UNISFA end workshop on Gender Parity.

Abyei, 26 November 2018 - A workshop on gender parity was conducted by UNISFA to sensitize its personnel on gender mainstreaming and gender-based violence. The workshop attracted over sixty female participants drawn from the military, police and civilian including national staff components of the mission with the aim to provoke discussions amongst participants on how best to promote gender equality, integrate gender perspective in all mission’s operations and reduce the current disparity. The workshop also aimed to work towards making UNISFA a pathfinder on achieving the gender parity objective of the UN.

According to Major General Gebre Adhana Woldezgu, UNISFA’s Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, the workshop on gender parity could not have come at a better time, noting that the changing nature of modern conflicts calls for innovative ways of handling their resolutions that will ensure lasting peace and security, stressing that one of the ways of doing so is by involving women in all efforts at resolving existing conflicts and preventing new ones. General Woldezgu noted that in Abyei, like in any other conflict area, the conflicts have impacted women in several ways. Some have lost their husbands and children in conflicts and have to take up more challenges and responsibilities while many others have been victims of gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse which have become a weapon of war. He noted that their many needs must be addressed, but most importantly they must be given a voice to contribute in finding a lasting solution to these conflicts, adding that any efforts at conflict resolution that leaves women out is bound to fail. He charged the workshop participants to come up with ways of engaging women...
and making them partners in the search for sustainable peace not only in Abyei but the entire region.

The Force Commander explained that UNISFA, as a mission has taken up the challenge to mainstream gender in all aspects of its operations and management in line with the spirit of UNSCR 1326 which urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts, and the UN Secretary-General’s vision to prioritize gender issues. He said the workshop serves as a vehicle to, not only advance the Secretary-General’s vision, and the provisions of UNSCR 1325, but also to strategize on ways to achieve this objective.

General Woldezgu announced that UNISFA has so far achieved 8% in gender parity, with 5% actively deployed in the field while the remaining 3% constitute the other components of the mission. He challenged the workshop to find innovative ways of improving the percentage, suggesting that one of the ways to do so is by encouraging women participation in all mission’s programs and activities.

He said UNISFA leadership is committed in ensuring that gender perspective is integrated in all mission’s programs and activities, emphasizing that the inclusion of women participation at all levels of the mission’s programs is critical to the mission’s mandate implementation and advised all program Managers to ensure that gender perspective is given priority in their program planning. He challenged participants to “discuss openly and honestly and come up with strategies to mainstream gender in all our activities”.

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