



gender action for peace and security

Informing the new UK National Action Plan
on Women, Peace and Security
Written Submission

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About GAPS

Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) is the UK's only Women, Peace and Security civil society network. We are a membership organisation of 17 NGOs and experts in the fields of development, human rights, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding.

We were founded to promote the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Our role is to promote and hold the UK Government to account on its international commitments to women in conflict areas worldwide.

Introduction

GAPS firmly welcomes this opportunity for UK civil society organisations to provide feedback to the UK Government on its current National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), and to use our analysis and lessons learned to make recommendations for the 2018–2021 NAP. GAPS continues to value the collaboration between Government and civil society on WPS, recognising the mutual aim to ensure the UK is leading the way internationally on protecting the human rights of women and girls affected by conflict and on women’s leadership in peace and security.

The submission builds on previous GAPS documents which include analysis of and recommendations for the UK’s work on WPS. These include our annual shadow reports, our responses to the current NAP and its mid-line evaluation, as well as reports and briefings written for specific events since 2014. These documents are listed in the annex of this submission with links to the GAPS website.

This submission is divided into three sections. The first provides our views on the current NAP, recognising strengths, weaknesses and notable gaps. The next sets out a comprehensive list of views and recommendations for the next NAP. These inform the final section of this submission which lists our recommended strategic objectives for inclusion in the 2018-2021 NAP.

GAPS intends for this submission to complement the findings and recommendations of the FCO-GAPS country consultations and the academic submission to the UK NAP from the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security. We reiterate our support for the open and consultative process to develop the next UK NAP.

1. Views on the current National Action Plan

This section focuses on key areas for improvement within the UK's current NAP, from which the new NAP could draw lessons.

1.1. Narrative framework:

The 2014 - 2017 UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security provided a supporting narrative to the priority afforded to WPS by the UK Government and situated it within broader efforts to prevent conflict and build peace. The current NAP, in this narrative, highlighted an approach that includes departmental cooperation, shared principles, investment in training, and working in partnership. It further provided a snap shot of WPS work and priorities by each of the three lead departments. The ambitions to “*put women and girls at the centre of all our efforts*” to achieve lasting peace and “*pursue visible change for girls and women affected by conflict*”¹ have always been welcomed by GAPS as the foundational principles of the NAP.

As a narrative, however, the current NAP has not been able to function effectively as a strategic document. GAPS has raised concerns that the absence of overarching objectives is problematic in terms of how the UK's position and vision would be achieved. This was exacerbated by an absence of a theory of change on the UK's WPS efforts which would have coherently framed the UK's approach. GAPS has also consistently argued against a pillar by pillar approach (used in the current UK NAP) which resulted in narrowly conceived activities that perhaps lacked a nuanced understanding of the overlaps between and interdependency of the pillars in UNSCR 1325.

The subsequent Country-Level Implementation Plan acted as a retrofit for activities that were already planned to take place within the NAP period. It did not allow for flexibility or provide strategic guidance for implementation at a departmental or country level to be designed and revised in response to changing contexts and in consultation with local civil society. That the NAP and Implementation Plan seemed out of sync with country-level business and operational plans saw challenges in effectively monitoring and reporting on progress, as set out below.

1.2. Resourcing:

In addition to the structural problems of the current NAP, GAPS has also raised concerns around the lack of adequate resources to support the NAP's effective implementation. GAPS has regularly argued for ring-fenced or earmarked funding for the NAP to support its implementation. In addition to supporting transparency around WPS through financial reporting and supporting the global shortfall on WPS funding, such resource could also support a dedicated budget of Ministerial Champions thereby raising the profile and outreach of their work. It could also be used to support WPS training for relevant Government staff in the UK and on mission.

Throughout the implementation of the current NAP, GAPS called for increased funding for WPS efforts. We welcomed the increased direct funding on WPS by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (increased by 50% in 2016, compared with the previous year) as well as the Government's funding of the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security (GAI-WPS). The UK's support for the GAI and for the UN Global Study on WPS was, however, not met with a commitment to increase

¹ UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2014-2017, page 1.

UK Aid on WPS (to meet UN standards) nor to provide more, long-term, flexible and core-cost funding for women's rights organisations (WROs).

