

HMG NAP Review

Gender Action for Peace and Security Recommendations for the 2014 – 2017 NAP

"Wherever there is conflict, women must be part of the solution"
Michele Bachelet, former Under-Secretary-General and Head of UN Women, 2012

The UK is a world leader in setting the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda, playing a crucial role to ensure that it remains an international priority. The new NAP offers HMG the opportunity to consolidate its existing work, and look boldly forward to programmes, funding and ways of working that will ensure women are at the heart of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and recovery.

GAPS welcomes the opportunity to work with HMG to review the 2010 – 2013 National Action Plan (NAP) and in the development of the new 2014 – 2017 NAP. This document outlines major recommendations that GAPS would like to work with HMG on to ensure they are included in the upcoming NAP. These are focused on overarching issues that apply across the NAP and specific recommendations for the four UNSCR 1325 pillars: Prevention; Protection; Participation; and Relief and Recovery.

Gender Action for Peace and Security is an expert network of peacebuilding, human rights, humanitarian and development NGOs, academics and grassroots peace builders. Through research, campaigning and advocacy, we work to bridge the gap between the realities of women at the local level in conflict-affected countries and UK decision makers and practitioners working on peace and security. GAPS members include: Action Aid, Amnesty International UK, CARE International, International Alert, International Rescue Committee, Northern Ireland Women's European Platform, Oxfam GB, Saferworld, Soroptimist International, United Nations Association – UK, UN Women UK, Widows for Peace through Democracy, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Womankind, Women for Women International, and independent consultants.

1. Strategic Recommendations:

1.1. Women Peace and Security Strategy:

GAPS encourages HMG to build on its individual departmental efforts that relate to WPS such as the FCO's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI), and DFID's Call to Action on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Emergencies and take forward a more ambitious and holistic strategy. This strategy should build upon existing cross departmental working between DFID, FCO and MOD to include other relevant domestic Government departments, including the Home Office, Cabinet Office, Government Office of Equalities, Ministry of Justice and the Northern Ireland Office. GAPS believes that this approach will help to both ensure that the UK implements UNSCR 1325 and other related UNSCRs domestically and that the UK can use its own national expertise to support its international work. The Strategy should outline HMG's vision for WPS and should encompass the range of government policies, programmes, systems and practices that relate to WPS and the UK's international WPS commitments. GAPS would be able to provide support to HMG in the development of this strategy.

1.2. Funding:

GAPS believes that the NAP needs ring fenced funding for the WPS projects and programmes. GAPS therefore recommends that HMG adopts the UN Secretary General's (UNSGs) recommendation that 15% of all peacebuilding funds be directed to supporting women's rights and participation in peacebuilding. This should allow for flexibility when conflicts arise to ensure organisations can access funding in a timely manner. GAPS also encourages HMG to ensure its funding mechanisms and funding streams have dedicated WPS leads at all levels. GAPS therefore recommends that, as the National Security Council (NSC) will have responsibility for the new Conflict, Security and Stability

Fund from 2015, one of the NSC members has WPS formally included in their NSC remit. This is important both directly for the NAP in terms of funding and decisions on country focus, and also for conflict policy and decisions more broadly given the role the NSC has in decisions of national security.

To ensure WPS is accounted for in all HMG funding decisions, GAPS also recommends that there is a trained WPS lead on all FCO and DFID programme funding boards in London and at post for funds allocated to conflict-affected and fragile environments. This should apply to all funding streams for conflict-affected and fragile environments across all departments. GAPS believes that this will support gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding programmes. GAPS would be able to support HMG to design mechanisms by which the WPS leads could assess projects and programmes from a WPS angle, and would encourage HMG to ensure this is implemented during the coming NAP. GAPS suggests HMG learns from best practice from other countries, such as Norway, to ensure all DFID and FCO funded, and MOD and National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) implemented projects and programmes in conflict-affected and fragile environments are required to incorporate gender analysis.

GAPS encourages HMG to undertake an assessment into its funding in conflict-affected and fragile environments focusing on how WPS is incorporated in terms of standalone activities and mainstreaming. Clarity on this would be extremely useful for both national governments and civil society and will support HMG in outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of different departments in delivering joint country strategies in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. GAPS also recommends that HMG improves its planning and reporting of WPS funding. WPS funding should be outlined in FCO Country Business Plans and DFID Operational Plans, and reporting should be aligned to internationally recognised funding reporting mechanisms such as the OECD Gender Markers.

1.3. Government Coordination:

GAPS welcomes the commitment to cross-government coordination in the NAP, which is essential for its full implementation. GAPS encourages HMG to continue to build on the start it has made on cross-government coordination. GAPS believes that the shared ownership of the UK's WPS work across the MOD, DFID and FCO is needed to ensure policy coherence and adherence with international WPS commitments. It is essential that in the 2014 – 2017 NAP, HMG ensures that departmental policies and initiatives are streamlined within the NAP and that this leads to a more joined up approach. For example, GAPS encourages HMG to outline commitments under the NAP in Country Business and Operational plans.

HMG should ensure DFID's refresh of its Strategic Vision for Girls and Women takes into account its WPS commitments, and cross references the NAP in the strategy where applicable. GAPS believes, through a WPS Strategy and the NAP, HMG can incorporate other WPS and conflict work, such as the FCO's PSVI and DFID work on VAWG and ensure this is cross-departmental. GAPS also encourages HMG to outline the complementary roles of the VAWG Champion and the FCO NAP lead, including the resources attached to each post. Furthermore, GAPS believes the MOD should to put in place structures and undertake processes that will contribute to the implementation of the NAP and UNSCR 1325, such as reviewing Defence Doctrine, to include reference to UNSCR 1325 and training UK military personnel in WPS.

