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Gender, peace and security and the post-2015 framework¹

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Over the past two decades, interest in the relationship between gender, peace and security has increased dramatically, manifested in new research agendas, policy debates and development programmes in conflict-affected countries. Perhaps the most high profile development has been the passage of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and subsequent resolutions² on women, peace and security, and the growing movement of civil society activists advocating for their implementation. However, although debates on the shape of the post-2015 development framework include strong calls for goals on both gender equality and peace and security, few actors have explored the links between the two and asked what these may mean for the content of the framework. Similarly, while advocates for the women, peace and security agenda call for concrete action by governments to realise its aims, little attention has been paid to whether and how the post-2015 framework may provide a vehicle for making progress on this agenda. This paper aims to respond to that challenge.

Connecting gender and conflict

A number of studies have found a strong statistical correlation between countries' peacefulness and their levels of gender equality.³ What is unclear from this evidence is the nature of this relationship:

¹ The points set out in this paper will be further elaborated in a briefing by Saferworld and Conciliation Resources, due for publication in October 2013. This paper uses 'women, peace and security' when referring to the UN agenda, and 'gender, peace and security' to refer to the broader approach that Saferworld espouses, which includes a more explicit focus on gender analysis of the role of men in conflict and peacebuilding.

* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

² At the time of writing, UNSCRs on women, peace and security include 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, and 2106.

³ For example: Institute for Economics and Peace (2011), *Structures of peace*, p 17-18; Caprioli, M. (2000), 'Gendered conflict'. *Journal of Peace Research*, 37(1), 51-68; Caprioli, M. (2005), 'Primed for violence: the role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict'. *International Studies Quarterly*, 49(2), 161-178; Melander, E. (2005), 'Gender equality and intrastate armed conflict'. *International Studies Quarterly*, 49(4), 695-714.

while some interpret gender inequality as a structural risk factor for conflict,⁴ it is also plausible that armed conflict exacerbates gender inequality. A review of qualitative evidence finds persuasive cases for both of these theories, suggesting that gender inequality, conflict and violence tend to be mutually reinforcing.

Conflict can exacerbate gender inequality

Armed conflict has been recognised as one of the most significant structural barriers to development, with the UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda stating that, “violence and fragility have become the largest obstacle to the MDGs”.⁵ As well as causing death, injury, and displacement, armed conflict destroys infrastructure, disrupts markets, disturbs social ties, diminishes the capacity of states, and diverts vital resources away from development.⁶ While available evidence suggests that men are more likely to suffer violent deaths during armed conflict, women are subject to other adverse effects such as increasing the double burden of productive and reproductive labour, larger numbers of dependents (including the injured and orphaned), and increases in gender-based violence (GBV), disease, and malnutrition.⁷ While in some cases women make gains in advancing their strategic interests during conflict, this is often – though not always – followed by a post-conflict backlash in which more unequal gender roles are restored.

Gender inequality can fuel conflict

Considerable evidence indicates that inequalities between social groups can become drivers of conflict, and gender inequality is no exception.⁸ While women may be less likely than other marginalised groups to take up arms in response to their subordination, evidence from Nepal and Liberia suggests that gender inequality and sexual violence were key motivating factors for female combatants during civil wars in those countries.⁹ Perhaps more crucially, there is evidence that the patriarchal gender norms which lie at the heart of gender inequality can also fuel conflict and violence, particularly where militarised notions of masculinity are prevalent.¹⁰ This is most obvious when discriminatory attitudes fuel GBV; however, it can also be observed in armed conflict within and between communities. For example, research by Saferworld and others in South Sudan reveals that participation in violent cattle raids, which perpetuate conflict between communities, is seen as a prerequisite to manhood. The bride price system, in which cattle are exchanged for girls and women, exacerbates this cycle of violence.¹¹

⁴ OECD (2009), *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*, p 33. Development Assistance Committee.

⁵ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2012), *Peace and security thematic think piece*, p 3. Signatories include 60 UN agencies.

⁶ For a summary of evidence on the relationship between conflict, violence and the MDGs, see Saferworld (2012), *The impact of conflict and violence on achieving development*.