The UK has made welcome commitments to supporting local women's rights organisations with resources, including "*promote the active participation of women in such discussions through political and/or financial support [in arranging all future UK-hosted peace-building events]*".² Yet this is matched with significant failings in funding for women's rights organisations. According to the OECD, only 0.5% of gender focused aid (from DAC members) went to women's civil society organisations in 2014. Furthermore, "*where resources are reaching women's rights organisations, they are typically small-scale and short-term. Small amounts of money can stimulate learning and innovation, but they do not enable vital expansion, scale-up and strengthening of organisational and operational capacity.*"³ Without stronger WPS reporting that align actions with strategic outcomes, it is impossible to say for sure how much funding local women's rights organisations are able to access from the UK. GAPS is concerned by the feedback from our partners who report that it is almost impossible to access funding, particularly funding that is long-term and supports them as an organisation, not just for project delivery.

Adequate resourcing for the current NAP is more than financial support. GAPS welcomed the increases in human resources within and across departments. Notably, the expansion of staff in the cross-Whitehall working group on WPS and an external evaluation have supported improved delivery and monitoring of the 2014-17 NAP. The MoD has made significant progress in this area, with specific pre-deployment training now available for all UK Armed Forces personnel, as well as training for gender specialists. However, GAPS recognised that awareness of the current NAP within the UK Government is limited, and echoes findings raised in the NAP's mid-term evaluation around a lack of awareness of the NAP and how to apply it to their work.

Throughout the current NAP, GAPS has called for the appointment of a Gender Champion or WPS Champion on the National Security Council. This would support greater internal leadership on WPS within the UK Government and support the UK's commitments to 'mainstream' WPS by ensuring that it is considered at the highest decision-making levels on peace and security and would further ensure a greater provision of funding for WPS in setting budget priorities for the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).

1.3. Monitoring and reporting:

As noted above, the current NAP leans towards a more narrative approach than strategic framework. This has created significant challenges for effective monitoring and reporting. In particular, the absence of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and time-bound) objectives has obscured what the UK intended to deliver (both in terms of outputs and outcomes) and, consequently, made reporting against the current NAP problematic. The outputs and indicative activities that were included in the 2014 - 2017 NAP were also broad and often ill-defined, and the added value of the Strategic Framework and Intervention Framework was unclear.

The reporting process for the current NAP was not standardised, meaning each annual report has been different in format and content. This has made it challenging to assess progress in implementing the activities committed to in the NAP and Implementation Plan. Furthermore, annual reports have tended

² Statement by Baroness Verma, UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, October 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-firmly-believes-that-the-15th-anniversary-must-represent-the-start-of-a-new-era-on-women-peace-and-security>

³ Donor support to southern women's rights organisations: OECD findings, November 2016, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/OECD-report-on-womens-rights-organisations.pdf>

to provide selective examples of activities rather than report against the indicators, outputs or objectives in the NAP. This has also made it challenging to understand where or when priorities have changed in focus countries as the Implementation Plan does not capture activities and projects decided after its publication.

GAPS welcomed the Government's investment in an external evaluation of the 2014 - 2017 NAP. The baseline and midline evaluations have provided useful insight into attitudes towards WPS and the NAP and GAPS agreed with many of the recommendations about how the next NAP should be developed, used and monitored, but the evaluations themselves do not assess the UK's work to implement the 2014 - 2017 NAP and achieve its objectives.

Reporting on the current NAP has been limited by the absence of financial reporting. The current NAP made a commitment "*to establish clear guidance on spending this [WPS] work*"⁴ but any such guidance, if it exists, has not been publicly published. Furthermore, GAPS has consistently called on the UK to go further and implement a 'gender marker' to enable the UK to have clear gender focussed criteria for funding, to track its spend on WPS, and to increase programming in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) that target the root causes of gender injustices. Accountability by and to the UK Government for WPS spending would also be greatly supported by an effective marker system.

The Government has made some welcome steps towards this. In July 2016, the Government reported that, of the £1.127 billion spent through the CSSF, "*£26m [was] explicitly on activities addressing gender equality and a further £159m on programmes with elements which addressed gender equality.*"⁵ Also welcome is the use of a marker labelled "Women's equality organisations and institutions" in the FCO's ODA programme spend reports published in 2016, some of which mapped programmes in current NAP priority countries. There is a degree of ambiguity, however, around the process that led to the statement on the CSSF and the mentioned marker, as well as how these processes related to gender markers established and used by the OECD and IASC.

