

Parliamentary Questions on Women, Peace and Security
1 September 2009 – 8 April 2010

Questioning Member	Answering Minister	Date of Answer	Question	Answer
Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat)	Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	4 March 2010	To ask Her Majesty's Government (a) what discussions have taken place with the Government of Afghanistan on the representation of women, and (b) how they will support the participation of women in jirgas considering the future of Afghanistan.	<p>The UK regularly discusses women's rights and the role of women in decision-making with members of the Afghan Government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and parliamentarians. As my right honourable friend the Prime Minister has said, it is vital that we promote women's rights at all times when discussing the future of Afghanistan.</p> <p>To encourage the Afghan Government to promote women's equal participation in governance and to build awareness of women's rights among civil society and policy makers the UK is funding several programmes in Afghanistan. This includes funding of £200,000 to support the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission; £737,000 to the UN Development Fund for Women's Elimination of Violence against Women Special Fund; and £500,000 to a five-year women's empowerment programme implemented by the NGO Womankind. The UK is committed to gender equality and fully supports implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to protect the rights of women and girls in areas suffering conflict and to incorporate their perspectives in conflict resolution and peacekeeping planning.</p>
Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat)	Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	4 March 2010	To ask Her Majesty's Government how, as part of the current review of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, they will support women's involvement in peacebuilding efforts and political participation, as required by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.	<p>The UK Government recognise the importance of women's political participation and their involvement in peacebuilding efforts. We currently support work in a number of conflict-affected states to build women's political empowerment and use our position at the UN to influence the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office to ensure that women's roles are considered.</p> <p>As part of the review of our national action plan, we are considering how best to progress work in these areas. We have sought the views of civil society and are planning to hold further discussion, including on these issues as part of the process. However, as the review is</p>

Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat)	Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	10 February 2010	To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (a) Afghan women, and (b) women of other nationalities, will be at the main table at the London conference on Afghanistan.	<p>not yet complete, we are currently unable to provide details of our future plans to support these two areas.</p> <p>The spokesperson for the Afghan Women's Network was the only Afghan woman who attended the main London conference. She gave a presentation on behalf of Afghan women and circulated a written statement on this to all conference participants. A delegation of Afghan female leaders was also involved in a series of events in the run up to the conference. They took part in a civil society conference where they made statements, and questioned and lobbied FCO Ministers. Members of the delegation also attended a reception on the eve of the conference, where they used the opportunity to lobby President Karzai, Angela Merkel, Hillary Clinton and other Foreign Ministers. In addition, the delegation attended a parliamentary meeting which took place at the House of Commons to discuss gender, peace and security in relation to Afghanistan.</p> <p>Other conference attendees were Foreign Ministers from ISAF partners, Afghanistan's immediate neighbours and key regional partners together with representatives from NATO, the World Bank, IMF and other international organisations. Three of these participants were women.</p> <p>The UK is fully committed to gender equality and fully supports implementation of UNSCR 1325, to protect the rights of women and girls in areas suffering conflict and to incorporate their perspectives in conflict resolution and peacekeeping planning. To encourage the Afghan Government to implement this resolution we are funding various programmes, to promote women's equal participation in governance and to build awareness of women's rights among civil society and policy-makers. This includes funding of £200,000 to support the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission; £737,000 to UNIFEM's Elimination of Violence against Women Special Fund; and £500,000 to a five-year women's empowerment programme.</p>
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Madeline Mood MP (Labour)	Ivan Lewis MP (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	26 January 2010	To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with reference to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, what steps the Government is taking to ensure women from civil society participate fully in the forthcoming Afghanistan Conference.	Two representatives of Afghan Civil Society, one of them a woman, have been invited to attend and address the London Conference. They will present the conclusions of the Civil Society Event to be held on 26 January 2010, which will be attended by other members of Afghan civil society, including approximately six women and eight