⁷ Ormhaug, C., Meier, P. and Hernes, H. (2009), *Armed conflict deaths disaggregated by gender*; Rehn, E. and Sirleaf, E. J. (2002), *Women, war and peace: the independent expert's assessment on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peacebuilding*.

⁸ For a summary of evidence, see Brinkman, H., Attree, L. and Hezir, S. (2013), *Addressing horizontal inequalities as drivers of conflict in the post-2015 development agenda*.

⁹ Saferworld (2010), *Common ground? Gendered assessment of the needs and concerns of Maoist Army combatants for rehabilitation and integration*; International Labour Organisation (2006), *Red shoes: experience of girl combatants in Liberia*.

¹⁰ A range of evidence and analysis is set out in Breines, I., Connell, R. and Eide, I. (2000), *Male roles, masculinities and violence: a culture of peace perspective*.

¹¹ Saferworld (2012), *People's peacemaking perspectives in South Sudan*. For further analysis of gender norms and cattle raiding in South Sudan see Small Arms Survey (2010), *Symptoms and causes: insecurity and underdevelopment in Eastern Equatoria*; United States Institute of Peace (2011), Richmond, M. and Krause-Jackson, F. 'Cows-for-bride

While the evidence on how gender equality supports peace requires further development,¹² the findings outlined above strongly suggest that the inclusion of a robust set of commitments on peacebuilding and on gender equality in the post-2015 framework would be mutually reinforcing, each helping to advance the other's objectives.

UNSCR 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda

The six UNSCRs on women, peace and security and the UN's accompanying global indicators already set out a wide range of international commitments. The post-2015 framework ought to complement, not duplicate these: in fact, the two processes have different emphases. While "1325 is as specific and narrow as the Security Council's mandate",¹³ and thus focuses on political and military responses to crises such as peacekeeping and diplomacy, the post-2015 agenda can and should take a longer term approach, addressing structural barriers to peace, development and equality.

Furthermore, many of the UN's key commitments on women, peace and security are too context-specific for inclusion in the new framework. For example, while UNSCR 1325 emphasises the need for women's participation in peace processes, negotiations on the post-2015 framework are highly likely to favour targets and indicators which are applicable across contexts and not only for conflict-affected countries.

However, there are key elements of the gender, peace and security agenda – including some of the UN's global indicators – which are universally relevant and which speak to the underlying causes of conflict, fragility and gender inequality. The following sections recommend targets and indicators for inclusion, framed in terms of the 'three Ps' of the women, peace and security agenda: prevention, participation, and protection.

1. Prevention

While the 'prevention' element of UNSCR 1325 has more recently been narrowly interpreted as referring only to the prevention of violence against women and girls in conflict, it is intended to include the prevention of armed conflict itself and women's increased involvement in prevention efforts.¹⁴

As Saferworld has argued elsewhere, the post-2015 framework can make a vital contribution to conflict prevention by addressing the drivers rather than the symptoms of conflict and violence.¹⁵ Peacebuilding policy frameworks illustrate a large degree of consensus on what the most common factors driving conflict across a range of contexts are. From these we can suggest a range of targets which need to be included if the post-2015 framework is to effectively address the causes of conflict.

inflation spurs cattle theft in South Sudan', *Bloomberg News*, 26 July 2011; *Dowry and division: youth and state building in South Sudan*; Oxfam (2013), *Challenges to security, livelihoods and gender justice in South Sudan*.

¹² For an initial summary of evidence, see UN Women (2012), *Gender, conflict and the post-2015 development framework*, annexe 1.

¹³ Klot, J. (2002), 'Women and peace processes – an impossible match?' in Louise Olsson (ed.) *Gender Processes – an Impossible Match?*, p 18.

¹⁴ The UN global indicators on women, peace and security define 'prevention' as "prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations". Measures to prevent violence against women and girls are addressed in section 3 of this briefing.

¹⁵ Saferworld (2012), *Approaching post-2015 from a peace perspective*.

