



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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BOUTELLIS: Today is Saturday, May 17th, 2008 and I am now sitting with Paavani Reddy who works with the UN Development Program (UNDP) as well as the Ministry of Gender of the government of Liberia. We are now in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. First thank you for your time. Before we start the interview can you please confirm that you have given your consent to this interview?

REDDY: *Yes, I have given my consent, I am not being coerced (laughter).*

BOUTELLIS: I'd like to start by learning more about your personal background, the positions you held before coming here and particularly what is your current position with the UNDP and what your position with the Ministry of Gender entails.

REDDY: *Okay, before this I graduated from university in anthropology and I worked for a year in Rwanda as an intern program assistant for CARE. That was basically an assistant to the Deputy Country Director of Programs and was PR, development, advocacy work. Here in Liberia I am the Civil Society Officer for UNDP and I have been seconded to the Ministry of Gender for the last ten months to be their technical assistant on policy and PRS (Poverty Reduction Strategy).*

BOUTELLIS: As Civil Society Officer for UNDP in the Ministry of Gender what is your mandate first and how does your mandate relate to security sector reform in Liberia?

REDDY: *The mandate with the Ministry of Gender is basically to provide technical assistance to the Minister and the Ministry needs in terms of various policies and also in terms of mainstreaming gender in the PR establishment as well as now in the implementation of PRS.*

BOUTELLIS: The poverty reduction strategy.

REDDY: *The poverty reduction strategy. One of the main pillar areas for the poverty reduction strategy's priority areas is the national security sector. So mainstreaming gender in the national security sector thus became one of the priority issues that I worked on in the last nine or ten months.*

BOUTELLIS: What are the key elements of this first pillar, national security sector, in your domain in terms of gender?

REDDY: *The first element as in what we proposed in terms of mainstreaming gender?*

BOUTELLIS: Yes, what are the key challenges that have been identified in the process of the PRS, or actually are in the document?

REDDY: *I think there would be two key challenges that we identified in terms of mainstreaming gender, both in terms of increasing the number of women in the security sector as well as making the services offered by the security sector much more gender friendly or people friendly. Those were the two focus areas; it is both institutional reform as well as an operational reform that we were proposing. The biggest challenge in proposing that sort of reform surprisingly was not the reluctance or an argument from the security sector, but rather the lack of knowledge of, the implication of what it is that we were proposing.*

Suppose we sat across a table and said we do want 33% representation, we want a gender capacity building officer in all of the security centers, be it Ministry of Defense, AFL (Armed Forces of Liberia), LNP (Liberian National Police). We want a gender officer stationed in each of the security centers whose main role

would be to build the capacity of women police officers in the rank and file so that they can rise to higher levels and be decision makers as well.

They agreed to it. At least it is in the PRS right now. So basically that means that they agreed to it. But I don't think they understand the implication of implementing something like that. Also when we've sat around in meetings with the Ministry of Defense, LNP uses accelerated learning program to have—.

BOUTELLIS: The Liberian National Police?

REDDY: *The Liberian National Police has a program called Accelerated Learning Program wherein qualified women, those who have not completed their high school diploma, are given an opportunity to finish the course through an accelerated learning program. Then they are sent to the police academy for training. LNP, the program has been quite successful. I think they have more than 10% of the officers currently trained are women and also they are increasing. They are looking at reaching at least 20 to 30% in the near future.*

The problem with AFL right now, I think the ratio of women in AFL, the Armed Forces of Liberia, is about 5.6, maybe even less. One of the main reasons for that is because the Ministry of Defense considers anyone going through Accelerated Learning Program being of lesser caliber than anyone who has a normal education. One of the arguments is that they want all the officers in the army now to be of a certain caliber. They don't want a repeat of the last twenty years and they want good officers.

BOUTELLIS: What is the minimum requirement to enter the army in terms of education?

REDDY: *I think they need to have a proper high school diploma.*

BOUTELLIS: So similar to the police.

REDDY: *Yes. Then depending on if you're going to officer training, then I think you need to have a full degree as well.*

BOUTELLIS: When was this accelerated education program for future female LNP officers first discussed? How has the idea of a quota of 20% female as a target for the LNP, how was it brought about? What was the context and maybe the background and discussions?

