

UK Government National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security

TOOLKIT: Activity for Posts to support and promote Women Peace and Security

“No lasting peace can be achieved after conflict unless the needs of women are met – not only justice for the victims of crimes of war, but their active involvement in creating a society in which their rights are respected and their voices are heard.”

Foreign Secretary William Hague, speaking at the launch of the ‘No Women No Peace’ campaign, October 2010

The UK Government’s international obligations are enshrined in law and policy commitments to gender have already been made, they include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979).
- The Platform for Action adopted at Fourth World Conference on Women convened by the United Nations in Beijing in 1995.
- United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010) which relate to Women, Peace and Security.
- Human Rights Act 1998. [The Equality Act 2010]
- The UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security.
- Commitments to reduce Violence Against Women including the Government action plan, Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls.
- The Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) was published July 2011 and marks the first time that the Government has put in place an integrated cross-government strategy to address conflict issues. The strategy recognised that women’ and girls in situations of armed violence, and women’s access to security and justice, are essential building blocks for more peaceful and stable states and societies.
- The Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) Human Rights Guidance was published December 2011. It will ensure greater consistency in the human rights approach to security and justice assistance overseas across HMG, including violence against women.

At the UN:

- The UN Security Council has noted ‘The constant under-representation of women in formal peace processes’. And sexual and gender-based violence also remains prevalent in many of today’s armed conflicts.
- No lasting peace can be achieved after conflict unless the needs of women are met – not only justice for the victims of crimes of war, but their active involvement in creating a society in which their rights are respected and their voices are heard.
- Not only does sexual violence inflict severe physical and mental trauma on victims, but it can also hinder progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), exacerbate conflict and damage prospects for recovery in the long term.

This toolkit provides examples of the type of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) activity that HMG staff should seek to incorporate into their country business plans. Posts in conflict or fragile states should also consider developing a **HMG Bilateral Country Plan on Women, Peace and Security**.

The UK National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 WPS can be accessed on the FCO website. The UK NAP includes Bilateral Country Plans on Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nepal, these plans are an innovative way that HMG is seeking to implement UNSCR 1325. Initial feedback is that these Bilateral Country Plans have helped Posts to improve the coherence of HMG activity, increase transparency about our activities and have simplified reporting. The aim of the Country Plans is to better coordinate and record existing activity being undertaken in country by FCO, MOD and DFID staff, structure this activity, raise awareness of WPS amongst HMG staff and to improve monitoring of the impact of our activity in-country.

This toolkit is divided into the main areas of activity identified by the UN as forming essential elements of the WPS agenda: **Prevention, Participation, and Protection**. The headings will help you to frame, understand and report against the work you are doing. You may find that you are able to report more activity under one heading than another. This is often the case as many of the issues overlap.

HMG staff can deliver UK policy through **political lobbying, reporting, building bilateral and multilateral relationships, and seeking project and programme funding**. Putting a country action plan together will require an initial coordination meeting with the London FCO Desk Officer, Post including DFID and MOD staff and the London FCO Lead on UNSCR 1325 WPS in Conflict Department. There will be reporting against the plan on an annual basis.

Consider:

- Communicating with relevant government ministries and civil society groups e.g. ministries that deal with gender issues, such as ministries of foreign affairs, justice, interior and women's rights networks for find out national initiatives and how best to work to complement them. *For example in Nepal the Embassy is involved in the Peace and Security Working Group in Kathmandu chaired by the Norwegians which engages with NGOs, Government and the UN*
- Integrating gender analysis into strategic conflict assessments. Working with others on mapping donors, dissemination of National Action Plans and other national laws and policies on women's rights and monitoring and evaluation. Does the host state have its own UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan? *For example in Nepal money was allocated to support the implementation of a Nepal National Action Plan which was launched early 2011.*
- Working with key donor coordination mechanisms if they exist. For example, consider developing an action plan for work on women peace and security and if appropriate the regional dimension e.g. *look at what exists in terms of cross-border and regional realities and institutions such as Mano River Union.*
- Sharing experiences with other posts in the region and look at regional opportunities for work, e.g. *regional women's rights networks such as Women in Peacebuilding and Mano River Union Women's Peace Network.*

Women's Rights:

In non-conflict areas we must not be complacent. Discrimination and violence against women is universal. Its impact on women, the family and wider community is immeasurable. That is why women's rights is a priority human rights issue for the FCO and why the UK Government is committed to gender equality and empowerment of women both domestically and internationally. Posts can play a key role in ensuring that these issues remain on the international agenda by:

- Participating in activities to mark UN International Women's Day (8 March) and UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November).
- Including women's rights in Post country business plans.
- Working with EU partners at country level to ensure that women's rights are factored into EU activities, including EU country human rights strategies and/or EU country business plans.
- Including women's rights in ministerial visit briefings and raising issues with the host government, as appropriate.
- Working with civil society to raise awareness and support their efforts.