Goal	Goal on social services (health, education)	Goal on gender equality	Goal on respect for planetary boundaries	Goal on sustainable and inclusive economic development	Goal on inclusive, responsive, accountable state-society relations	Goal: Overcome violence, insecurity and injustice
TARGET:	TARGET: All social groups have fair access to social services and resources	TARGET: Violence against women & girls is eliminated	TARGET:	TARGET: All social groups have opportunities for decent livelihoods & a share in economic growth	TARGET: All social groups can express political opinion without fear and participate in the decisions that affect society	TARGET: All social groups are free from violence & insecurity
TARGET:	TARGET:	TARGET: Women's economic empowerment	TARGET:	TARGET: Least developed countries are protected against scarcity of vital resources & destabilising price shocks	TARGET: All states manage revenue effectively & corruption is eradicated	TARGET: End impunity & ensure access to justice for all social groups
TARGET:	TARGET:	TARGET: Women's political empowerment	TARGET:	TARGET:	TARGET:	TARGET: Divisions within society are constructively resolved
				TARGET:	TARGET:	TARGET: Eradicate transnational crime & stop the flow of illicit drugs, arms & war commodities

Figure 1: Illustrative goals and targets addressing the underlying causes of conflict and fragility. Taken from Saferworld (2013), *Addressing conflict and violence from 2015: a vision of goals, targets and indicators*.

These commitments could be included together under a standalone peace goal, mainstreamed across other relevant goals or – as in the UN Secretary General’s High Level Panel’s (HLP) illustrative framework – a combination of the two.¹⁶ Under its goals to ‘Ensure good governance and effective institutions’ and ‘ensure stable and peaceful societies’ the HLP addresses a range of these issues, as well as bringing in other key elements under other goals, such as eliminating violence against women, access to decent jobs and preventing environmental degradation. Although the targets need further refinement, the HLP has successfully integrated these factors (with two exceptions noted below) into its illustrative framework. Member States will need to exert considerable political effort to ensure that these elements are included in the final framework.

Mainstreaming gender

It is particularly welcome that the HLP recognises that “data gathered will need to be disaggregated by gender, geography, income, disability, and other categories”.¹⁷ It is vital that a gender perspective

¹⁶ UN High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013), *A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

is mainstreamed across all targets, including those suggested above, whether through specific indicators addressing gender inequalities or through the use of disaggregated data.

For example, any target on access to security and justice must employ disaggregated data to ensure that women and other marginalised groups benefit. Discriminatory treatment by security and justice providers on the basis of gender, ethnicity, class and other factors can be a key barrier to accessing these services. While the HLP's targets 11b and 11d on building the capacity of formal security and justice systems touch on issues that need to be addressed, targets should address, and indicators need measure, public safety and trust in security and justice providers. Measurement through disaggregation of men's and women's trust in security and justice providers is particularly vital from a gender perspective.

Similarly, from a peacebuilding perspective it is essential that any target on access to decent livelihoods should use disaggregated data to ensure access for people across all social groups, so as to reduce inequalities and prevent grievances. While it is well recognised that unemployment among men can increase the risk of conflict,¹⁸ there is also evidence that increasing women's paid employment in post-conflict countries can improve community welfare and "may lead to significant peace dividends".¹⁹

In addition, as women's lack of access to economic resources is a structural barrier to gender equality, a separate target on women's economic empowerment under a gender equality goal could help to address gendered barriers to economic empowerment. Indeed, increasing women's participation in paid employment without addressing underlying constraints such as the burden of unpaid care could even exacerbate inequality by increasing time poverty among women.

Missing pieces

Two of the issues listed above from Saferworld's illustrative framework have not been adequately included in the HLP report, both of which are relevant to gender, peace and security concerns:

I. Social cohesion

While the HLP framework addresses formal justice institutions, it does not address the need for peaceful coexistence between social groups or informal means of resolving disputes peacefully. There is a strong correlation between levels of peace and people's acceptance of the rights of others.²⁰ As outlined above, qualitative evidence suggests a strong link between conflict and militarised notions of masculinity which normalise relations of domination and control and valorise violence. Saferworld has recommended a target on ensuring that 'divisions within society are constructively resolved' with a range of possible indicators, for example measuring acceptance of others' use of violence as a means to an end.²¹

¹⁸ Geneva Declaration (2008), *Global burden of armed violence*, p 49, 111; Bouta, T. Frerks, G. and Bannon, I. (2005), *Gender, conflict, and development*, p 148-9.

