

United Nations in Global Effort to Increase Number of Female Police in  
Peacekeeping Operations

Women Officers Have Special Role to Play in Societies Affected by Conflict;

'Power to Empower' Theme of Campaign to Move United Nations towards Gender  
Equity

NEW YORK, 7<sup>th</sup> August (Department of Peacekeeping Operations) -- The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations is launching a global effort to recruit more women police into its peacekeeping operations, as part of the campaign launched in May 2009 entitled "Power to Empower" that aims to move the ranks of the Organization towards gender equity.

This recruitment push is centred on increasing the representation of female police officers in peacekeeping operations, while at the same time encouraging national training programmes to support women to join national police services. The goal is to have Member States raise the number of female police officers serving in peacekeeping missions to 20 per cent by 2014, up from its current number of 8 per cent.

Currently, there are 11,000 United Nations police officers working in 17 peacekeeping missions around the world, while the Organization is mandated to have 15,000.

"We need more female police as soon as we can get them," stated Andrew Hughes, the United Nations Police Adviser. "There has been some progress -- when I commenced in this role in 2007 6 per cent of the 8,000 police deployed were women, but this progress is not enough, we must accelerate this upward trend."

United Nations police perform a vital role in creating trust and upholding law and order as they help civil society rebuild following a conflict and they play an essential role, training and coaching national police services in these situations. In addition to regular policing duties, female officers bring a much-needed, extra dimension to the role.

"By having more women officers deployed in peacekeeping missions, they inspire more women to join their local police services, and this in turn will in the future give contributing countries a larger base from which to recruit officers," said Ann-Marie Orlor, the United Nations Deputy Police Adviser. She added that frequently women and children are more comfortable reporting their experiences to female officers, and the fact that a woman is the authority can be empowering to women and girls.

"When the shooting stops, law and order is what brings security back to civilians, and often the most traumatized in a post-conflict society are women and children. Greater representation of women creates trust and boosts confidence for communities recovering from conflict, and helps the UN police to take into account all the needs of those societies," said Mr. Hughes.

Women serving in United Nations peace operations are represented at every level, and are deployed in whole units -- for example, in Liberia there is an all-female Formed Police Unit -- or individually. The United Nations is committed to increasing the number of women and will actively seek to recruit female police officers, particularly at a senior level, in order to address the gender disparity.

The United Nations strongly encourages countries which contribute police to the United Nations -- also known as police-contributing countries, or PCCs -- to establish a policy that sets the percentage of their contribution of female police officers at par with their national police gender ratio. They are also encouraged to review their recruitment requirements and procedures for international deployment to ensure that female candidates are not restricted from applying; and they are asked to consider providing incentives for officers who serve in peacekeeping missions.

The top 10 contributors of policewomen, as of the end of July 2009, were Nigeria (167), India (128), South Africa (62), Ghana (47), Zambia (38), Cameroon (29), Nepal (28), Philippines (23), Canada (21) and Côte d'Ivoire (19). These 10 countries account for more than 60 per cent of the female police officers deployed today.

For further information, please contact Lee Woodyear, Public Information Officer, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, telephone: +1 917 367 0200, e-mail: [woodyear@un.org](mailto:woodyear@un.org).