

Challenges and Opportunities facing Women in Post-Conflict Situations: Focus on Eritrea

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Eritrea, one of the poorest countries in the world, has emerged from over 30 years of conflict, to face major challenges in terms of achieving human development, economic well-being and peace for its people. Women played a key role in the armed struggle and as a result of death and displacement during the conflict now head many households. Gender equality in the assignment of roles was a feature of the conflict but a key challenge now is how to harness the increased participation and power of women in Eritrean society in the light of pressures for them to return to traditional roles in the domestic sphere.

Legislative reforms while providing a framework for a more equal society cannot achieve this without other measures, in particular investing in economic opportunities for women along with education and public awareness raising on women's rights as part of a broader human rights education agenda.

Introduction

December 1997 is the start of events to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The commemorations and recent UN reforms which have led to the upgrading of the office of the UN Human Rights Commissioner will focus renewed attention on the capacity and willingness of the international community to

protect human rights. Emerging from the ashes of the Second World War, the protection of civilians during conflict was at the heart of the Universal Declaration. However, the proportion of civilian casualties in conflicts since the Second World War is close to 95%, compared to 5% in the First World War and 50% in the Second.¹ These conflicts have been paralleled by massive increases in the number of refugees and displaced worldwide to 40 million persons, of whom over 80% are women and children.²

Along with the UN, multilateral bodies, most recently the World Bank, governments, and development NGOs are increasingly reassessing their roles and responsibilities in these conflicts. These actors are debating how to ensure the fullest civilian participation in the prevention and cessation of conflict and in the reconstruction and rehabilitation phases. As part of this debate and as a result of decades of simply addressing women as victims of conflict (as refugees in full flight or as passive victims left behind, the international community has begun to acknowledge the role of women in peacemaking at least at community level. Looking at the causes of armed conflict a gender gap in attitudes toward the use of military force has been identified with men at about 10 – 15% more likely to prefer the use of military force over women in diverse situations.³ A UN expert group on Political Decision Making and Conflict Resolution has determined that including women in peacemaking will “encourage a greater awareness of gender issues, gender-based crimes, and the needs of excluded and marginalised peoples.”⁴

Recently, there has been more thorough and more thoughtful analyses of the role of women in conflict, (not least due to the widespread acknowledgement of women’s participation in the genocide in Rwanda). Increasingly international bodies are applying “gender analysis” to conflict studies and searching for a fuller picture of the role of women in conflicts and the ways to harness the important benefits which armed struggles may lead to in the form of social and institutional change.

Perhaps the most significant change in the approach to conflict analysis is recognition that it is not only an outcome, or a social response to inequality, which forces people into new roles and responsibilities they were previously denied. Conflict also offers a real possibility of transforming gender relations in society.⁵

The following case study explores the impact of conflict on gender relations in Eritrea, now enjoying peace after a 30 year

liberation struggle. Eritrea is known throughout the world for its images of trousered women in flak jackets: this signified a huge change for women who were largely confined to the peasant farming sector prior to the war. Almost one-third of combatants during the struggle were women, a higher percentage than in any other liberation army.⁶ It is also important to note that Eritrea's liberation army developed a code of gender equality during wartime which it has now translated into legislation in its new role as government. The long-term implications of this widespread transformation of roles, responsibilities and rights are assessed below.

The liberation struggle

Eritrea has a long history of invasion and occupation: first came the Turks, followed by the Egyptians. Italian colonisation gave way to British administration, and finally the annexation by Ethiopia's emperor Haile Slassie, in 1962, which provoked the 30 year war of independence. Eritrea, with its poor soil and inhospitable highlands, was attractive to colonial powers mainly for its 1,000 km coastline and Red Sea port at Massawa. Italian rule (1895-1941) is remembered for "its apartheid type segregation, and more especially for its denial of any education beyond elementary level to the Eritrean population."⁷

Almost half the population are Coptic Christians, most of the rest are Muslims, although there are Catholic and Protestant minorities. According to Tesfai, the British in Eritrea (1941 – 1952) "stuck to their perception that highland, predominantly Christian Eritrea belonged to Ethiopia and lowland, predominantly Muslim Eritrea should join the Sudan. Discrimination against Muslims was institutionalised and justified by this analysis".