¹⁹ UN Women (2012), *Women working for recovery: the impact of female employment on family and community welfare after conflict*.

²⁰ Institute for Economics and Peace (2013), *Pillars of peace: understanding the key attitudes and institutions that underpin peaceful societies*, pp 29-35.

²¹ Saferworld (2013), *Addressing conflict and violence from 2015: a vision of goals, targets and indicators*, p 11.

II. Drugs, arms and war commodities

Helpfully, the HLP includes a target (11c) on stemming the external stressors which lead to conflict, but these are not listed. Explicit reference is needed to flows of illicit drugs, arms and war commodities. The UN global indicators on women, peace and security include a measure of states' activities to control small arms and light weapons. Such an indicator could play a useful role in the post-2015 framework to generate political will and resources around the implementation of existing frameworks such as the Arms Trade Treaty, contributing to conflict prevention and improving security for both women and men.

2. Participation

The exclusion of some social groups from participation in governance structures can be a key driver of conflict.²² A post-2015 target on inclusive governance, ensuring that all social groups can participate in the decisions that affect society and express political opinions without fear would therefore make a vital contribution from a peacebuilding perspective. This could include indicators on such factors as diversity of representation in decision-making bodies, confidence in electoral processes, and freedom of the press, using disaggregated data to measure women's inclusion as well as that of other social groups.²³

Women's exclusion from decision-making at all levels from the household to the national and international is also a structural cause of gender inequality, and so a separate target on women's political participation or voice should be a component of a gender equality goal, complementing other inclusive governance targets (see figure 2).²⁴

Advancing the commitment enshrined in UNSCR 1325 to increasing women's involvement in decision-making on matters of peace and security is a particular challenge. The diversity of institutions and mechanisms for this type of decision-making in different countries makes it exceptionally difficult to measure in a way that is comparable across contexts. However, indicators on women's participation in parliaments and ministerial positions (one of the UN's global indicators on women, peace and security) have greater applicability across countries and are already measured within a range of gender equality indices.

Women's representation in politics does not necessarily equate with greater decision-making on peace and security issues: indeed, women in ministerial positions are overwhelmingly allocated portfolios in social sectors and not in home affairs, foreign affairs, or defence.²⁵ However, an indicator on women's representation in the police and judiciary could help to accelerate women's inclusion in traditionally male-dominated arenas. Crucially, evidence suggests that such inclusion would also help increase women's willingness to report crimes and make justice systems more responsive to their needs,²⁶ and so it would sit equally well under a target on women's access to justice or on eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG). While not currently widely

²² For a summary of evidence see Brinkman, H., Attree, L. and Hezir, S. (2013), *Addressing horizontal inequalities as drivers of conflict in the post-2015 development agenda*, p 7-8.

²³ Saferworld has set out an illustration of what this target might look like is set out in Saferworld (2013), *Addressing conflict and violence from 2015: a vision of goals, targets and indicators*, p 12.

²⁴ For a summary of arguments in favour of a target on women's influence in public life, see VSO (2013), *Women in power: beyond access to influence in a post-2015 world*, p 9-10.

²⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union (2012), *Women in politics 2012*; Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2012), *Women count. Security Council Resolution 1325: civil society monitoring report 2012*, p 14.

²⁶ UN Women (2011), *Progress of the world's women: in pursuit of justice*, p 59-61.

measured, data on this has been successfully gathered by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders in 14 out of 15 countries monitored, including conflict-affected and fragile states.²⁷

It is widely recognised that “having a seat at the table does not guarantee that a woman will have the opportunity to speak, or that she will be listened to.”²⁸ Women’s participation in decision-making is also no guarantee that they will champion women’s rights or voice women’s concerns. However, an indicator measuring women’s perceptions as to whether decision-makers are addressing their concerns would help to assess whether greater inclusion of women is having the desired effect. Recognising the tendency for women’s representation in public institutions to be limited to those from more privileged backgrounds, all indicators should be disaggregated where possible by factors such as ethnicity, region, and income group.