Prevention: “Mainstream a gender perspective into all conflict prevention activities and strategies, develop effective gender-sensitive early warning mechanisms and institutions, and strengthen efforts to prevent violence against women, including gender based violence” (UN definition).

1. Ensure that Ambassadors and high-level HMG representatives **ask Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSGs), and UN Heads of Mission for information on violations of women’s rights** and for this information to be included in their country-reporting to the Secretary-General and Security Council.
2. Find out if there are **Gender Advisers in UN missions** - peacekeeping or special political missions - and **meet with them regularly** to inform your political reporting. If they are not present ask why and ask who is responsible for gender issues.
3. **Lobby the host state to secure invitations for UN Special Rapporteurs to report and monitor women’s rights in the country.** There is a UN Special Rapportuer on Violence Against Women who can request and be invited to a country to investigate, make recommendations and report to the Human Rights Council (see: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/>). Similarly you could encourage visits by the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict.
4. **Regularly include information about incidents of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), women’s participation in conflict prevention and information from women’s rights organisations in reporting to London.** This information can be helpful as early warning indicators of impending conflict or social tensions, as women may be aware of signs of violent conflict at community level such as hiding of arms caches and as curtailment of women’s rights is often linked to resolution of conflict through violence.
5. **Working with the British Council and others, provide financial and political support to support cultural or educational projects that tackle gender stereotypes.** *For example, the British Embassy in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) funded a TV campaign with the NGO Search for Common Ground to promote positive cultural attitudes towards women using male celebrity role models.*
6. **Include people with gender expertise on HMG visits and Stabilisation Response Team missions to countries** and ensure high level HMG representatives visiting countries ask key questions about gender equality, women’s rights and violence against women and girls.

Participation: “Promote and support women’s active and meaningful participation in all peace processes as well as their representation in formal and informal decision making at all levels: improve partnership and networking with local and international women’s rights groups and organisations; recruit and appoint women to senior positions in the UN including Special Reps of the SG, and in peacekeeping forces, including military, police and civilian personnel.” (UN definition)

1. **Support the activities of female Human Rights Defenders (HRDs).** Consider:
 - > Forming an EU working group on HRDs and designing a strategy to protect female HRDs. This will better ensure that women’s views inform your policy and programme design.
 - > Funding grass-roots women’s organisations, mediators, and peacebuilding groups to help strengthen civil society activism. Long term and flexible funding supports the strengthening of women’s civil society groups and enables the participation of women in building a sustainable peace.
 - > Hosting a “female voices” seminar at the Embassy to seek women’s views. *For example HMG funded a Darfur-to-Darfur dialogue attendance was 30% female representatives.* [Some advocates suggest that thirty percent women’s participation represents a ‘tipping-point’ at which women’s representation becomes meaningful.]
 - > Ensuring meetings are as accessible and inclusive as possible by considering the barriers to attendance of women at meetings and for example, providing childcare, running events at different times of the day, monitoring levels of women’s participation, asking participants their translation and/ or access needs and ensuring they are met, creating women only spaces where women may be able to speak freely, visiting women in their communities when possible and being aware of the access needs of women living with disabilities.
2. **Ask Ambassadors and visiting HMG Ministers to urge their counterparts to increase women’s representation in peace negotiations,.** Ensure any Security Council and HMG Ministerial visits to your country include meetings with women’s rights groups and female politicians.
3. **Identify lobbying and programme opportunities to strengthen the role of women in public life.** Consider parliamentary exchanges and activities between female MPs, from the UK, EU, Council of Europe, etc. Look at ways to strengthen the participation of female MPs in international parliamentary bodies *for example the Inter-Parliamentary Union.*
4. **Support the development of gender units in Independent Election Commissions and programmes that encourage female political empowerment,** to increase the future number of female politicians.
5. **Work with the Defence Attaché to identify female police or military actors from the host state who might benefit from attending UK courses.** *For example, Courses at Bramshill such as the annual International Female Police Commanders Course.* Similarly, **identify female candidates for Chevening Scholarships** for example civil servants, community activists, lawyers.
6. **Lobby donors, and international organisations for the inclusion of women and provision of adequate facilities and support for them in peacekeeping and special political missions, as well as Disarmament Demobilization & Reintegration (DDR), Security Sector Reform (SSR) and other programmes.**
7. If your host state is a major UN troop contributor consider **supporting or lobbying for a gender training programme and press for the inclusion of female personnel.**

