



THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP  
on Women, Peace & Security

## All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace & Security

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### 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - MINUTES

Monday 22 June, 15.00 – 15.30, Room R Portcullis House

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#### 1. Welcome from the Group's Chair & Co-Chair – Nicola Blackwood MP & Baroness Hodgson

In attendance:

- Nicola Blackwood MP
- Lord Hannay
- Baroness Hodgson
- Madeleine Moon MP
- Baroness Prosser
- Baroness Uddin

#### 2. AGM apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

- Heidi Alexander MP
- Sir Peter Bottomley MP
- Rosie Cooper MP
- Baroness Cumberlege
- Baroness Kinnock
- Pauline Latham MP
- Baroness Lister
- Caroline Lucas MP
- Lord McConnell
- Baroness Northover
- Baroness Stern

#### 3. Election of Officers

The members in attendance voted in favour of the current Officers continuing in the following roles:

- Nicola Blackwood MP to continue as Chair and Registered Contact
- Baroness Hodgson to continue as Co-Chair
- Madeleine Moon MP to continue as Vice-Chair
- Baroness Stern to continue as Vice-Chair

As Baroness Uddin was not in attendance for the first part of the meeting, it was agreed that the Co-chairs Nicola Blackwood MP and Baroness Hodgson would meet with her to discuss ways in which she may be able to support the Group.

**ACTION: APPG Coordinator to arrange meeting between APPG Co-chairs and Baroness Uddin**

#### **4. Rules change**

The Group should be aware that the rules governing APPGs have changed and have now come into force.

The Group discussed a number of the changes – such as the numbers required to be quorate at an AGM and the requirement for an MP to be Chair and Registered Contact – which primarily affect the way the APPG is administrated.

It was agreed that the new rules should be circulated to all members of the Group.

**ACTION: APPG Coordinator to circulate new rules with AGM minutes**

#### **5. Update on activities in 2014-15 / acknowledge minutes from the Group's 2014 AGM**

Baroness Hodgson updated the group on the following activities:

##### National Action Plan (NAP) on 1325 – UK strategy 2014-2017

- Briefing to parliamentarians ahead of debate on the NAP in House of Lords (February 2014)
- Briefing note sent to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) on the NAP (July 2014)
- Letter sent to Melinda Simmons (FCO) seeking meeting on NAP implementation plans (August 2014)
- Meeting with FCO on implementation plans (October 2014)
- Event in parliament with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Womankind and GAPS on the NAP and parliamentary engagement (October 2014)
- Meeting with Julian Brazier, Defence Minister (January 2015)
- Panel discussion with the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP) on Principles of Women, Peace and Security and the Lives of Women in Northern Ireland Since the Peace Process (January 2015)

##### Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict (ESVC) Summit – June 2014

- Chaired a panel event with Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, Womankind Worldwide and Amnesty on a comprehensive approach to Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The event included activists from Liberia and Nepal
- Chaired a panel with GAPS, Oxfam and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom on women's rights and participation in Syria
- Chaired a panel with the IPU on parliamentary engagement in the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) and ESVC

##### NATO Summit – September 2014

- Introduction meeting with Tobias Ellwood, Parliamentary Adviser to Prime Minister on NATO (April)

- Email to Lord Jopling re UK NATO Parliamentary Assembly
- Email to Hugh Bayley MP, President of the UK NATO Parliamentary Assembly
- Email to Sir Malcolm Bruce MP, Chair of International Development Select Committee re donor conference in Afghanistan (April)
- Letter sent by four APPG-WPS members to new Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond ahead of NATO Summit seeking greater representation of women and focus on NATO WPS strategy (August)
- Former Foreign Secretary William Hague hosts side meeting at NATO Summit on WPS (September)

#### London Afghanistan Conference – December 2014

- Email to Sir Bob Stewart MP and James Gray MP (Defence Select Committee) regarding Afghanistan inquiry and importance of WPS (February)
- Email sent to a Special Advisor at the Department for International Development (DFID) accompanying a GAPS-BAAG policy paper on the Afghanistan London Conference (October)
- Co-organised an event with the APPG on Afghanistan on civil society voices for the future of the country, featuring three civil society activists (two women), DFID and FCO representatives and parliamentarians

#### Other events and representation

- APPG event with Saferworld on women in the Middle East and North Africa (January)
- APPG event with International Alert and Saferworld on gender and peacebuilding (March)
- Roundtable with Human Rights Watch gender experts and APPG members (May)
- Roundtable with Tobias Ellwood and NGOs (May 2014)
- Party Conferences: joined panel event hosted by Amnesty International on human rights at the Conservative Party Conference
- GAPS and APPG members private meeting with Dr Reem Ali on life in Raqqa under ISIL (PSVI team and APPG co-organised)
- Private meeting with Tobias Ellwood (Fiona Hodgson – APPG Chair, Hannah Bond – GAPS Executive Director, Paul-Andre Wilton – APPG Coordinator) to discuss MENA region (January 2015)