Each illustrative target contains a range of indicator options which could be further developed. In each case, the indicators we consider more promising are placed closer to the target. The ‘source’ identified for each indicator illustrates that there is a recent multinational metric available attempting to monitor the variable in question, but this is not a claim that this data source is adequate.

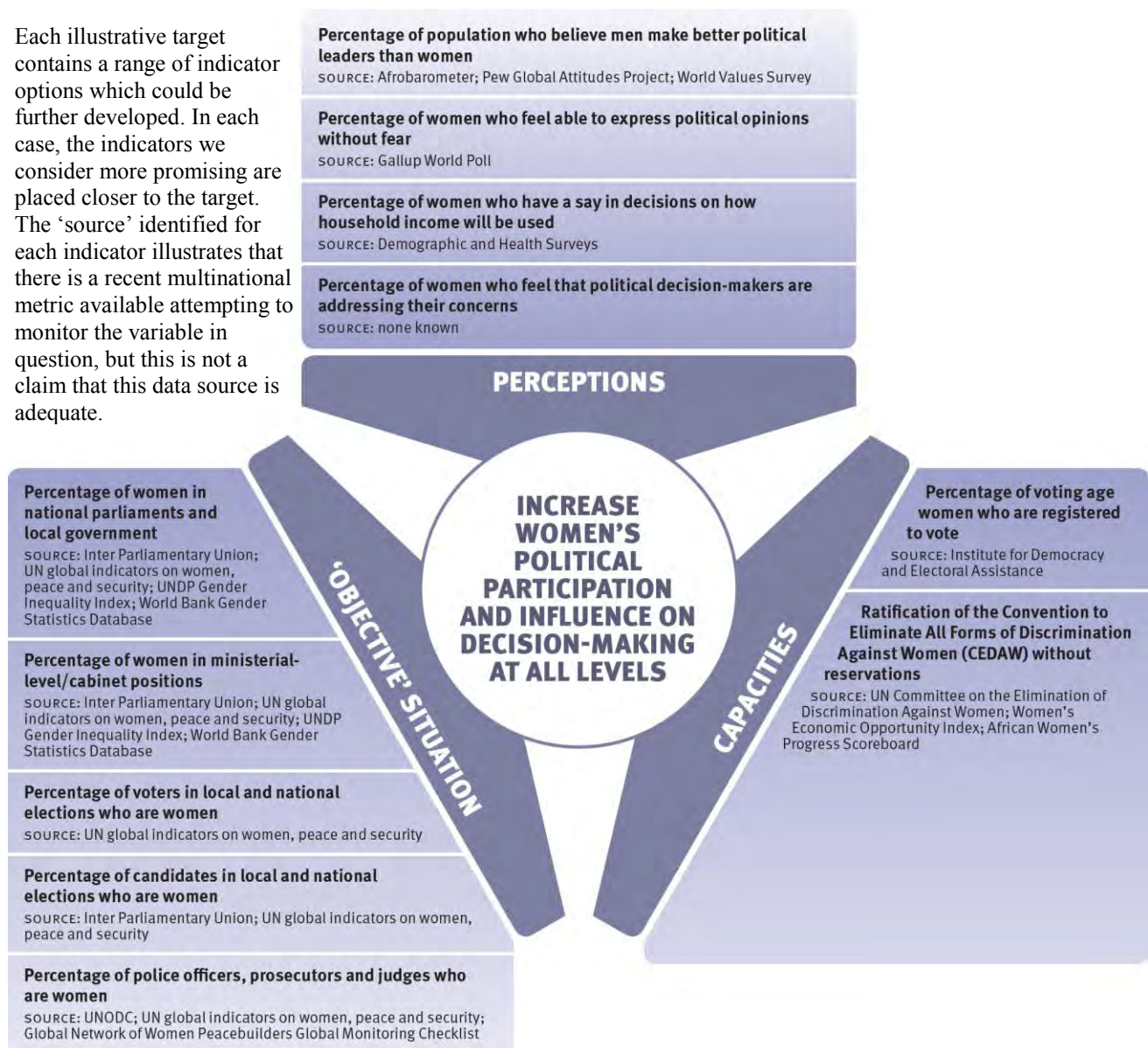


Figure 2: Illustrative target and accompanying indicator options on women’s political participation and influence on decision-making at all levels.