Protection: “Strengthen and amplify efforts to secure the safety physical or mental well being economic security and or dignity of women and girls promote and safeguard human rights of women and mainstream a gender perspective into legal and institutional reforms” (UN definition)

1. Ensure that the Ambassador and visiting HMG Ministers regularly **raise the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the need for female voices to be heard in peace processes with senior figures in the host government.** Press any Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, EU Special Representatives in country, or UN heads of mission, for information and reporting on SGBV and the participation of women in peace processes.
2. **Track national legislation and assess if it complies with international law and standards:**
 - > Does the constitution or penal and civil code include legislation that is discriminatory to women? *For example laws relating to inheritance rights, including land and property, forced marriage and the criminalisation of SGBV;*
 - > Are national laws in accordance with the principles of CEDAW, UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960 and relevant regional human rights law such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights?
 - > Does the host state have a action plan on women’s rights, for example one on women, peace and security or on violence against women and girls?
 - > Can we lobby for changes? *For example HMG has been building on increased local support to lobby for changes to legislation in Yemen to prevent child marriage. And in Nepal, we supported the drafting of the new constitution to include provisions on women’s rights.*
3. **Address impunity for crimes relating to SGBV:**
 - > Are there national or regional cases relating to sexual violence that we can press for movement on with Interior or Justice Ministries? *For example Pressing for the trial of Jean Pierre Bemba at the International Criminal Court (ICC), for allegedly commanding troops that committed SGBV in the Central African Republic.*
 - > Are there ways to support the improvement of access to justice, for example advocating to ministries and supporting their work with justice mechanisms at the national or local level, or in building judicial and police capacities and understanding
4. **Support the establishment of effective and independent National Human Rights Commissions,** which investigate, promote and protect human rights. *For example HMG has been actively supporting the development of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.*
5. **Consider providing funding for healthcare, counselling etc. to help treat victims of SGBV** *For example HMG has made contributions totalling £1m to Panzi Hospital in the DRC which has a specialist unit to provide care for the victims of SGBV.*
6. **Ensure that HMG-sponsored conflict programmes integrate gender analysis:**
 - > Are DfID sponsored DDR programmes gender-sensitive?
 - > Do SSR programmes aim to increase the number of women at all levels in the security forces, including at senior levels within security agencies, and incorporate dealing with VAWG as part of the training package?
 - > How are relief and recovery efforts targeted at or inclusive of women?
 - > Do DDRR and SSR programmes involve women civil society organisations and networks?

FURTHER INFORMATION

DEFINITIONS:

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”

Gender-based violence (GBV)

GBV refers to violence that is primarily targeted against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender identity. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. GBV can take place in the home, in the community or in public institutions and is exacerbated by conflict and include sexual violence, exploitation, abuse and harassment; interpersonal violence in the home; sex trafficking and forced prostitution; harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation; and physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state. Although women and men can be victims of GBV, it particularly affects women due to unequal gender relations. GBV is often used interchangeably with the term violence against women (VAW).

Useful Websites:

FCO website National Action Plan - www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/global-issues/conflict-prevention/women-peace-security-action-plan

FCO website Annual Review October 2011 - www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/word/global-issues/nap-unscr-annual-review-oct-11

FCONet UNSCR 1325 and Conflict Department Toolbox for - www.fconet.fco.gov.uk/Doing+my+Job/Good+Practice/Conflict+Toolbox/default.htm

Stabilisation Unit Lessons Site - www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk MOD www.mod.uk DFID www.dfid.gov.uk

UNWOMEN - www.unwomen.org GAPS - www.gaps-uk.org.

Training:

FCO Conflict Department - Conflict Foundation Course - 2 days

Stabilisation Unit - UNSCR 1325 Course - 1 day

FCO Human Rights and Democracy Department – awareness and practitioner level courses (2 days and 5 days)

Funding Sources:

Include: Conflict Pool, Strengthening Alliances and Partnerships, Human Rights and Democracy Programme Fund, DFID civil society challenge fund, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

Documents:

Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=632657882>

UNSCR resolutions 1325 (2000) 1820 (2008) 1888 (2009) 1889 (2009) 1960 (2010)

http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_war_peace/resolutions_instruments.php

**These are suggestions there is lots of other activity that can be implemented on Women, Peace and Security.
We welcome your support and feedback.**

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