REDDY: *That's a good question because the Accelerated Learning Program I think started way back when the Security Sector Reform assessment was carried out in conjunction with U.S Government and King's College. The assessment identified the figures (20%) to ensure the force had basic gender balance. When the restructuring of the LNP was taking place, they did want to have gender balance in the recruits. That's when they felt that there was an entire generation that's lost out in education in the country. That was when to have more women that they decided to have the accelerated learning program.*

The Accelerated Learning Program has been going on, I'm tempted to say since 2004. I could be wrong, but I think you have to verify in what year it started and how many women have been targeted through that Accelerated Learning Program. I don't have the exact figures.

BOUTELLIS: Before we come back to the security sector, what are some of the broader, sort of societal challenges in terms of gender? You mentioned the army's reluctance

to have an accelerated program, but where are the broader challenges here in Liberia in terms of gender issues?

REDDY: *I think the biggest is the personal crime against women. The extent of gender based violence here, particularly rape, is in epidemic proportion. So that really hinders any kind of basic development and sense of security that women feel. Having said that it is all the rest of course, two decades of war, there's not much money, there is lost education, all of the development challenges that come in a country like this. But I think violence against women as well as their low status in the counties is the biggest problem that we face right now. It is wide spread. There is one clinic, I don't know if you've heard about it, Benson Clinic, which is basically treated as a rape center. They have, on a daily basis at least, they treat about ten children ranging from one month to ten years old.*

BOUTELLIS: So cases of rape against children?

REDDY: *Children and women, it is very, very widespread. For example at the National Women's Conference - we had last week - time and again the issue of protection and security came up and that women identified as the biggest, biggest concern to them. They don't know what to do. Other women have gone through rape and other forms of violence in society. There is no support network, no structures that are established.*

The other thing is, of course, land, access to land. That is a huge issue. There is a traditional, customary practice in terms of land distribution in the counties; it is not through civil procedures. It is allocated to people and usually women don't inherit land. Once a husband dies the land can be taken from the woman and given to someone. They have passed an inheritance law in 2005 saying that the spouses have equal rights in terms of inheriting land, but that has—the knowledge of the inheritance law and the application of the inheritance law has been quite minimal since 2005 I think.

There is a law against gang raping from 2005 as well.

BOUTELLIS: So the rationale for the accelerated education program implemented in the case of the police and proposed in the case of the army was that women did not have easy access to education.

REDDY: *It's not just women; everyone didn't have access to education. You had two decades of war. There's basically no infrastructure outside of Monrovia. Every single school system has been destroyed. Right now the immediate crisis in the country is an education crisis. They don't have enough teachers to go around and they have "volunteer" teachers who are not basically any more educated than the children that they teach. That is leading to crime as well, lots of crime. [interruption]*

BOUTELLIS: Second part of the interview with Paavani Reddy. Before we get into different functional areas of police reform and restructuring, I'd like briefly to ask you about what is a typical day as gender advisor for UNDP but seconded to the Ministry of Gender looks like.

REDDY: *A typical day, mostly I work on the policy side of things. There are a lot of policies that are currently being undertaken in the country from social welfare to national—there are very diverse policies that are currently being undertaken in the country as well as revised in the country, so gender being something very*

cross cutting. It is almost like we have little insight or little inroads into every single policy that is being developed in the country.

Participation in some of these policy developments becomes a bit of an issue, given that there is a limited capacity both in terms of personnel as well as resources. Therefore we do prioritize on the kind of policies that we can focus on. For now we are very much focused on the social welfare policy that is being developed as well as being very interested in ensuring that the security sector reform that they're proposing, the one that is being adopted as well, the implementation of it is quite sensitive to gender issues in the country as well as the PRS - poverty reduction strategy implementation that is going to roll out from June onwards. The implementation plans actually reflect the strategies that are proposed in the poverty reduction strategy, particularly in terms of gender. That's from the gender technical advising side.

BOUTELLIS: Just to give us a rough idea, what does the Gender Ministry look like in terms of capacity right now? How big an institution is it?