1.4. Policy coherence:

According to the UK's strategic framework on WPS (an Appendix to the current NAP), the NAP would "*pull together it's [the UK's] work under one heading, bringing together the Foreign Secretary's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, DFID's Strategic Vision for Girls and Women, including broader work on violence against women and girls, the Call to Action on protecting women in emergencies, as well as our work at the UN Security Council and at the Commission for the Status of Women.*"⁶

The cross-Whitehall working group on WPS has been a welcome development to facilitate cross-departmental working and the inclusion of several PSVI (Preventing Sexual Violence in conflict Initiative) projects in the NAP's annual report is a positive step. In the main, however, it is not clear how implementation of the NAP has promoted policy coherence and implementation on WPS across and within departments. For example, whilst sexual violence is a feature of conflict, women's and girls' experience of gender-based violence is much broader than conflict-related sexual violence (the focus of PSVI). The focus under PSVI on addressing impunity is but one aspect of the UK Government's obligations on violence against women and girls (VAWG) in conflict. The UK's approach to prevention, response and broader protection issues relating to sexual violence in conflict and other forms of VAWG appear to sit separately with teams in DFID. As noted in the parliamentary report on PSVI, a clear theory

⁴ UK NAP 2014-2017, Annex B page 30.

⁵ <http://www.parliament.uk/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-07-21/HCWS123>

⁶ UK NAP 2014-2017, Annex A, page 28.

of change and links to DFID's existing theory of change on VAWG are currently absent. GAPS has long argued for a more integrated theory of change on VAWG which would support a comprehensive approach that acknowledges and seeks to address root causes of all forms of VAWG in fragile and conflict affected contexts.

As highlighted by the mid-term evaluation of the current NAP, knowledge of it has been largely localised to select members of staff within the three-lead departments. This appears to be reflected in the publication of various, core, relevant Government policy papers which make no reference to the current NAP or UK WPS commitments more broadly. DFID's Economic Development Strategy (January 2017), for example, made strong commitments to supporting livelihoods in fragile states and to "*place the economic empowerment of girls and women at the heart of our approach*" but no reference to the NAP or WPS. Likewise, the UK Aid Strategy (November 2015) which committed to spending 50% of DFID's spending in FCAS and commitments to supporting women and girls, but had no reference to the NAP or WPS. The same appears to be true for DFID's single departmental plan (2015-2020). A notable and welcome exception to this trend was the inclusion of WPS as a section within the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), albeit followed by a separate section on PSVI.

The NAP and the Arms Trade Treaty:

Of notable concern is the lack of coherence between the NAP and the UK's broader approach to FCAS, particularly around arms sales. The UK played a significant role in the development and adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the pre-eminent tool for regulating the global arms industry. The ATT made clear that arms control was a gender issue. Article 7 states: "*The exporting State Party, in making this assessment, shall take into account the risk of the conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1) or of the items covered under Article 3 or Article 4 being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children.*"⁷

Even before the ATT entered into force in December 2014, the UK has taken great pride in what it regularly refers to as "*one of the world's most robust, rigorous and transparent export licensing systems.*" Yet despite this system the UK has continued to export arms to countries which have used those weapons in a disproportionate and illegal manner against civilian women. Most notably the UK has continued to export arms to Saudi Arabia – a country engaged in a violent conflict in Yemen in which more than 10,000 people (mainly civilians) have been killed, according to UN figures, and where women have suffered disproportionately.

Two Parliamentary Committees in 2016 called for a suspension of UK arms exports to Saudi Arabia, stating that "*the UK's support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, primarily through arms sales in the face of evidence of IHL [international humanitarian law] violations, is inconsistent with the UK's global leadership role in the rule of law and international rules-based systems.*"⁸ The UK has not followed this advice and has not been supportive of efforts to establish an independent investigation into allegations of war crimes in Yemen. The actions undermine the policy coherence of the Government's attitude to WPS, and risks undermining the positive impact of other policies envisaged under the NAP.

⁷ <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/ART/630-8?OpenDocument>

⁸ Recommendation 8, **The use of UK-manufactured arms in Yemen**, First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills and International Development Committees of Session 2016–17 (September 2016), <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmbis/679/67908.htm>

1.5. Thematic gaps in the current NAP:

GAPS highlights three specific, thematic gaps under the current NAP:

Girls and young women:

The current NAP includes limited references to involve and target girls. Predominantly, girls' inclusion in the NAP (both document and implementation) is reduced to protection from abuse, such as child marriage. Whilst GAPS welcomes the inclusion of child marriage as a recognised form of VAWG within the NAP, more deliberate efforts are required to intervene in childhood and ensure adolescent girls and young women receive comprehensive services and are well equipped and positioned to become leaders in promoting peace and security within their communities, nations and internationally. The positive roles adolescent girls and young women play in their communities and their potential to be strong advocates of peace was not fully reflected in the current NAP. For example, the UK NAP sets out clear objectives to build both women's and girls' leadership in decision-making processes, yet the accompanying initiatives solely target older women. The NAP's failure to move beyond the view of girls and young women as passive victims of violence and the lack of committed resources towards their political empowerment could compromise the UK's overall ambitions to secure women's role in preventing conflict and sustaining long-term peace.