Eritreans resisted and frustrated the British (and Ethiopian) plan to dismember the country. The liberation struggle, officially born in 1961, a year prior to Ethiopia's forced annexation of Eritrea, ended in victory in 1991 when the EPLF (Eritrean People's Liberation Front) took Asmara, the capital city. In April 1993 over 98% of Eritreans voted in favour of independence from Ethiopia. Today Issaias Afewerki heads the one and only political party in Eritrea, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ).⁸

Women's roles before independence

There is relatively little evidence available on the real life struggles of Eritrean women under colonial rule, although some commentators have recorded accounts of deep and widespread oppression.

In her review of the liberation, Babet Papstein reports one woman's story: "Our lives were controlled by our fathers or other male relatives. We were betrothed as children to men we had never seen. ...we were circumcised or infibulated to keep us virgins by destroying sexual pleasure and physically closing us. At eleven or twelve we were given as brides to men of twenty or older who forced us to have sex which we didn't understand....A woman had to be married to survive. We had no right to land, to engage in trading, to produce anything except crops and even this was controlled by the man. ...the only way to escape was to run away to the town but that almost always meant becoming a prostitute."⁹

Agriculture has been the mainstay of the economy with over 80 per cent of the population engaged in farming. Sixty per cent of these were agriculturalists mainly living in Eritrea's highlands, cultivating crops. The remaining 40% were involved to varying degrees in agro-pastoralist work, with camels, cattle, sheep and goats the primary means of livelihood.¹⁰ According to development analyst Worku Zerai, rural Eritrean women were engaged in a wide variety of economic activities on the family farm but they, like many peasant farming women elsewhere, had little access to the income from their work.

"Women participated in all aspects of agricultural activities such as in the preparation of the land, weeding, harvesting, transporting and storing the grains. [However] they did all these activities without any form of remuneration because it is the man who owned the means of production such as land, implements and seeds. The work done by men such as ploughing, sowing and weeding, was presented by the patriarchal ideology as the most decisive work, that is the tasks for which a person can be paid."¹¹ A number of Eritrean taboos existed (and, according to Zerai, persist) to prevent women from engaging in these decisive tasks. One such myth suggests that if women sow the crop the seed will be carried away by the wind.

Papstein charts the transformation of a pastoral woman farmer to a liberation fighter. "My life consisted of unchanging routines: the Migs came. We were camped. I was in the tent when they came. I had never seen such a thing before...I was

terrified – there was so much noise and fire. I ran from the tent looking for the children and my husband. But the fire had destroyed everything – including my children. When I found my husband I looked at him directly for the first time but his face was burned away by the napalm.... When the fighters from the EPLF came I was frightened of them also. I just didn't know what to do so I went with them. That was the beginning of a new life. A life I didn't know even existed.”¹²

Women on the front line

The EPLF recruited tens of thousands of women from their homes to the front line and brought many more into the struggle as health care workers, teachers, and support personnel. Eritreans frequently refer to the “65,000 martyrs” or official troops who lost their lives during the 30 year war. Up to one third of these troops were female; 95,000 fighters survived the war, over 30,000 women among them. More than half of these women fighters have children.¹³

Fighting and working side by side with men during the struggle dramatically altered the social and traditional constraints under which women previously lived. Reproductive roles and relations were fundamentally altered in the EPLF marriage law of 1977. This law changed many of the traditional practices in Eritrean society and transformed the lives of those in the armed forces and civilian society in EPLF controlled or liberated areas.

The law stated specifically that “the feudal marriage norm based on the supremacy of men over women [and] arbitrary and coercive arrangements ...shall be banned. The new democratic marriage law, based on the free choice of both partners, monogamy, the equal rights of both sexes, and legal guarantees of the interests of women and children shall be implemented. Polygamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference in the remarriage of widows, and other marriage presentations shall be abolished”.¹⁴

The EPLF passed by-laws to outlaw the practice of female genital mutilation and health education programmes were developed to discourage the practice: both initiatives are credited with successfully reducing its prevalence in some villages. Birth control and family planning information were made available to combatants and non-combatants; pregnancy leave from “the front” was mandatory and included a six month leave period for mothers to be with their infants. These

maternity leave mothers remained active, however, caring for the children of other combatants in community crèches when mothers returned to front line duty.¹⁵

In 1979 the EPLF created the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) to increase female participation in the liberation struggle, chiefly by expanding access to education, removing discriminatory provisions in land and inheritance laws, and promoting the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Molyneux documents a similar transformation in her review of the impact of women's participation in the Nicaraguan struggle for independence.¹⁶ It is clear that such transformations of policies, roles and rights, welcome and long overdue as they are, can derive as much (and possibly more) from the practical demands of war time as from any commitment to equality. While liberation armies may well harbour ideals of equality, supporting women's access to family planning, maternity leave, education are all very much in the interests of the struggle.