#### Parliamentary questions

- Urgent questions prepared on ISIL, and NATO Summit (but not selected, September)
- Written follow up questions on NATO Summit tabled (September)
- Written question tabled on South Sudan, sexual violence and the peace talks (October)
- Written questions following up on NATO and Afghanistan summits (December)

#### Other correspondence/outreach

- Meeting with Rt. Hon James Arbuthnot MP, Chair of the Defence Select Committee (March 2014)
- Suggested questions circulated to members ahead of FCO and DFID oral questions (March)
- Meeting with Richard Ottoway MP, Chair of Foreign Affairs Select Committee (May 2014)
- Meeting with Bridget Philipson MP (asked MOD questions – September)
- Request for meetings sent to Rory Stewart MP (Dec-Feb)

The minutes from the 2014 AGM were approved by the members present.

In discussing the 2014-15 activities, Madeleine Moon MP stated that she had not been aware of communications sent to individuals on the Defence Select Committee, of which she was a member, regarding the London Afghanistan conference. It was agreed that communications such as this would ideally be sent to either the Chair or all members of the Committee.

The members present expressed their gratitude to Paul-André Wilton, the Group's former Coordinator, for his excellent contribution to the previous year's activities. The Group also wished to express their thanks and best wishes to Hannah Bond, Executive Director of the Gender Action for Peace and Security, whilst she is on maternity leave.

Nicola Blackwood MP thanked Baroness Hodgson for steering the Group's work during 2014-15 whilst she focussed on the general election.

**ACTION: APPG Coordinator to pass on the Groups messages of gratitude to Paul-André Wilton and Hannah Bond**

## **6. Ideas for future programme of work**

Suggestions discussed by the Group included:

- Tentative meeting in July on women peacebuilders (with focus on either Iraq or Syria?)
- Questions on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly those relating to gender and peace and security
- October's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Resolution 1325 and the related High Level Review
- Government's report to Parliament on the first year of its current National Action Plan and the launch of GAPS' shadow report
- Future of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) and engaging with the Ad Hoc Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Lord Hannay updated the group on the Ad Hoc Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict, explaining that the Committee is currently going through background material (Lord Hannay particularly recommended the March 2015 report of the Secretary-General's Special Representative (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict). There will be a special adviser appointed shortly, there should be a call for evidence by the end of July and the final report deadline will be 23 March 2016.

Lord Hannay suggested that evidence submitted by the APPG to the Committee would be very welcome, as would ideas for experts which the Committee could call upon (experts which the APPG may also wish to consider inviting to an event). On this point, Madeleine Moon recommended Dr Adrian Gallagher, an academic who provided the Defence Select Committee with evidence on the responsibility to protect.

Baroness Prosser suggested that the Committee focus on the need for effective inter- and intra-departmental coordination of the Government's women, peace and security work. Nicola Blackwood MP added that separate funding structures for Government departments can undermine effectiveness and coordination.

Baroness Hodgson stated that these issues were pertinent to the UK's report to Parliament under the National Action Plan. Lord Hannay stated that as the Prime Minister's newly appoint Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Baroness Anelay was aware of these issues.

Baroness Hodgson suggested that in addition to the topics listed above above, the following should also be considered for the Group's programme of work:

- Contacting the relevant Select Committee Chairs
- Hosting an event in July on the UK's PSVI work in Iraq
- Ensuring Afghanistan does not slip off the agenda

Other upcoming moments for the APPG to consider include UN Day in October and the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

If any member present would like to suggest a topic for the Group to consider in its forthcoming programme of work they should email the Group's coordinator, Hayley Richardson, on [appg-wps@gaps-uk.org](mailto:appg-wps@gaps-uk.org).

**ACTION: APPG Coordinator to send SRSG report to the Group along with minutes**

**ACTION: Baroness Hodgson to explore availability of PSVI team for possible July meeting**

**ACTION: APPG members to pass on suggestions for experts to recommend to the Committee**

**ACTION: APPG Coordinator to organise contact with Select Committee Chairs**

**ACTION: APPG Coordinator to schedule meeting between APPG Co-chairs and Ian Bailey, Conflict Department, FCO**

## **7. AOB**

Baroness Hodgson provided a brief update on her recent visit to Iraq. The Group then held a wider discussion on other situations of concern in the Women, Peace & Security field, including support for victims in Bangladesh.