

# News story: Joint Forces Command celebrates International Women's Day

The special guest and keynote speaker for the event was Ambassador Marriet Schuurman, NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace, and Security.

JFC, which develops and manages the supporting frameworks for successful operations for joint forces in the UK and across the world, jointly hosted the event with NATO on Monday 6 March at its headquarters in Northwood, Middlesex.

The event was attended by approximately 100 people ranging from UK military, civil servants and defence contractors to military from NATO member countries. The key theme of the day was transformational management and leadership.

During her keynote speech, Ambassador Marriet Schuurman spoke about the importance of gender equality. She said:

Gender equality for NATO is not optional; it is fundamental. It allows us to respond smarter and better to today's security challenges. Mixed teams perform better and smarter. Diversity is our strength.

The ambassador also referenced the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, which recognises the disproportionate impact that war and conflict has on women and children. She said:

Resolution 1325 is an agenda for change, an agenda for sustainable peace and security by being inclusive.

She continued:

Every change process requires great leadership. Change always faces challenge and resistance. We must promote gender equality as a matter of effectiveness, and make it relevant for the security challenges of today.

Two panel discussions were also held to explore the themes of how leadership can be transformed and leadership challenges in a diverse culture with representatives from JFC, MOD and Foreign and Commonwealth Office leading the discussions.



A panel discussion at JFC's International Women's Day event on Monday 6 March 2017. Crown copyright. All rights reserved

Speaking during one of the panels, Vice Admiral Duncan Potts CB, Director General Joint Force Development and Defence Academy said:

Diversity and inclusion are very important because without a balanced number of women in our forces, we risk missing out on the skills and expertise of 50% of the population. It's really important that we get the right people into our services. And it's crucial that we reflect the values of the society we protect.

Andy Helliwell, Director of Resources and Policy, JFC said:

I am very proud that JFC is the first part of the MOD that has a more than 50% female civil servant workforce. We must strive to ensure that this continues and that we promote the benefits of diversity and inclusion to the wider MOD and indeed beyond other government departments.