"Winning the war" simply requires that previously unrecognised rights of women (to education, and basic health services) are urgently addressed. Such an abrupt change of thinking and service provision is ultimately designed to enhance women's capacity to deliver on the aims of their male leaders. Meeting women's practical needs in this regard is consistent with the "Women in Development" approach to development interventions, in which resources are targetted at women as instruments in the development process, rather than to promote an end – the goal of equality.

Meeting women's practical needs can also be an opportunity to meet their strategic goals. If through training, education, and access to services, women can enhance and further their pursuit of equality, conflict does indeed offer the possibility of real and lasting positive change.

After the conflict: reconstruction in Eritrea

Much of Eritrea's infrastructure was destroyed by the war, with many towns and villages totally devastated, roads damaged and livestock populations decimated. Today Eritrea is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a GDP per capita of \$960,

well below the sub-Saharan GDP average of \$1,377. Gender Development Indexes and Gender Empowerment Measures are not yet available from the UNDP, however, Eritrea's Human Development Index at 0.269, is one of the world's lowest (on a scale from zero to one).¹⁷

During the war, about 500,000 Eritreans, mainly from the western lowland provinces which had borne the brunt of war, fled into neighbouring Sudan. The Eritrean Diaspora includes a further 200,000 resident in Europe, the US and Africa.

Since the end of the war, about 110,000 people have spontaneously returned, along with 25,000 others through organised repatriation, 80% of them from the Sudan. A major task facing the country has been the repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees, and the simultaneous reintegration of nearly 50,000 demobilised combatants.¹⁸ Today there are nearly 16,000 female ex-combatants reintegrating into Eritrean civil society.¹⁹

Prior to the 1993 independence referendum the EPLF committed itself to a programme of decommissioning arms and a comprehensive programme for the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society. A recent review of the process has concluded that it took place in almost complete peace and that it represents one of the most comprehensive programmes attempted in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁰

With other groups in society, former soldiers are trying to exploit the economic opportunities offered by independence and stability. Given their skills and relatively high literacy rate, they are, on average, better qualified than many others. Their high level of motivation and discipline derived from years of struggle are seen as key resources which can be used to gain employment or to otherwise improve their situation. However, to date only about 7,000 ex-combatants have found permanent employment, or self-employment, leaving over 41,000 potentially unemployed.²¹

To co-ordinate its rehabilitation programme the Eritrean Government established the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) with a special division, Mitias, to support the reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants. Mitias provides training, skills development and counselling.

The Gender Unit of Mitias, which focused specifically on the reintegration of female ex-combatants has recently been subsumed into a Social Counselling Unit (SCU). This aims to address the social needs of women ex-combatants, and provide training programmes in technical and business skills,

administration and credit for small scale enterprises. According to Worku Tesfamichael, the co-ordinator of the Social Counselling Unit, the major challenges facing women ex-combatants are "lack of skills, no resources and no job experience".²²

The Unit has 20 trained counsellors, 7 based in Asmara, with 13 in the provinces. There are 5 female counsellors. Maintaining the support system and social bond which developed between fighters during the years of struggle remains an important function of the work of Mitias. In a visit to Bidho, a handicraft income generation project supported by Mitias in Asmara, counsellor Biri Johannes described Mitias' objectives: "Bringing the women together to avoid them losing the sense of comradeship, with a long-term aim of economic sustainability."²³

The EPLF commitment to equality

The EPLF's stated commitment to equality continued after independence. Following the referendum in April 1993, the new government set about creating a new constitution, "based on widespread participation and consultation with civil society." The consultation took place over 3 years throughout Eritrea, the US, the Middle East, the EU and Africa.