Refugees:

With very few safe and legal routes out of conflict-affected countries, many woman and girls take huge risks to seek protection beyond their borders, only to face new dimensions of insecurity, violence, destitution, and other forms of abuse when and if they reach their destinations, including in Europe. The prevention of abuse, including violence, and the protection of the human rights of women refugees and asylum seekers are integral parts of the WPS agenda and recognised by the NAPs of several countries. However, no specific commitments on these issues have yet been included in the UK NAP, nor in the FCO's flagship Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative. Moreover, organisations working with refugees have accused the UK of 'double standards' whereby it actively champions the rights of women and girls internationally, while those who come to the UK to seek asylum are often met with scepticism by the Home Office, are at times detained, and at risk of being returned to the unsafe countries.

Northern Ireland:

Though the UK Government does not define the situation in Northern Ireland as an armed conflict, it did acknowledge that some aspects of UNSCR 1325 could be applied there, particularly in the areas of women's participation in peace and political processes and in public life. In her 2014 report, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women Rashida Manjoo noted the exclusion of women from the peacebuilding processes and that their experiences of violence during and after the Troubles have been mostly unrecognised. Though recognising the relevance of UNSCR 1325, the UK has made no specific commitments in the NAP or elsewhere to implement its principles domestically. GAPS believes this is an important part of the UK adopting a comprehensive approach, and integral to its international leadership and credibility in advocating for women's rights and gender equality in peace and security.

2. Recommendations for the next UK National Action Plan

The new NAP is a real opportunity for the UK Government to apply lessons learned from the current NAP. Based on our analysis of the current (and previous) NAP(s), GAPS makes recommendations in seven key areas for the new NAP:

2.1. General recommendations: content and framework

- **The new NAP should be at least five years in length**, with overarching thematic priorities defined by and based on comprehensive gender analysis, with flexible implementation plans developed at country level and reviewed annually. This will enable the UK to take a longer term strategic approach to systemic issues and demonstrate progress in addressing gender-related root causes of fragility and conflict, and the gender inequalities that most directly inhibit the WPS agenda.
- **Thematic strategic objectives:** The pillars of UNSCR 1325 are intended to help governments and other actors understand and act on the many and complex challenges faced by women and girls in situations of conflict, although in reality interpretation of the pillars have varied. GAPS believes the pillars should be included in the next NAP to demonstrate an understanding of the connections between women's participation in peace processes, protection of their human rights, prevention of conflict and violence, and women's equality and empowerment in humanitarian action. The pillar structure, however, is not useful as a means of categorising lists of activities. Instead, we encourage the Government to develop strategic objectives that strongly align with the pillars, though will likely contribute to more than one thematic area and reflect other Government priorities such as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. These strategic objectives should then guide the development of activity plans at Whitehall, and at country levels, in consultation with civil society. The process of establishing strategic objectives should implement the principles of WPS.
- **Rights-based framework:** The UK's next NAP should adopt a women's rights-based approach to all WPS work, in line with UN Women's recommendation in its Global Study on Women, Peace and Security (2015). This is essential to ensure that all objectives, activities, programmes and projects are primarily contributing to the protection and promotion of women and girls' human rights, as well as to preventing conflict, building stability and securing peaceful societies. This approach would also allow for better integration of related policies and programmes, such as those to prevent sexual violence in conflict which largely fall under the Prevention and Relief and Recovery pillars. A rights-based lens will also help the UK to achieve the SDGs for women and girls in conflict-affected and fragile states (in line with the Leave No One Behind agenda) by bringing together relevant activities on women and girls' economic, social and political empowerment under the banner of WPS.
- **Priority countries:** GAPS recommends that the new UK NAP retains the same focus countries as the current NAP, and that the NAP includes explanation of how and why each country is included, with some reference to the selection criteria used by the Government. The objectives for the bilateral plan should be based on consultation with civil society groups in country to ensure the NAP reflects and responds to needs on the ground, and we encourage the bilateral plans to be translated into the official languages of the focus countries so that civil society groups can maintain effective oversight of UK activities and commitments.
- **Broader foreign policy:** The NAP should also be applied and implemented across all countries where the UK is operational, and as such we recommend that the NAP act as a high-level policy that is expected to be met in country-level business and operational plans (in the same way the National Security Strategy, the Strategic Defence and Security Strategy and the UK Aid Strategy all inform annual plans). GAPS suggests that country posts are encouraged to contribute information

about relevant WPS activities and that these are reported against a set of global indicators as evidence of effective mainstreaming across government.