REDDY: *It has a lot of staff but it doesn't really have technocrats in it, so that is the biggest challenge we face. That's why people like me need to be seconded to the Ministry to work as their staff. Sometimes it becomes difficult to differentiate where my role as a UN staff and my role as a Ministry staff ends and begins. The Ministry might have a set idea on a few things. That might be not against, but a little different from what the UN is proposing. It is always a slightly different—when that happens it is difficult to negotiate that ground.*

BOUTELLIS: Actually we'll come back to this at the end of the interview, the relationship between the UN and the host country personnel. I'd like to go into the first area that we're looking at. Again from a gender perspective which is your area, the recruitment of the police. What are, how do you participate in the recruitment strategies, the designing of the recruitment strategies at your level?

REDDY: *I personally don't, and I wonder if the Ministry as well does. Though we should be following up very closely because this has been time and again a very important issue identified by the women themselves. It is something that we strongly feel about in terms of, from a technical standpoint or from a philosophical standpoint, but it is not something that we are actually doing in terms of following up with the recruitment, following up with the LNP as to whether or not they are actually following through what was decided upon in the 2004-2005 in the restructuring of LNP, whether various strategies that we have proposed are actually being implemented. I mean it is really hard to tell because there's just not enough staff to go around to follow up. We need like a separate staff just to be able to follow up from the security sector reform point of view.*

I don't know if I mentioned cross border trade problem that we have in terms of the security sector, cross border trade and the abuses of women and the cross border threat.

BOUTELLIS: Can you explain that?

REDDY: *There is a lot of cross border trade between Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire as well as Guinea. The anecdotal evidence that we have that is being repeatedly recounted by various sections of the population engaged in this cross-border trade is that the cross borders have posts of police, army, immigration and they always get stopped at these cross borders. They get checked, bribed, as well as raped and other kind of abuses. So much so that it is actually hindering cross-*

border trade. This has come to a level that it was discussed as well as a priority issue that needs to be handled by the government right now. How we train or how we influence the security sector actors to train, not just train but follow through with their training is going to be very crucial in the next couple of years if you want to make a big change in terms of what the services that the security sector is providing to the people, the quality of the services that it is providing to the people.

BOUTELLIS: We'll get back to training but first on recruitment. You're not directly involved in following the recruitment strategies, however, that has been one of the big challenges of the police because of the history of the police and the public perception, just to get people to apply. It has been an even greater challenge for women, to get women to apply to the police. Is this something you have been, the Gender Ministry is aware of, and what are some of the initiatives that have been taken?

REDDY: *We are definitely aware of this, it is something that we constantly hear every time we go to the security sector meetings. It has become really difficult in terms of recruiting qualified women —because there are other options that they can go in for. I don't blame anyone for mistrusting any forms of state power, particularly police and army given that there were two decades of war and it was the police and the army that committed the maximum of abuses. To recreate any kind of trust in these institutions of power is going to be a long run. I think LNP needs to advocate more in terms of getting more people, getting more qualified people to apply for these police positions. But I understand that the Americans were supporting the LNP restructuring, they do go about, take the women officers from LNP as well as the army and they have more information sessions with women in the counties to encourage more women to apply. This has definitely gone through the army but it was more of an initiative of one of the advisors of the armed forces; it wasn't an initiative from the armed forces itself, it was one of the advisors to the armed forces who made it a point to take his very, very qualified women candidates and take them around and encourage them to be role models to other women and get them on board to join both the army and the LNP.*

The next question that you need to ask is LNP has 23 women in top positions. The Inspector-General, the Deputy Inspector-General are all women. Then what is stopping these women to take much more of an active role in terms of recruitment, in terms of being out there actively enrolling candidates and actively encouraging women to participate in LNP. One of the proposals that we have is to extend what we call Reserve Officers Training Corps, which was a program before the war, which was basically an officers training program that is introduced in the schools to extend to young girls and women as well. So you have qualified women being trained in high schools who were at a certain point joining either the army or the LNP so that you have—you have trained, qualified candidates available readily. They never had a strong standing army and I don't think that is a security ambition of Liberia either to have a strong standing army. So they go through the Reserve Officers Training Corps, (ROTC).

BOUTELLIS: ROTC, this is in high school?