Eritrea's recently appointed Attorney General, Mr Mussa Naib believes that the EPLF's commitment to participation and legal literacy emerged as a direct result of the nature of the relationship of the EPLF with civil society and its volunteers during the armed struggle. "Participation was not something we thought of after independence," Naib has insisted. "It was not a new aspect to the work of the EPLF with civil society."²⁴

According to Naib, who headed the Civic Education Committee of the Eritrean Constitution Committee, the Government realised that to ensure the participation of women in Constitutional discussions a special consultation procedure was needed to enable the Commission to hold separate discussions for women, allowing them space to raise and explore specific women's issues and rights.

As a result, the authors of the new Constitution say it reflects grassroots concerns. Naib also contends that the process has led to a much higher level of "ownership" of the final document. He describes the first draft of the Constitution, released in 1996, as a "secular document" which holds all persons equal before

the law. Article 14.2 states unequivocally that: "No person may be discriminated against on account of race, ethnic origin, language, colour, sex, religion, disability, political belief or opinion, or social or economic status."²⁵

The government has also attempted to address the issue of inheritance and access to resources under the 1994 "Land Proclamation" which guarantees women equal rights to land ownership. Necessary legislative changes have finally been completed, and the important Proclamation should see its first test cases soon.

The new government also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1995. Prior to ratification the Convention was translated into three languages and used as an education tool to provoke discussion with community groups during the Constitutional Education Project. Last year, in the most recent effort to promote equality, Parliament officially decided to reserve 30% of all seats for women. Women are also allowed to compete for the remaining 70% of seats. The National Union of Eritrean Women was at the forefront of the campaign for equitable representation in Parliament. With a nationwide membership of 200,000 and 600 staff, the Union also promotes women's increased access to literacy classes, vocational training, child-care facilities and new technologies, running projects in a number of these sectors.

Thus on a political and legal level Eritrean women enjoy the equal rights which characterised the liberation struggle and which were promised on independence. However, there are clearly enormous problems integrating the gains made by women during the struggle more deeply into the political process and into society in general. Patriarchal traditions are deeply rooted in Eritrea and the challenge remains, according to Attorney General Mussa Naib "to develop the mechanisms and instruments that will promote the application of our commitment to equality". Such mechanisms are in the making, but the details "take time".²⁶

Some see the merging of the Gender Unit into the SCU as clear example of a lack of commitment or understanding of the fundamental problems faced by the female ex-combatants. The transfer of a training unit into the SCU suggests a distinct lack of appreciation of the full needs of women. It is increasingly evident that women's post-conflict needs are far wider than social issues. Economic needs must be addressed and if not met, cultural change in favour of women will be impossible to maintain.

According to Worku Zerai: "Economic dependency and unemployment is sending many women ex-combatants back to their villages and to a traditional lifestyle, dominated by the patriarchy." Women in urban centres where much of the Eritrea's industry is based face precarious working conditions and low pay. According to a preliminary study by Zerai, the majority of women workers (75.2%) earned an income of between 100-400 Birr (£10-40 per month) well below the average income per head.²⁷ These women are unskilled and found mainly in textile, leather and chemical factories and according to Zerai's research, the majority of these workers (88.3%) have never had access to any form of additional training or skills development in their jobs.

For women ex-combatants with little access to income in the cities, returning to their village may prove traumatic. With their dramatically different experiences and lifestyles during combat, they may well be estranged from their families. For women ex-combatants this trauma is exacerbated by the reality that the social roles of women in combat and in traditional society differ much more than the roles of men in military and civilian life. During the armed struggle, the EPLF may have supported equal rights and responsibilities but according to a comprehensive German study, "once back home, the family often expects the women to undertake their traditional tasks and to obey their parents and their husbands."²⁸

Grasping the opportunities provided by new legislation is also proving difficult for women in the face of the strong patriarchal traditions. While the new Constitution provides women with the option of appealing under national law in pursuit of a divorce or to contest land ownership, a woman who does so risks isolation from and within tight-knit local communities.