²⁷ Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2012), *Women count. Security Council Resolution 1325: civil society monitoring report 2012*, p 12-13.

²⁸ VSO (2013), *Women in power: beyond access to influence in a post-2015 world*, p 17.

As Saferworld has argued elsewhere,²⁹ employing a mixture of capacity indicators, ‘objective’ situation indicators and perceptions-based indicators presents a possible means of validating results and avoiding perverse incentives.

3. Protection³⁰

The case for including a target on eliminating all forms of VAWG in the post-2015 framework has been made convincingly,³¹ and it is welcome that the HLP has included this in its report.

From a peacebuilding perspective, it is vital to address GBV against both women and men. GBV against men, including in the form of sexual violence, forced recruitment into armed groups, and sex-selective killings, is a common feature of armed conflict.³² However, while the concept of GBV enjoys significant currency, efforts to identify in practice which instances of violence are gender-based are open to contestation, depending as they do on factors such as the motivations of the perpetrator and the gender dynamics of the context. This makes it difficult to measure prevalence in a way that is comparable across contexts. However, it is feasible to include these forms of violence in the post-2015 framework in other ways, for example through a target on violence and insecurity which utilises gender disaggregated data.

In the illustrative targets in figures 3 and 4, GBV against women is captured in its own target (figure 3) in a way that addresses specific causes of and responses to this particular form of violence. Crucially, this includes indicators addressing the attitudes underlying GBV against women, which is key to prevention. The evidence tells us that discriminatory attitudes towards women, including a belief in a man’s right to beat or force sexual contact on his partner, are among the factors most consistently associated with intimate partner violence.³³ Given the importance of social norms and attitudes as an underlying cause of gender inequality more broadly, these could be separated out into a target on discriminatory attitudes under a gender equality goal.

The target on violence and insecurity (figure 4) includes people’s perceptions of their security, and also captures some of the forms of violence which particularly affect men and boys in conflict, such as forced recruitment into armed groups and violent deaths. Importantly, it includes a measure of sexual violence, which should be disaggregated by gender, thereby ensuring that male survivors are not erased.

²⁹ Saferworld (2013), *Addressing conflict and violence from 2015: a vision of goals, targets and indicators*, p 6.

³⁰ Gender-based violence is sometimes taken to fall under either or both of the prevention and protection pillars. Its inclusion here under the protection pillar is not intended to preclude the need for preventive measures in a potential post-2015 target.

³¹ See, for example, UN Women (2013), *A transformative standalone goal on achieving gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment: imperatives and key components*; Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (2012), *Addressing gender based violence in the post 2015 agenda*.

³² Carpenter, R. C. (2006), ‘Recognising gender-based violence against civilian men and boys in conflict situations’, *Security Dialogue*, 37(1).

³³ See, for example, Heise, L. (2012), *What works to prevent partner violence: an evidence overview*; Barker, G., Contreras, J.M., Heilman, B., Singh, A.K., Verma, R.K., and Nascimento, M. (2011), *Evolving men: initial results from the international men and gender equality survey (IMAGES)*; Partners for Prevention. (2013). *Why do some men use violence and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the UN multi-country study on men and violence*.

