.

Donors may risk further embedding discriminatory practices by advocating for "grounded legitimacy" approaches without a detailed investigation of the impact of customary institutions on women in a specific context. Failure to take a gender-sensitive approach can exacerbate tensions. One aspect that has been repeatedly highlighted is the risk of backlash against women and girls in situations where women's rights and gender equality programmes are implemented without taking into account their impact on male community members and careful measures to bring them on board. For example, increased domestic violence has been associated with women's economic empowerment programmes that fail to analyse the impact of interventions on gender relations in households and communities at the design stage (see Box 3.3.).

**iv) There are complex interactions between statebuilding and development, and gender equality matters for both processes.** Better development outcomes are both a goal and part of the process of statebuilding. A solid body of evidence exists to demonstrate that gender equality can lead to better development outcomes (World Bank, 2011). Addressing maternal mortality, eliminating gender disadvantages in education and closing differences in access to economic opportunities are especially important. For example, targeting women for agricultural inputs and extension services, safeguarding their land rights, and providing them with skills training or access to employment-generation schemes would support post-conflict economies and overall growth as well as ensuring better health and welfare of households. In short, "gender equality is smart economics" (World Bank, 2011: 3), offering the potential to raise productivity, improve other development outcomes and contribute to more representative decision making within societies. It is important that policy makers engaged in statebuilding processes in FCAS do not lose sight of the potential to address gender equality objectives through a broad range of public policy interventions including macroeconomic policy and natural resource management.

Despite these compelling arguments, and the extensive and growing body of literature on the many ways in which conflict and its aftermath impact



women and girls, there is currently limited evidence about what works and why in terms of integrating a gender perspective into statebuilding, including guidance on the ideal sequencing or prioritisation of activities to promote gender equality.<sup>3</sup> There is therefore a need to build the evidence base in order to strengthen local policy making and donor practice, and avoid overloading the agenda in FCAS.

However, policy makers also need to be strategic about the challenges involved in pursuing gender equality and women’s rights in FCAS, where few institutions are effective at managing violent conflict, delivering public goods and services, or upholding citizenship rights. Statebuilding is an internal political process that requires buy-in from powerful groups. Formal institutions need to be aligned with informal social norms and political realities if they are to gain traction. The ability of external actors to understand and influence these local processes is often very limited. Moreover, gender roles and relations are ingrained within the cultural fabric of society and can be resistant to change, particularly when change is imposed by external actors. The next chapter will explore some of these challenges in more detail.

## Notes

1. For more information on the New Deal and its main components, see New Deal (2013).
2. Conflict-sensitivity and “do no harm” are key underlying principles that govern donor action in fragile and conflict-affected states. See OECD (2007).
3. For example, see El-Jack (2003), Naraghi Anderlini (2010), Bouta et al. (2005), Rehn and Sirleaf (2002).

## References

- Bates, R.H. (2001), *Prosperity & Violence: The Political Economy of Development*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York.
- Bouta, T., G. Frerks and I. Bannon (2005), *Gender, Conflict and Development*, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Cahn, N. and F. Ní Aoláin (2010), “Gender, Masculinities and Transition in Conflicted Societies”, Hirsch Lecture, *New England Law Review*, Vol. 44, Issue 1, George Washington University Law School, Washington, DC.
- Carpenter, C.R. (2006), “Recognizing Gender-Based Violence Against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 83-103.
- Castillejo, C. (2011), *Building a State that Works for Women: Integrating Gender into Post-conflict Statebuilding*, FRIDE, Madrid.
- Cornwall, A., J. Erdström and A. Greig (2011), *Men and Development: Politicizing Masculinities*, Zed Books Ltd, London.
- El-Bushra, J., M. Lyytikäinen and S. Schoofs (2012), “Gender Equality and Statebuilding”, Framing paper for the OECD DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility.
- El-Jack, A. (2003), *Gender and Armed Conflict: Overview Report*, BRIDGE/Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton.
- Naraghi Anderlini, S. (2010), *World Development Report (WDR) Gender Background Paper*, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- New Deal (2013), New Deal website, [www.newdeal4peace.org](http://www.newdeal4peace.org) (accessed 3 June 2013).
- North, D.C. et al. (2009), *Violence and Social Orders*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- OECD (2007) *Principles on Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*, OECD DAC, Paris, [www.oecd.org/dac/fragilestates/43463433.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/fragilestates/43463433.pdf).
- OECD (2011), *Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility: Policy Guidance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264074989-en>.

Rehn, E. and E. Johnson Sirleaf (2002), *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women (now UN Women), New York.

Sweetman, C. (2013), "Introduction: Working with Men on Gender Equality", *Gender & Development*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 1-13.

UN Women (n.d.), "Concepts and Definitions" web page, available at [www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm), accessed 1 June 2013.

World Bank (2011), *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*, World Bank, Washington, DC.



**From:**

## **Gender and Statebuilding in Fragile and Conflict-affected States**

**Access the complete publication at:**

<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264202061-en>

### **Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2013), "Why integrate a gender perspective into statebuilding?", in *Gender and Statebuilding in Fragile and Conflict-affected States*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264202061-4-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to [rights@oecd.org](mailto:rights@oecd.org). Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at [info@copyright.com](mailto:info@copyright.com) or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at [contact@cfcopies.com](mailto:contact@cfcopies.com).