While detailed evidence is not yet available which elaborates further on the social and psychological obstacles facing women in pursuit of their civil rights, according to UNICEF "there is ample anecdotal evidence that women, particularly poor, rural, uneducated women, will not take a man – and especially her husband – to court, if he has wronged her." For women who are fearful and reluctant to use the civil courts, their first resort is local community structures. "A customary, traditional or shari'a court will be the first avenue of redress, and in this court – which will often consist of a panel of male elders who may view women as second-class citizens – traditional patriarchal rules will apply."²⁹

Research suggests many women do not want to return to traditional village life and are more likely to live alone. This is

one of the contributing factors in the rapid rise in urban female-headed households in Eritrea.³⁰

These women (and their children) may well be part of a healthy form of protest and their decision to remain in urban areas may be an important aspect in the survival of the social and cultural gains brought on by their participation in the conflict. However, in light of the patriarchal tradition, it is clear that female-headed households will face a measure of social isolation because of this choice. Research into the specific needs of this group is warranted but with little evidence to suggest that appropriate employment opportunities are available for these (and other) women, increased investment in training, credit and access to housing and health services is essential.

Collaboration for change in post-conflict Eritrea

The reconstruction period in Eritrea offers both threats and opportunities for women. It can mean losing gains towards greater equality or it can mean women firmly establishing the new roles which they acquired in wartime. The benefits which the conflict may have brought about include changes in the division of labour, household structures, and in traditional marriage relationships, along with the emergence of women's organisations which systematically lobby for women's rights at a high political level. To capitalise on and maintain these advances, women clearly need access to economic resources, or the means (education and training) to acquire them.

In spite of a clear and possibly unprecedented commitment from the Eritrean Government on public representation and equality, there is a danger that Eritrea's women and men may not see the real fruits of their struggle in terms of gender equality. This could happen if economic insecurity and poverty mean a retreat to traditions which undermine women's human rights and which deny them full participation in the benefits of liberation. The Eritrean Government must ensure that strategies to promote gender equality during the liberation struggle are seen as more than a short term measure. Long term work for equality must move beyond legislative change in this post-conflict period. Financial resources specially targetted to support women's participation are critical, and public education and

social awareness programmes must complement existing legislation to enable women to fully benefit from legislative change.

Consultation and gender sensitive responses must guide any intervention in the post-conflict period. Priorities for action for international donors should include legal and political literacy for women, with targeted support for women's understanding of their civil, political and economic rights and education for men on those rights. In addition, support must focus on economic empowerment through education and skills training. To participate in such training, women have to be freed from the constant demands of family and community responsibilities. During the post-conflict period, when multilateral and bilateral donors are likely to target support on infrastructure development, there is a danger that basic needs such as rural water supplies and improved access to health services for rural communities can be ignored.

The 1995 EU Gender Resolution promised coherence between development co-operation and other policies, including trade, environment, agriculture, foreign and security policy. The Commission and member states have recognised the need to ensure disaggregation of data by gender at project level and the need to include this in all aspects of their work. The Commission and member states should therefore support the collection of gender disaggregated data in all country strategies and use such data to inform all stages of policymaking. In view of the EU's increasing emphasis on trade as a means to development, it is vital to carry out a gender analysis of the impact of trade liberalisation measures on Eritrean women. Just as development co-operation policy aims to reduce gender disparities, (point II.2 of the EU Gender Resolution), equally, the reduction of gender disparities should be an objective of trade policy.

Any long term strategy for working with local NGOs should be characterised by an open dialogue, the ability to listen to critical questions from partners, transparency in approaches to working together, and the investment of sufficient time and resources in this process. In this way partnerships can be built rather than declared. ACORD³¹ reviewed its gender training experience in Eritrea in its 1996 annual report and described the process, whereby persons learn new perceptions and (gender) approaches during training, but turn back to old ones immediately afterwards, as a process of "de and re-magnetisation".

The agency claims that such “de and re-magnetisation” occurs when individuals are re-oriented through gender planning training (gender awareness plus gender analysis and planning tools) but cannot, as individuals, successfully reorient their organisation’s direction of thinking. Like many others before it, ACORD argues for an integration of gender analysis “into the programme’s activities, its structure, its design; otherwise no change will happen.”³²

Possible components of a strategy for international agencies and Northern NGOs working with local NGOs on gender in post-conflict situations include:

- joint training workshops on gender and conflict;
- commissioning research which documents and synthesises the experiences of men and women in conflict situations;
- strengthening the resource base of local women consultants, trainers and experts for employment in post-conflict situations, which will enhance the likelihood of culturally sensitive, gender-balanced perspectives being incorporated into planning;
- providing gender sensitive local NGOs with opportunities to contribute to the design of strategies and long term planning for post-conflict situations;
- undertaking research and practical activities to discover the concept of gender as it is expressed in each society, and discussing with local NGOs the liberating and oppressive aspects of this concept.³³

In the midst of the poverty that is often both a consequence and a cause of conflict and the many demands of post-conflict reconstruction, progress on the implementation of equality legislation, and investment in women’s education, training and skills development is likely to be seen as a luxury that simply must wait. To guard against this multilateral donors and Northern NGOs should target their support at such measures to ensure that the advances in equality, which are the result of conflict and social change, can be maintained.