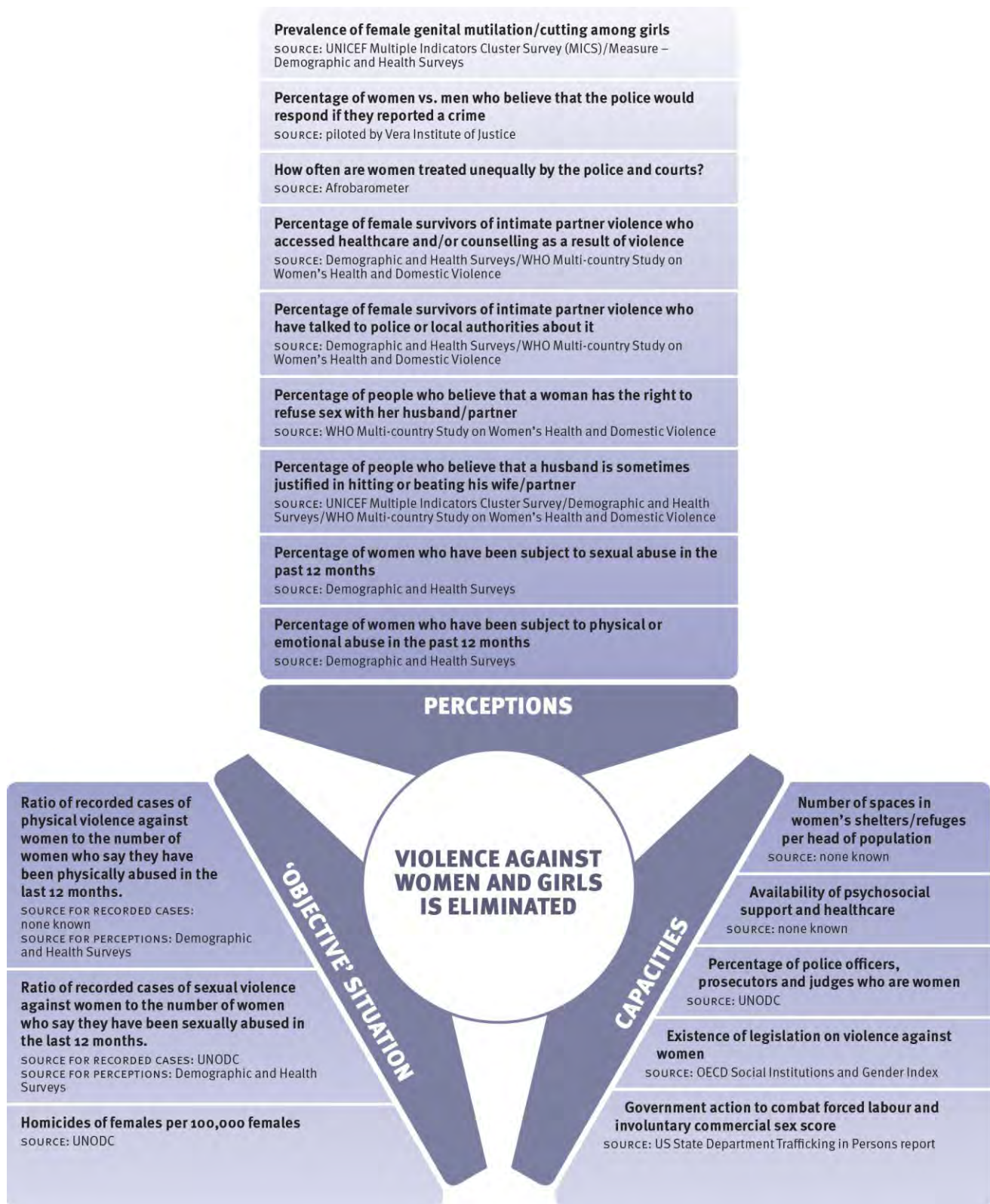


Figure 3: Illustrative target and accompanying indicator options on eliminating violence against women and girls.