- **Policy coherence across Government:** The new NAP must ensure that the Government's approach to WPS takes into account the entirety of Governmental decision-making, and that a responsibility is placed upon all departments of Government not to undermine the WPS agenda by taking actions such as selling arms to the perpetrators of gender-based war crimes. The principles and protections of the WPS agenda should also be extended to women and girls affected by conflict who are no longer in their countries of origins, including refugees, asylum seekers and newly resettled refugees. For initiatives receiving increased attention and resources, such as the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) agenda, it is imperative that WPS objectives are integrated fully into all policies and strategies to ensure that women and girls are not instrumentalised and that the realisation of their human rights does not become secondary or contingent upon other objectives.

2.2. Adequate and monitored resourcing:

- **Staffing:** To ensure that the new NAP can be effectively implemented, it is essential that the Government's prioritisation and political leadership in WPS is matched with adequate resourcing. GAPS specifically recommends that the Government should include WPS objectives in the job descriptions of at least one member of staff in each of the lead NAP department representatives in all focus countries. They should be adequately trained by attending the gender training run by the Stabilisation Unit.
- **Gender Marker:** The UK has made clear commitments and welcome progress in reporting on ODA spends but there is a notable gap in spending on women's rights. The use of a gender marker on UK Aid would reap further benefits for wider ODA spending and complement the implementation of other UK commitments, including around the Sustainable Development Goals. GAPS recommends that, in the new NAP, the UK commits to the use of gender markers (building on OECD and IASC markers) to enable better tracking and reporting of WPS spending.
- **Increased spending on WPS:** GAPS recommends that, during the implementation of the next NAP, the UK considers spending a minimum of 15% of UK development aid in FCAS on WPS and related gender equality aims as recommended by the UN Global Study. Similarly, meet the UN target of a minimum of 15% of peacebuilding spending dedicated to furthering women's empowerment and gender equality.
- **Women's rights organisations:** GAPS welcomed the UK's support of the GAI and recommends that the new NAP take this commitment further to provide more effective and direct support for women's rights organisations. GAPS specifically calls on the UK to increase funding for women's rights organisations pursuing WPS activities that is long-term, flexible and supports core costs (as recommended by the Global Study).

2.3. Address root causes:

The new NAP should take a strategic and long term view to reduce the drivers of gender inequality and women's exclusion, and to learn/evidence what works on promoting gender justice in fragile and conflict affected contexts. Specifically:

- **Include a coherent theory of change:** one that guides and frames the UK's WPS efforts. This should be informed by DFID's theory of change on VAWG as well as consider the gender dimensions of fragility and conflict.

- **Gender analysis should be integrated into the NAP** itself and the NAP should commit to supporting such analysis in all conflict policy and programming in conflict-affected states including all National Security Council country and regional strategies. Gender analysis should also take into account the differentiated needs, power relations, or vulnerability of different women and girls (i.e. based on age, location, class), consider potential vulnerabilities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex (LGBTI) individuals and communities, and take account of risks faced by women human rights defenders (WHRDs).
- **The UK Government should consult women's rights organisations, WHRDs and civil society** for the development and evaluation of the gender analysis and to define the priorities it informs. Funding and programming stemming from such analysis should be targeted at addressing these priorities.
- **Take a holistic approach by addressing causes in parallel to symptoms of gender inequality in fragile and conflict affected contexts.** Dedicate funds for longer term strategic initiatives on gender equality to create an enabling environment for women's participation, prevention of gendered impacts - such as VAWG - and wider impacts of humanitarian crises from a gender perspective.