Footnotes

- 1 J. El Bushra and E. Piza Lopez, *Development in Conflict: The Gender Dimension*, Oxford, Oxfam UK/1-ACORD, 1993, p.6
- 2 D. Eade, (ed.), *Development in States of War*, Oxford, Oxfam Publications, 1996, p.5

- 3 UN Division for the Advancement of Women and International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Expert Working Group on *Political Decision-Making and Conflict Resolutions: The Impact of Gender Difference*, New York, EGM/PRDC, 1996, p.13
- 4 Ibid., p.11
- 5 It has been widely acknowledged that conflict can be the catalyst of other positive change. In assessing the health care system in Eritrea Burgess states: "The initial advances in health care have been in the treatment of the many thousands of war injuries: burns from napalm, the devastating effects of cluster bombs, the loss of limbs, sight and hearing – all in a society that was already malnourished and suffering from the long term effects of disease. The list of obstacles to developing health care and services were endless...it is as if the momentum and adversity of war have become the engine for building a meaningful and accessible health service." D. Burgess, "Women and health in Eritrea", in *Changing Perceptions*, Wallace and Marsh (eds), Oxford, Oxfam Publications, 1991
- 6 S. Klingebiel et al, *Promoting the Reintegration of Former Female and Male Combatants in Eritrea: Possible Contributions of Development Co-operation to the Reintegration Programme*, German Development Institute, 1995, p.3
- 7 A. Tesfai, *Governance Issues and the Eritrean Context*, Asmara, UN War-Torn Societies Project, Eritrea, November 1996
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 R. Papstein, *Eritrea – Revolution at Dusk*, New Jersey, Red Sea Press, 1991, p.116
- 10 D. Burgess, 1991, op.cit.
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- 12 R. Papsrein, 1991, op.cit., p.116
- 13 S. Klingebiel, 1995, op.cit.
- 14 R. Papsrein, 1991, op.cit., p.116
- 15 Dr. A. Gebrekidan in an interview with the author, Eritrea, 4 July 1997
- 16 M. Molyneaux, "Mobilisation without emancipation? Women's interests, the state, and revolution in Nicaragua", in *Feminist Studies 11*, no. 2, Summer 1985, Feminist Studies Inc.
- 17 Eritrea ranks 8th lowest in the world on the HDI and 17th lowest on real GDP per capita. The HDI measures development in terms of life expectancy, education levels and income. For details see 1997 *Human Development Report*, UNDP, Oxford University Press.
- 18 The Eritrean Government aimed to demobilise two-thirds of all EPLF fighters. Demobilisation took place in two phases. During the first, 26,000 combatants who joined the EPLF since 1990 were demobilised, followed by 22,000 EPLF veterans in 1994-5. The remainder are still in the army or have been redeployed into other state structures.
- 19 S. Klingebiel, 1995, op.cit.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 W. Tesfamichael, in an interview with the author, Eritrea, 2 July 1997
- 23 B. Johannes, in an interview with the author, 5 July 1997
- 24 M. Naib, in an interview with the author, Eritrea, 2 July 1997
- 25 Draft Constitution, State of Eritrea, July 1996, p. 7

- 26 M. Naib, in an interview with the author, Eritrea, 2 July 1997
- 27 W. Zerai, 1997, op.cit.
- 28 S. Klingebiel, 1995, op.cit., p.31
- 29 UNICEF, *Mothers and Children in Eritrea*, New York, United Nations, 1994
- 30 S. Klingebiel, 1995, op.cit.
- 31 ACORD is a an international consortium of European and Canadian NGOs working for long term development in Africa.
- 32 Personal Communication from John Plasrow, of ACORD, October, 1997
- 33 El Bushra, J. and Piza-Lopez, E. "Working on gender in conflict situations: some ideas on strategy", in *Oxfam Focus on Gender 2*, Oxford, Oxfam UK/Ireland Publications, 1993