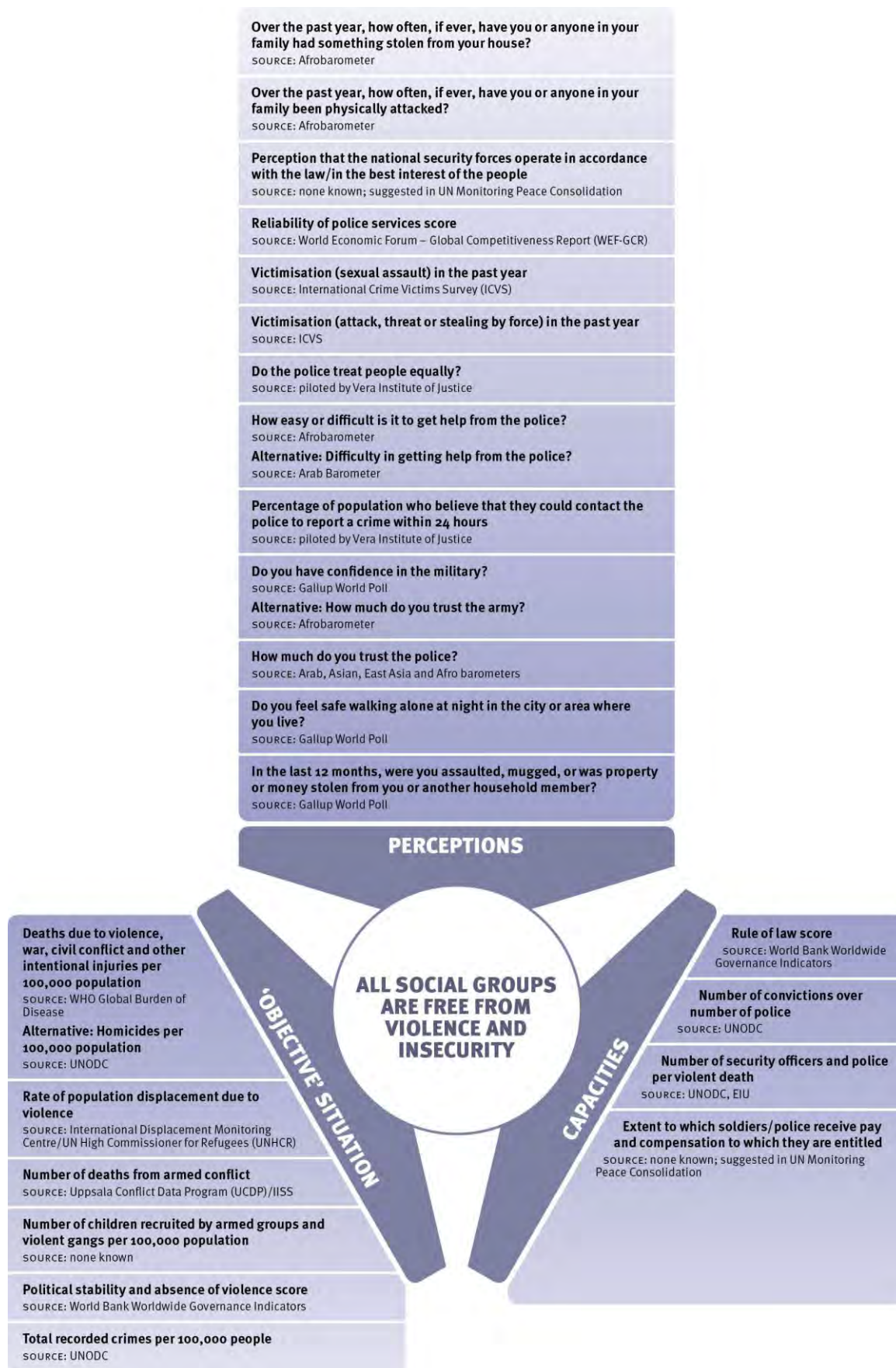


Figure 4: Illustrative target and accompanying indicator options on violence and insecurity. Taken from Saferworld (2013), *Addressing conflict and violence from 2015: a vision of goals, targets and indicators*.

Conclusions

Establishing a framework with the potential to be truly transformative requires swift efforts to build the capacity to measure phenomena such as GBV for which accurate measures are long overdue. It will also require considerable effort on the part of governments, civil society, and the UN system to ensure that the growing consensus on the need for commitments on peace and gender equality is not watered down or lost.

A number of aspects of the gender, peace and security agenda are sufficiently universal and measurable to be included in the post-2015 framework. An approach that prioritises the prevention of conflict and violence is crucial: a band-aid approach that addresses only symptoms and not causes will prove ineffective in motivating lasting change. By the same token, the framework must address the underlying causes of gender inequality by targeting discriminatory attitudes and empowering women politically and economically. The targets and indicators outlined here represent those for which there is strong evidence that they would make a significant contribution to promoting gender equality, peace, or both. Furthermore, while research on the relationship between peace and gender equality is ongoing, current evidence suggests that commitments in these two areas could help to advance their mutual aims.

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