



Rapporteur: Zack Gold

On September 12, 2022, CNA held its sixth and final Inclusive National Security event of the year (@InclusiveNatSec on Twitter), continuing the focus on the relationship between gender and national security. This month's event ([recording here](#)), "Metrics and Methods: Assessing Gender Equity in National Security," reflected on tracking and evaluating progress on the stated gender equality goals of nations, militaries, and national security bureaucracies. The event featured a discussion with Carmen A. Medina, a retired senior federal executive with 32 years' experience in the Intelligence Community; and Dr. Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, a global fellow with the Woodrow Wilson Center's Environmental Change and Security Program. Julia McQuaid, a principal research scientist at CNA and director of its Program on Transnational Challenges, moderated the event.

Reflections from Dr. Chantal de Jonge Oudraat and Carmen A. Medina

- The socially constructed ideas of femininity and masculinity are fundamental organizing principles of most societies. Gender is about "power structures" at all levels of society, including national security organizations. These structures manifest highly masculine dynamics (e.g., domination, exploitation, hierarchies). If we look at national security issues from different perspectives, for example, by not focusing simply on traditionally masculine frames of hard power and military might, the world and its challenges look different.
- Gender equality is a basic human right. Research has shown that gender inequalities lead to bad policy outcomes. Thus, there are both ethical and practical reasons to pursue gender equality.
- United Nations Security Council resolutions, policy commitments, and institutional practices aimed at improving gender equality exist around the globe. For example, 103 countries have national Women, Peace, and Security action plans. Although the adoption of these policy instruments shows progress, implementation is slow.
- Establishing a baseline level of equality, monitoring the appropriate data, and evaluating progress are keys to holding countries (and organizations) accountable to their commitments to gender equality. When countries and organizations do not collect data, they have excuses for not allocating resources or addressing challenges.
- A tendency exists to collect "vanity metrics," which are used to indicate progress or success on gender equality. However, these metrics measure superficial indicators at best (e.g., number of women in a training course).
- Metrics often reflect the values of the status quo, but the goal of gender equality is to *change* the status quo. Measuring progress toward gender equality requires defining the problem, identifying the objectives, and measuring metrics that address the achievement of those objectives.
- Tracking metrics also has its limitations, and evaluations of progress should identify root causes of the status quo that may not be measured by the metrics.
- Measuring progress toward gender equality should not be a once-a-year exercise. To affect an organization's structure, measuring progress needs to be operationalized in a systematic and meaningful way.
- Key recommendations include the following: Because gender equality assessments touch on very sensitive issues, document everything. It is important for women to get seats at the table, but structural change is also needed so that those at the table can speak their truth. Engage in the conversation because you never know who is listening. Finally, find allies, including among men, and pick your battles.

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