REDDY: *This is enrolled in high school.*

BOUTELLIS: So you study and the weekends you do army training.

REDDY: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Would that be specifically for the army only or is that something being considered for the LNP as well?

REDDY: *I think the proposals are that we need to look at how best to introduce it to women, I mean girls, and how best to use it as a starting point for getting more in all of the security sector, police, maybe specialized units.*

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned the IG, the head of police, and her deputy being female. The President is also a woman. The UN brought in a whole contingent of Indian FPU. There has definitely been an emphasis on gender particularly in the security sector. Has this had any visible impact if not measurable in terms of perception or is it too early to tell? Is there any feedback you're getting on for instance the Indian all-female formed police unit.

REDDY: *Their presence is very much in Monrovia, though. I can't really tell how they're perceived outside in the counties. It seems to be all the presence of the women and women in security is very much concentrated in Monrovia. We're not, when we're discussing Liberia, we're not discussing Monrovia. That's my perception of it. I would be very interested in understanding, I mean hearing what the FPU thinks about how they're being perceived and if they have made any real tangible change in terms of the number of women being—. That's not true; we have maybe one woman right now in specialized officers training in the police academy. That is right now as we speak and she wants to leave as well, that's what I heard yesterday.*

BOUTELLIS: You have one?

REDDY: *One female in the special unit that is being trained at the LNP.*

BOUTELLIS: The ERU, the Emergency Response Unit?

REDDY: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: They will be carrying weapons, the only unit that will be carrying weapons.

REDDY: *That's right. And there's only one woman in that unit. I actually heard yesterday, somebody told me it looks like she wants to leave too.*

BOUTELLIS: So she is in the middle of the training right now.

REDDY: *Yes. Again, this is anecdotal. Not that I spoke to that woman, so you need to again cross check with someone who can actually verify that fact.*

BOUTELLIS: It is something that other people mentioned, there is only one woman currently in this unit that will potentially carry weapons. So now that leads us to training and professionalization. We've talked about the accelerated education program to bring some women to high school level so that they can actually enter the training at the police academy. What are some of the trainings that are specifically on gender, human rights, and how do you make sure that gender is mainstreamed into the training that police officers and army receive?

REDDY: *That's a very interesting question. I have not ever seen a training manual for the police or the army, so I am not in a position to say whether or not it is appropriately gender mainstreamed or even from my perception whether or not it has anything in terms of how you treat men and women or how do you understand what they're saying. How do you understand the differences of men*

and women from that standpoint? What does gender training mean? I don't know. I have not seen the manuals. I don't know their curriculum. I think this question should be directed to UNMIL who is actually involved in gender mainstreaming or gender training.

BOUTELLIS: So UNPOL for instance has gender units. You work with them.

REDDY: *Again the capacity issue is humongous. It is, me, basically that needs to follow through all the sectors.*

BOUTELLIS: You mean you're the only gender person at UNDP?

REDDY: *No, it is, from the Ministry's point of view.*

There is a lot that is going on in the country. There is a humongous amount of work that is being done in terms of everything. So following through if you don't have a dedicated staff to look at the security sector it is going to be difficult. We are really urging for if not an expert at least someone with familiarity in the security sector, to hire someone like that so that they can follow through from the gender point of view. But again the training manuals, we had this discussion once at a security sector meeting.

The Ministry of Defense said, oh it's all gender mainstreaming, they get training in gender and human rights. Our deputy minister said, can we see those manuals and at least know what you're teaching is just not there is man, this is woman, they have differences, but you're actually teaching the police and the army to be able to engage with men and women on an equal basis. The response we got was how to you say, it's not secret but access is limited, it is not for everyone's consumption - the training manuals.

BOUTELLIS: National security.

REDDY: *Yes, it is a matter of national security. Our training manuals will not be shared with everyone.*

BOUTELLIS: This is for the army?

REDDY: *This is for the army. The LNP has—.*

BOUTELLIS: A curriculum that has been developed jointly by UNPOL and LNP.

REDDY: *And there is an UNMIL office of gender advisor as well.*

BOUTELLIS: Are there any other specific issues in terms of training that we haven't talked about?