2.4. Participation:

- **Women's representation:** The UK has asserted that women are essential partners in preventing conflict and in building peace and stability; their participation in decision-making processes related to peace and security is therefore equally essential and non-negotiable. The next NAP should commit the UK to supporting the representation and participation of women, WHRDs and women's civil society organisations at international peace, security and aid events, including by providing financial and diplomatic support. GAPS also believes the UK should publicly 'call-out' events, meetings and processes that exclude women and girls by design or practice, and fail to include WPS on the agenda.
- **Consultation:** GAPS would also like to see the next NAP standardise the practice of consulting with civil society in the UK and conflict-affected countries in order to: support their participation in relevant processes; ensure UK aims and activities reflect and respond to the needs on the ground; and maintain accountable relationships with civil society. Furthermore, consultation with women in NAP focus countries should be embedded into the reporting process for the next NAP, become standard practice for any future international events hosted jointly or solely by the UK and be part of any support the UK provides to other governments in developing NAPs.
- **Ministerial visits:** Building on its acknowledgement that women's meaningful participation is fundamental to peace, security and development, the Government should also standardise FCO, DFID and MOD ministerial visits to include meetings with women's and girls' groups, women's rights and other civil society organisations, and women human rights defenders when visiting fragile and conflict affected states.
- **Girls and young women:** With the adoption of the UNSCR 2250 on youth, peace and security by the UN Security Council in December 2015, there is now global recognition that more needs to be done to harness the positive contributions of younger generations in promoting and maintaining peace and security. At this critical juncture in Government's WPS agenda, GAPS calls on the UK Government to step up its efforts to purposefully engage adolescent girls and young women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions and to commit sufficient resources to empowering girls to become the next generation of political leaders. The Government must ensure

that the double marginalisation of adolescent girls and young women - due to their gender and age - is tackled in its WPS policies and programmes.

- **Women Human Rights Defenders:** The next NAP should acknowledge the vital role of WHRDs in building peace and securing the human rights of the most marginalised women and girls. Through the NAP the Government should take steps to implement UN General Assembly Resolution on the protection of WHRDs (Resolution 68/181) and advocate internationally for its full implementation.

2.5. Protection and violence against women and girls:

- **Comprehensive approach to addressing VAWG:** Programmes for providing services to women and girls need to take holistic approach in addressing VAWG. This includes ensuring that survivors have access to women-only spaces and recognising the pivotal role of specialist women's organisations/human rights defenders to understand barriers for survivors' access to services and justice. GAPS believes that services must be integrated across multiple sectors (including health, education, economic empowerment and water and sanitation) and at multiple levels (national, local). Survivors should be supported in developing new skills, including leadership training and conflict resolution. The new NAP should ensure that the Government is guaranteeing sustained services to survivors participating in efforts to investigate sexual violence and working with specialist women's organisations to better understand gaps in services to ensure these organisations' programmes and state services are mutually reinforcing. Such programmes need to be scaled up to expand geographical reach and also ensure that all women (including LGBTQ, disabled, older) have access to such services.
- The **IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Interventions in Humanitarian Action** should be mandatory for all UK implementing partners in FCAS by the end of the new NAP. All officials working on conflict issues should be well informed about the policy and programmatic objectives.
- **Istanbul Convention:** As a leader in gender equality, the UK Government should set an example at home by ratifying the Istanbul Convention in the broadest way and without reservation. The Istanbul Convention is a step forward addressing the rights of women and girls, many who face intersecting forms of discrimination that prevent them from accessing justice and support and protection services, and from enjoying their fundamental rights. It provides protection for women and girls, including refugees, migrants and asylum seekers who are often escaping sexual violence in conflict settings. GAPS believes that by ratifying the Convention without further delay, the UK Government will set an example and a strong signal on their commitment towards eliminating violence against women and girls across the globe.

2.6. Prevention of conflict:

- **Gender sensitive conflict analysis:** Offer leadership in implementing gender sensitive conflict analysis that recognises the gendered triggers and impacts of conflict to develop conflict prevention approaches, as well as women and girls' specific experiences of and roles in conflict. The current focus of the international community and security actors in responding to conflict excludes women's expertise and experience in planning and prioritising strategies to peace, security and justice. GAPS encourages the UK Government to take an international lead in implementing alternative approaches to achieving peace that are premised on the leadership of women and girls in resolving and preventing conflict. We further encourage the UK Government to invest in gender

transformative strategies and ensure that statebuilding process are linked to, informed by, and partner with, local level women-led peacebuilding initiatives.

- **The new NAP should not silo women's role in conflict prevention.** UK strategies and policies on conflict and prevention and peacebuilding, such as the NSS, SDSR and the Building Stability Framework must have a much greater emphasis on the importance of gender sensitivity and women's inclusion; references to the NAP and WPS agenda in these documents, while welcome, do not go far enough in stipulating to all departments, teams and officials that the delivery of the WPS agenda is a collective responsibility and central to successful peace and development.
- **Invest in research and innovative programmes that seek to understand what works** in preventing conflict that reflects the diverse range of women's experiences and perspectives. This should include, for instance, learning how to ensure that the positive gender roles women adopt during conflict (in terms of supporting their families, communities and societies) can be sustained and built upon on post-conflict environments.
- **Invest in gender transformative strategies** and ensure that state building processes are linked to, informed by, and partner with, local level women-led peacebuilding initiatives. We also strongly suggest the next NAP include commitments to supporting partnerships with local level women-led peacebuilding initiatives with regard to researching what works.