Linda Gilroy MP (Labour)	Ivan Lewis MP (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	21 January 2010	To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many full-time equivalent staff in his Department are responsible for (a) the central coordination of activities and (b) monitoring the effect of activities undertaken under the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.	<p>men from Afghanistan.</p> <p>Central co-ordination of activities under the UK National Action Plan, jointly developed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development, is within the FCO carried out by the conflict policy team. Two members of staff cover this work as part of their wider duties, with additional support provided by others as necessary.</p> <p>There is also a range of staff across the FCO and wider government network involved with the implementation and monitoring of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The FCO does not hold information on the number of staff in its overseas network with this specific responsibility as part of their duties.</p>
Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench)	Lord Brett (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	15 January 2010	To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo regarding concerns about corruption, impunity and human rights abuse in that country.	<p>We lobby the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) vigorously through our embassy in Kinshasa on the human rights situation in the country and we welcome President Kabila's zero tolerance policy on human rights abusers. We continue to press for measures to be taken on impunity for serious abusers, including the handover of Bosco Ntaganda to the International Criminal Court. We take the issue of impunity seriously, and have lent support to developing the justice sector in DRC. We are providing around £80 million over five years to increase accountability of the security sector through strengthened oversight mechanisms, technical assistance and training.</p> <p>We also lobby strongly for, and support, action to be taken on sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). Our action to combat this is focused on four levels: prevention; strengthening medical and psychosocial response; support during the judicial process; and advocacy to generate political action by the DRC Government. The Security Council recently passed Regulation 1888 which was co-sponsored by the UK. It renews Security Council Regulation 1820 on women and conflict, and creates a technical task force to look at sexual violence, as well as a UN special envoy.</p>

				<p>The UK in addition continues to push for legal action against five senior commanders of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) accused of committing sexual violence and who were named by the UN Security Council during their visit. We will continue to stress the importance of ensuring the implementation of the UN peacekeeping mission's policy of withdrawing support from FARDC units implicated in serious human rights abuses.</p> <p>We are working with the international community, particularly the World Bank, European Commission, International Monetary Fund and the UN Development Programme, to tackle corruption in the DRC. We are supporting government institutions to develop a more efficient and transparent public financial management system, and are working to improve the quality of government audit and budgeting processes. In addition, through a new civil society fund, we are starting work to make Parliament and civil society stronger in holding government agencies to account.</p>
Keith Simpson MP (Conservative)	Ivan Lewis MP (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	22 October 2009	To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the UN Security Council on the implementation of UN Resolution 1820 in Democratic Republic of Congo; and what recent progress has been made on such implementation.	<p>The UK is a key supporter of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1820, which deals with the issue of sexual violence in conflict situations. We work hard to mainstream its provisions into the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUC). It is referred to in MONUC's mandate, due for renewal in December 2009.</p> <p>The UK recently co-sponsored UNSCR 1888 (revision of 1820 on women and armed conflict). In addition, the UK continues to push for legal action against five senior Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) commanders accused of committing sexual violence, named by the UN Security Council during their visit in May 2009.</p>
Jo Swinson (Liberal Democrat)	Ivan Lewis (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	22 March 2010	To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department plans to allocate additional funding for the purpose of tackling violence against women overseas consequent on the creation of the new ministerial role to which Baroness Kinnock has been appointed; whether civil service posts will be dedicated to providing support for that ministerial	<p>On International Women's day, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that my noble Friend Baroness Kinnock will be given responsibility for leading the Government's work to tackle violence against women overseas. This is the first time such a dedicated responsibility has existed within the Government and reflects the growing awareness of the impact of violence against women on societies around the world and its</p>

			<p>post; whether the Government plans to bring forward an integrated strategy for tackling violence against women overseas; and whether performance indicators will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Government's work to tackle violence against women overseas.</p>	<p>effect on our international policies towards security, the economy and development.</p> <p>The appointment of Baroness Kinnock will ensure that the existing resources available for work on violence against women in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence, including staff, are effectively co-ordinated, ensuring a coherent UK approach. Baroness Kinnock will provide a high level voice on this issue, ensuring UK assistance is targeted and that opportunities are seized to share best practice. The Government have undertaken a public consultation with a view to revising the UK's National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security. We will continue to engage with civil society as this is developed. We are considering the inclusion of indicators to measure progress and are also supporting the development of international indicators at the UN level.</p>
David Drew MP (Labour/Coop, Vice-Chair, APG-WPS)	Ivan Lewis MP (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	7 January 2010	<p>To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what indicators with which to measure process efficiency and programme effectiveness his Department plans to include in the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.</p>	<p>We are examining the use of indicators as part of the revision of the UK National Action Plan, which is now under way. We have started a stakeholder consultation process that includes the issue of how the UK can best measure progress against a revised plan.</p>
Lord Lester of Herne Hill (Liberal Democrat)	Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)	5 January 2010	<p>To ask Her Majesty's Government why they are not promoting a United Kingdom candidate for membership of the United Nations Agency for Women or the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.</p> <p>To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ascertain whether there are qualified United Kingdom candidates for membership of the United Nations Agency for Women or the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.</p>	<p>The UK remains fully committed to the protection and promotion of all human rights, including the rights of women. We are strong supporters of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and its committee. The UK last presented its report on our implementation of the convention to the committee in 2008.</p> <p>The UK promotes gender equality and women's rights through our membership of the Human Rights Council; our current membership of the Commission for the Status of Women; our promotion of women's rights bilaterally and through international organisations; and our support for the creation of a new composite UN gender entity for women.</p> <p>The UK has a clear policy in relation to UN appointments</p>

which is focused on promoting open, transparent and merit-based selection that attracts as broad a representation as possible. It may sometimes be the case that the best candidate for the job may not be a UK national.