REDDY: *Not that I am aware of. If I can think of anything I'll get back to you.*

BOUTELLIS: The next area in terms of restructuring of the security sector is integration and amalgamation of services. What are some of the discussions and what's the gender perspective on the restructuring of the sector?

REDDY: *As I understand that right now there is definitely going to be the armed forces and LNP. Of course there were minor arms corrections, the immigration, all of that will fall under the security sector, which don't have the same power; corrections and immigration do not have the same power as LNP or the armed*

forces. They are at a lower level in the security sector. But they have huge influence particularly when it comes down to cross-border training and other kinds of cross-border issues.

Amalgamation of services, it is not more of an amalgamation but rather the nature of services that they're going to offer that is of key concern from a gender standpoint, particularly LNP. We're not looking for traditional policing as it was done twenty years ago, which is basically police stand around. If there is any crime they investigate. We want much more of an active role for police in terms of community policing, in terms of them being able to patrol in community, build community relationships, improve citizen-police relationship, more on a crime prevention side of things. There should be basic human security as the core principle that we want them to follow rather than police being seen as someone who will stop crime and keep law and order but much more of an engagement with the community in terms of—I think that reduces the pressure on the police to do everything as well. It reduces the need for them to carry arms.

BOUTELLIS: In the beginning of our conversation the first issue was to increase the representation of women in the security sector, the second was to make services offered to women and people more friendly. One big initiative was for the police to create what they call the Women and Children Protection Division. What are some of the achievements of this section? How far along are we in the actual services they are offering and how was this unit created in the first place?

REDDY: *I can't really answer to how the unit was created and the training that they underwent. I can definitely state that the concern right now is that the Women and Children's Protection Division is based in the headquarters of LNP. That makes it, in terms of access, very limited to certain specific in services they can provide. It's women and children are not just in that LNP building. They have probably one car for the unit.*

BOUTELLIS: So the unit is based in the LNP headquarters building, is that what you're saying?

REDDY: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Are there some branches in the police stations?

REDDY: *Not yet, not yet that I'm aware of. That was also a point of discussion yesterday when we were looking at the security sector and the information that I got was that there is just no presence of them. Not only that there is no presence, there is no capacity for them to do the work. The head of the Women's and Children's Protection Division I believe went a couple of weeks ago to Phebe Hospital somewhere out in the counties. That was the only car available. They had a child rape case, a girl of five or ten was raped repeatedly and they didn't have a vehicle to take her to the hospital, a vehicle to go and arrest the perpetrator who was just walking around the streets, or do anything about it because the police didn't have the means to go and arrest this person, or even for the girl, once she is a hospital to offer her appropriate services or even psychological services. This is just normal police, not just the Women's and Children's Protection division, but that shows you the limitations of them being able to perform their role.*

I've known a couple of police who worked with the Women and Children Protection Division and who trained them as well. The information I got from them is that it is very easy for a normal police officer to view any of the women only cases, particularly in terms of abuse cases. It is something that needs to be dealt with by the Women and Children Protection Division; it's not our case any

more. It is just being pushed over and it becomes like a concentrated, specialized unit definitely, but then the rest of the police are not aware of its work, or don't take the responsibility of saying - well that's a crime committed, I'm equally responsible to follow through with investigation and arrest.

As I understand it, it is a constant training that goes on, on-the-job training of the Women and Children Protection Division, particularly by UNPOL in terms of them understanding why they need to do certain things, why understanding certain things are more important, how they talk to the survivors or victims of rape, how they talk to them and how they do bookkeeping, the First Incident Report, the FIR, how they file these things. How do they keep all the evidence? So it is constant on-the-job training.

I don't know what the turnover of the Women and Children Protection Division is, that would be interesting to find out.

BOUTELLIS: Is this unit staffed with officers that were taken out of it?

REDDY: *I don't know, but I'm presuming that any man placed in the Women and Children Protection Division might request for a transfer. They can definitely request for a transfer and can move into other divisions. So I want to know whether or not—for that matter any person can request for a transfer.*

BOUTELLIS: It is on a voluntary basis that you join this unit. The next area is internal management. You mentioned the fact that the IG and DIG currently for the police, the number one and two positions are staffed by females but they're presidential appointees. What are the issues of, what are some of the management problems in terms of – from a gender standpoint again in the police?