2.7. Humanitarian:

- **Promote women's empowerment:** The Government should prioritise the commitments it made alongside other states, UN agencies and NGO partners, to promote women's empowerment and leadership in humanitarian action into policy and practice including refugee livelihoods, education in emergencies, prevention of human trafficking and sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- **Strengthen implementation:** DFID should develop a guidance note to support DFID staff and implementing partners on the design, monitoring and evaluation of specialised and mainstreamed programmes to address women's empowerment and gender equality in humanitarian action. The guidance note should support the strengthening of women's coping strategies, including the role of local women's groups, as highlighted at the World Humanitarian Summit. Furthermore, the NAP should include new UK Government commitments towards the Call to Action on protection from GBV in Emergencies, as the last commitments date back to 2015.
- **Accountability for gender equality and VAWG efforts:** Building on recommendations by women activists and efforts by ECHO (the European Commission's humanitarian donor institution) and UN Agencies, the Government should conduct a review to identify recommendations on strengthening its approaches to accountability for gender equality and VAWG across all sectors of humanitarian response in different crises. Specifically, it should include organisational 'gender audits' to address attitudes and practices of their staff, which are key to ensuring that women's protection and agency are appropriately addressed.
- **Champion the Grand Bargain:** The UK should step-up to become a 'gender champion' in the context of both global and bilateral efforts to follow-up on the 'Grand Bargain' agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit, which addresses issues relating to the 'localisation' of aid, cash programming and participation by affected people in aid accountability efforts. DFID should ensure that this process factors in the Gender 'Core Commitments' and gender implications of localisation, cash assistance and participation are addressed.

3. Thematic areas for strategic objectives

As previously noted, GAPS recommends that these objectives are developed to support the pillars as an integrated framework, rather than a pillar-by-pillar approach. We have included the pillars to visually represent how such objectives work across the pillars and provided examples of activities which would contribute to each objective. These are intended as examples and are not an exhaustive list of objectives GAPS would like to see in the NAP.

Thematic areas for strategic objectives	Relevant WPS Pillar				Suggested activities to strengthen Government impact in this area (within the new NAP)
	Participation	Prevention	Protection	Relief & recovery	
<p>Policy coherence: Position the NAP as a 'go-to- document to support greater cohesion amongst existing and new UK policy to ensure consistency with WPS principles and further the central role of women to achieving peace and security.</p>	X	X	X	X	<p>Position the NAP as a go-to document to support greater policy cohesion by aligning it to relevant new and existing policies such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the ATT.</p> <p>Systematically implement the principles and protections of WPS in practice, including with refugees, asylum seekers and newly resettled refugees in the UK and overseas.</p> <p>Invest in creating gender adviser posts in key team and departments</p>
<p>Address root causes of gender inequality: Dedicate specific efforts to analyse and address underlying gender inequalities over time, including those that contribute to fragility and conflict</p>	X	X	X	X	<p>Undertake comprehensive gender analyses to identify root causes and inform strategic goals that will promote gender equality and stability</p> <p>Fund programmes that address underlying gender inequalities in fragile and conflict affected contexts over time</p> <p>Research, share and fund what works in achieving gender equality in fragile and conflict affected contexts</p> <p>Support building the evidence base around 'what works' in WPS</p>
<p>Increase women's representation: Ensure that at least a 30% of participants at UK-hosted peace, security and aid events (in the UK and overseas) are women.</p>	X	X	X	X	<p>Provide financial support to WROs, WHRDs and CSOs to attend UK-hosted events</p> <p>Invite women from civil society organisations and WHRDs to address the Security Council during UK presidencies</p> <p>Fund projects that build the advocacy capacity of grassroots WROs and WHRDs</p> <p>Fund projects that support the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women</p>