When assessing whether to field a candidate for upcoming vacancies within the treaty-monitoring bodies of the UN international human rights treaties, and the other human rights bodies of the UN, to which we are eligible to nominate candidates, the UK takes into account a range of factors, including: the impact that a UK incumbent can have on UK priorities; the current number of UK experts on these bodies; the balance of bodies on which we wish to be represented; whether there are other candidates standing who can represent UK interests; and, the resources and political capital available with which to run election campaigns. We prioritise our election bids to stand the best chance of success to those bodies identified on these criteria. Elections are frequently contested by a large number of candidates from a wide range of countries.

For 2010, Patrick Thornberry will be the UK candidate for CERD (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination). The UK will also be standing for the ACABQ (Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions). The UK has to date not put forward a candidate for the CEDAW committee. However, we do not rule out our fielding a candidate in the future. The appointment of the Under Secretary-General to head the new UN Gender Entity will be made by the UN Secretary-General, and not by election.

The UK is committed to promoting open, transparent and merit-based appointment processes for UN leadership positions. The purpose of this is to ensure that the best people are appointed to important roles such as the head of the new UN agency for women.

For elections, such as for the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women's Committee (CEDAW), our policy is always to

Jo Swinson MP (Liberal Democrat)	Michael Foster MP (Department for International Development)	14 December 2009	To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 1 December 2009, Official Report, column 607W, what steps his Department is taking with other countries to ensure well-qualified women candidates are appointed to senior posts in (a) CEDAW and (b) the UN Agency for Women.
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support the best-qualified candidates.

The Department for International Development works with national women's ministries in a number of developing countries to strengthen their capacity on gender equality and their engagement in international institutions working on gender.

Andrew
Rosindell MP
(Conservative)

Maria Eagle MP
(Government
Equalities Office)
and Ivan Lewis
MP (Foreign and
Commonwealth
Office)

2 November 2009

To ask the Minister for Women and Equality how much her Department has spent on the promotion of women's rights in developing countries in each of the last 12 months.

Maria Eagle: No expenditure has been spent in each of the last 12 months by the Government Equalities Office in promoting the UK's policies for women's rights in developing countries. This area of responsibility lies with the Department for International Development-12 October 2009, Hansard, column 84W.

The UK Government are strongly committed to promoting and protecting women's rights, as evidenced by the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1986.

In addition, the UK actively participates in the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meetings in New York. At its 50th session in 2006, actions were agreed that member states and civil society actors should undertake in order to enhance the participation of women in development.

Ivan Lewis: The 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women met at the UN from 1-12 March. The UK, along with other member states and representatives of non-governmental organisations and UN bodies, participated actively in the meeting, including at ministerial level.

The Commission reviewed progress in implementing the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the internationally agreed agenda for women's empowerment and gender equality, and identified the remaining obstacles and challenges to the full realisation of all human rights by women. The Commission adopted a political declaration in which member states pledged to work harder to ensure the full implementation of the

				<p>Beijing Declaration. In addition, the Commission also adopted a number of resolutions on issues including HIV/AIDS; female genital mutilation; women's economic empowerment; and maternal mortality and morbidity. It also agreed a text supporting the establishment of a new UN body devoted to gender equality and women's rights through the consolidation of four existing UN offices which work on gender issues.</p> <p>The UK remains committed to working with all other UN member states including through the Commission on the Status of Women to achieve gender equality and equal rights for women.</p>
Jo Swinson MP (Liberal Democrat)	Michael Foster MP (Department for International Development)	23 November 2009	To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans there are to consult civil society organisations on the structure and mandate of the new single UN agency for women.	<p>The UK Government have worked tirelessly alongside groups such as the Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign (GEAR) for the General Assembly agreement on a single United Nations agency for women.</p> <p>The current task is to make this agency a reality. We are continuing to consult GEAR members and other civil society groups such as the Gender and Development Network (GAD), Women's National Commission (WNC) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) UK in this task. Consultations with civil society groups on the structure and mandate of the new agency will continue as the negotiations go on in the General Assembly.</p>