REDDY: *I guess this is very much anecdotal information that comes through in terms of what is the difficulty in working, currently, the working conditions, the environment in the LNP right now. I'm not sure if I should be quoted on this at all but as I understand it there is a lot of rivalry.*

BOUTELLIS: Turf battles?

REDDY: *Yes, which makes LNP more politicized and makes new initiatives that this country really provides an opportunity for—you have a clean slate. You can create a police system that could be studied and could be duplicated in other countries. You have an absolutely clean slate. But the initiatives that anyone proposes, can propose or even if the heads can sit together and discuss any initiatives that they can come up with is limited because there is no dialog that is taking place.*

BOUTELLIS: You mean at the very top level.

REDDY: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Right now all the middle management, below the political appointees—.

REDDY: *Even them. They said 23, there is not real discussion between any of the—not just the high level but also—.*

BOUTELLIS: These are all provisional positions because there will be a Promotion Board that will soon review all the ranks.

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- REDDY: *Hopefully. So that has been a limitation in terms of working with the LNP.*
- BOUTELLIS: Because any effort on gender might not be—if it is supported by one it might not be supported by others.
- REDDY: *Yes. Whether it is gender or not, any effort—there definitely, you need to ask yourself one question. Rape is the highest reported crime in Liberia. Rape is not a crime that usually is reported, so if it is the highest reported crime then you can imagine, you can multiple it by probably ten or fifteen times and understand what the figures are. How often do you see campaigns by LNP in terms of prevention, protection and even training police, all police in order to address crime? It is very limited and you need to ask yourself why is this not taking place.*
- BOUTELLIS: Now we've explored a number of different areas of police reform. In your opinion and from your gender standpoint again, what are some of the tasks that should be prioritized, what are some key things?
- REDDY: *In terms of police reform?*
- BOUTELLIS: Yes, and maybe from the broader gender perspective.
- REDDY: *I don't know, maybe you can enlighten me on this, but do they have a clear police strategy in terms of - this is how the policing will be? I don't think so. I think that is going to be key for us because we really, really want to push for more people sent to people-friendly policing, focus more on crime prevention. That is going to be the key from a gender standpoint because the services that police are offering is pretty abysmal right now. That needs to be very, very much improved.*
- For that to take place and for more women to join, they need to look at their own institutional reform in terms of codes of conduct for police, in terms of having a sexual harassment policy for police, because they do go about working on most of the crimes out in the counties, and also in terms of how, a human resources policy in terms of how they encourage more women to join the LNP.*
- Now it is one thing to have these policies and it is another thing to have mechanisms in place to address the violations of these policies. Given the infrastructural difficulties in this country, given that sometimes a police presence in the counties is very, very limited because they do not have proper access to roads. It is very difficult to travel to some of the leeward counties, so the police presence is very, very limited in the counties. Also there is no oversight from Monrovia once you are sent into the counties. So you can do whatever you want to basically in the counties.*
- So with so many limitations, any proper functioning of a police force would be in no less than 10 years. Sometimes we fail to see the entirety of the picture and concentrate on getting fancy words on paper and we fail to see the gravity of the situation and the actions that need to be taken immediately.*
- BOUTELLIS: The last section of the interview I'd like to turn to the donors and the UN. Maybe the first question, you're co-located in the Ministry of Gender. A lot of this idea of the UN and particularly the UNPOL has been co-location, working within the LNP and working together with them on-the-job. What are some of the lessons you've learned from this and any advice you may have for people in similar roles.

REDDY: *Sometimes there is just so much pressure to finish things by a certain deadline which is yesterday so therefore you need to crunch it today in order to meet that deadline. So it doesn't really give an opportunity to mentor staff, at least from where I stand on the policy side of things. But I'm sure that UNPOL functions very differently. They don't do work but they're supposed to mentor staff and give them on-the-job training.*

I think another big challenge is—I guess we had the luxury of education and luxury of exposure and a luxury of understanding that these are structures of government that need to be in place in order for these to function. You can't expect someone else, who has just graduated from high school, gone through twenty years of war. So with a very limited exposure to the overall global functioning of the state to understand why you're saying certain things, why these things need to be done. This is a gradual process.