<p>Meaningful participation: Reduce the number of international peace, security and aid processes and negotiations that exclude women and girls by design or practice</p>	X	X		X	<p>Release ministerial statements that speak out against events and processes that exclude women's participation</p> <p>Mandate all embassies, attachés and country offices to insist upon women's meaningful inclusion as a condition of its support for such processes</p> <p>Strengthen UK diplomatic support and advocacy for the role of women and girls' rights organisations and women human rights defenders from crisis contexts</p> <p>Systematise consultations with civil society in the UK and conflict-affected countries on WPS to inform UK aims and activities</p> <p>Implement UN General Assembly Resolution on the protection of WHRDs (Resolution 68/181)</p>
<p>Funding: Ensure that there are sufficient and dedicated resources to implement WPS commitments in the NAP</p>	X	X	X	X	<p>Dedicate a standalone budget to WPS</p> <p>Spend a minimum of 15% of all peacebuilding and security funds on women's empowerment and gender equality.</p> <p>Provide core, long-term funding to women's rights organisations in FCAS working to build peace and prevent conflict at local, national and international levels.</p> <p>Introduce and report on a gender marker for UK ODA</p>
<p>Girls and young women: ensure that girls and young women are supported and equipped to be active participants and leaders in all efforts to build peace and stability</p>	X	X	X	X	<p>Invest in and increase number of programmes that target girls and young women. In particular, programmes that focus on creating an enabling environment and developing their leadership skills.</p>
<p>Prevention: Deliver conflict prevention programmes and activities that consistently and meaningfully include the perspectives and roles of women and girls</p>	X	X			<p>Trial gender and conflict analysis toolkits and roll out their use to government officials working in FCAS</p> <p>Invest in and increase the number of programmes that partner with local level peacebuilding initiatives led by women and women's rights organisations</p> <p>Continue to invest in research that aims to build our understanding of the role of gender norms in causing, perpetuating or resolving conflict</p>
<p>VAWG: Deliver comprehensive and holistic VAWG programmes through gender analysis and policy cohesion across</p>	X	X	X	X	<p>Actively engage WROs to ensure comprehensive design and delivery of VAWG programmes.</p> <p>Comprehensive gender analysis that is</p>

government departments.					<p>accessible and used by all government staff and incorporate intersectionality of women and girls.</p> <p>Ratify the Istanbul Convention to take rigorous steps in addressing VAWG in the UK and overseas.</p> <p>Clearly define goals and objectives, considering policy coherence among the WPS agenda including PSVI.</p>
<p>Humanitarian: promote women's empowerment across UK crisis and humanitarian response.</p>	X			X	<p>Intentionally promote women's meaningful participation in humanitarian decision-making</p> <p>Develop and implement guidelines on implementing gender-responsive humanitarian response – these guidelines should draw on the IASC guidelines.</p> <p>Develop and implement accountability for gender-responsive humanitarian action, including via funding mechanisms and implement mandatory reporting</p> <p>Pledge new commitments under the Cal to Action</p>

Appendix: Relevant GAPS documents

- Assessing UK Government Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2016 (January 2017): <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Assessing-UK-Government-Action-on-Women-Peace-and-Security-in-2016-Final-17012017.pdf>
- Experts' Meeting: Sexual Violence in Conflict and the UK's Women, Peace and Security Agenda: <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/LSE-WFVI-GAPS-Experts-Meeting-SVC-and-WPS-Chairs-Summary-FINAL.pdf>
- Next Steps for the New, Forward Looking NAP 2018+ (September 2016): <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Next-Steps-for-the-New-Forward-Looking-NAP-2018-NAP-Midline-Feedback-13092016.pdf>
- Assessing UK Government Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2015 (January 2016): <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/GAPS-Shadow-Report-Assessing-UK-Government-Action-on-WPS-in-2015.pdf>
- The 15th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325: UK Leadership and Commitments at the 2015 UN High Level Review (September 2015): <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/GAPS-HLR-Policy-Brief-final2.pdf>
- Turning Promises into Progress: Gender equality and rights for women and girls - lessons learnt and actions needed (Summary Report, March 2015)⁹: <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Turning-Promises-into-Progress-Summary-Briefing-FINAL.pdf>
- Response to the 2014 – 2017 UK National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security and Recommendations for the UK NAP Implementation Plan (March 2015): <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/GAPS-NAP-Response-Final-27082014.pdf>
- Briefing paper: Financing and resource allocation for resolutions on women, peace and security (October, 2013): <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/GAPS-UK-thematic-briefing-paper-resourcing-for-NAPS.pdf>
- GAPS written submission for the development of the 2014-17 NAP: <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/GAPS-NAP-Response-Final-0609201311.pdf>

⁹ Full report: <http://gaps-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Turning-Promises-into-Progress-FINAL1.pdf>