I think that when that particular sense is not there and the people who you're working with, sometimes they don't understand why you say what you're saying, what's the rush, why does this need to be done today. So that intensive—who you're working with and their understanding of why this needs to be done, that's a challenge. It comes out as disinterest. I don't think it is disinterest on their part, it is more of not having a fuller picture of why it needs to be done the way it needs to be done and why it needs to be done now.

BOUTELLIS: If you could create a wish list, what would be two or three changes in UN and UNDP internal management and policy that you would wish for that would help you do your job more effectively.

REDDY: *I would not do anything to change at UNDP because it is not UNDP's job, it is more on the Ministry's side in terms of having more technocrats because the Ministry of Gender's role is to be more of an advocating party and a monitoring party to ensure that the kind of treatments that need to be taken place are actually taking place and that if they're not taking place, being able to provide technical assistance to do that. The UN only can advise. It shouldn't be doing the job because when the UN leaves, there is no follow through.*

BOUTELLIS: The Gender Ministry is an innovation here. Some countries gender mainstream, other countries went on the option of a gender Ministry. When was the Gender Ministry created and are there some lessons already from having taken this route?

REDDY: *I'm tempted to say 2001, but I could be totally wrong. It is definitely late 1990s or early 2000s that it was created. It is definitely a new body, the Ministry of Gender and Development as it is called. I think it is an important ministry particularly because it plays an oversight role. It has a very, very important role in addressing issues of marginalization and exclusion whether it is male or female and it is one Ministry that can actually address something like that.*

Lessons learned from having a Ministry of Gender, again it goes back to the capacity of the Ministry of Gender to actually do its role. How do you address that other than having a good staff, or the Ministry should have internal capacity building programs so it can train its own staff to do its work. It is also the Ministry which has the Child Welfare and Development office. It is a very, very key ministry.

BOUTELLIS: Last question, are there any innovations or experiments that you know of from your current job or other places or previous experiences in terms of gender and security sector reform that you think merit more attention?

REDDY: *I don't know about experiences in other places but we're definitely advocating or pushing for having a civilian oversight body. Initially we thought it should be a gender oversight body but a civilian advisory/oversight body to the security sector whose role would be to ensure that the trainings that are provided are actually gender-human rights sensitive. They actually are going through with the gender capacity program. They're actually recruiting more women. It is more of an oversight to see if all these, that they've agreed to in terms of strategy in the security sector reform are followed through and also be able to have the issues of civilians being addressed by the security sector.*

We also think it is a very, very important committee because Liberia is very definitely, given its history, requires more of a civilian oversight in its security sector. It shouldn't be just something that is directly being addressed by the President. Once this President leaves, the next President might not be the same. In order to balance it out we definitely want to have a civilian oversight body. Whether or not that is going to be—we have a feeling that it is going to be a long drawn out battle because we hear there are lots of outside security actors who are reluctant for a suggestion like this.

BOUTELLIS: For what reasons, what are some of the outside players?

REDDY: *I'm told it is mostly Americans.*

BOUTELLIS: What are the specific reasons?

REDDY: *I guess they see it more that the security sector should be just an institution that is well trained, well disciplined and much more fulfill their mandate, they don't see the importance of having a civilian oversight, probably because their security sector doesn't report into anyone other than the Secretary of State, Commander in Chief.*

BOUTELLIS: They also have been focusing their part of security sector reform on the army segment, they've not taken a lead role into the police.

REDDY: *No, but any civilian oversight body would deal both with LNP and the army, the security sector as an entirety. The army is also supposed to be training its officers in gender and making them much more sensitive to gender concerns because once they're deployed to the border areas, they would also be a part, in the checkpoints. So again, we don't want issues, what we're facing right now in terms of cross-border trade to escalate once the AFL is back. They are of course paid very little and we should be able to question the Minister of Defense as to why he thinks the soldiers are doing what they're doing and what he has to say to answer that. Yes, it is going to be a long, drawn out, battle.*

BOUTELLIS: Do you have any final comment?

REDDY: *No.*

BOUTELLIS: Paavani Reddy, thank you very much.

REDDY: *Thank you Arthur.*