GAPS suggests HMG builds better internal departmental WPS systems. GAPS welcomes some of the steps undertaken, such as the UNSCR 1325 training within HMG. GAPS recommends that this training is on-going and all UK-based and locally appointed staff working on and in conflict-affected and fragile environments are trained, supported and retrained on UNSCR 1325. GAPS also believes that for WPS to be comprehensively addressed in HMG, better systems are required to ensure that WPS is considered across the departments, particularly at Desk Officer level and in posts and DFID Country Offices. GAPS recommends greater inclusion of WPS in performance appraisals of all staff with conflict remits or who work in conflict-affected and fragile environments by including a WPS performance indicator. HMG should also ensure gender analysis is part of all FCO-DFID-MOD Conflict Advisor's job descriptions.

HMG should continue to train staff on UNSCR 1325, but should ensure that this training is outcome focused and covers the prevention pillar, including with practical examples of how it can be effectively

implemented. HMG should also maximise the opportunity of all conflict and security training to ensure WPS is included. GAPS believes that despite the admirable work to ensure that UNSCR 1325 is better understood within departments, there is a disparity between London and post/Country Office based work. GAPS would therefore recommend that HMG establishes stronger mechanisms to mainstream gender and WPS internally within departments.

1.4. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning:

GAPS welcomes the annual NAP Report to Parliament, and has been pleased that this is led at ministerial level. This is important for both leadership within Government, and accountability purposes. However, GAPS is concerned that monitoring and evaluation of the NAP has an insufficient foundation, as the NAP is not based on impact level indicators, rather at output level. It is important to ensure that indicators demonstrate impact so that HMG can see where its programming, systems and policies are effective and identified where changes are required. HMG has sound Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) expertise, particularly within DFID. GAPS encourages HMG to maximise these resources to ensure that HMG is achieving impact through the NAP and resources that are put into it.

GAPS encourages HMG to ensure strong MEL mechanisms are established for related strategies, such as the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS). This would ensure that not only the strategies themselves, but the MEL of those strategies are streamlined. GAPS recommends HMG reporting should be aligned to internationally recognised funding reporting mechanisms such as the OECD Gender Marker. GAPS would welcome the opportunity to work with HMG on the development of impact-level indicators that use such gender markers.

1.5. Civil Society and In-Country Consultation:

GAPS recommends increased, budgeted consultation with civil society in the UK and civil society and governments in-country. GAPS believes that in-country consultation with women and girls is essential to ensure the UK's NAP and WPS priorities reflect the needs of women and girls in conflict-affected and fragile environments. Consultation with governments is also important for NAP MEL and development. GAPS encourages HMG to undertake consultation with women's rights organisations in conflict-affected and fragile environments in the development, monitoring and evaluation of the NAP. HMG should commit to two stages of UK and in-country consultation during the life of the 2014 – 2017 NAP to ensure that it continues to be relevant as in-country contexts change and develop. GAPS would welcome commitments and a dedicated budget is outlined in the 2014 - 2017 NAP.

2. UNSCR 1325 Pillar Recommendations:

2.1. Prevention:

GAPS is encouraged by HMG's growing commitment to the VAWG elements of prevention. However, GAPS believes HMG should expand its work on prevention to cover all aspects of the term including gender-sensitive conflict prevention. As part of its work on VAWG, GAPS encourages HMG to coordinate prevention work under the NAP with wider government efforts to prevent conflict and VAWG, in particular streamlining such efforts with the BSOS and DFID's Strategic Vision for Women and Girls. For instance, GAPS encourages HMG to tackle the social norms and gender inequalities that cause VAWG, which provides an opportunity to streamline the 'Prevention' pillar of the NAP with the 'Preventing Violence' pillar of DFID's Strategic Vision. GAPS also recommends that HMG should take this forward by using DFID's Theory of Change on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls.

The UK also commits to developing "effective gender-sensitive early warning systems" as part of the prevention pillar of the NAP. GAPS believes this provides another valuable opportunity to coordinate such activity with that under the Early Warning pillar of the BSOS. The BSOS commits the UK to developing an Early Warning System for conflict and insecurity that informs the nature of the UK's response. As GAPS recommends all BSOS activity should be gender sensitive, the development of gender sensitive early warning mechanisms would prove valuable to the implementation of the NAP.

Furthermore, GAPS recommends that the UK's conflict analysis methodology – the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) – incorporates a gender analysis that seeks to understand the gender dynamics in a conflict context. As the JACS is jointly owned by the MOD, FCO and DFID, GAPS

believes thorough gender analyses that are informed by in-country consultation will help HMG to plan and implement NAP prevention activity that is strategic and contextually relevant.

GAPS is encouraged by DFID programmes on women's empowerment and believes this should be a key aim recognised across Government. GAPS believes a greater understanding of the importance of women's empowerment is essential to HMG achieving its WPS aims. HMG should include explicit reference to working with local women's rights organisations, who will ultimately bring prevention change in conflict-affected and fragile states environments. This should include plans to ensure women's civil society organisations have adequate capacity and responses through providing long-term, sustainable and flexible funding across all bilateral plans.

2.2. Protection:

GAPS welcomes HMG's increased focus on protection, particularly within PSVI, however HMG should expand its definition of protection. Protection should include more than protection from sexual violence. For example, GAPS notices that reference to domestic violence is limited in the NAP and other government VAWG priorities. GAPS recommends HMG addresses this in the 2014 – 2017 NAP. GAPS suggests HMG increases its support to community-led prevention approaches, including increasing its support for women's rights organisations. GAPS also suggests that HMG invests in increasing awareness raising on national laws.

GAPS recommends HMG recognises the need for consultation with women and girls and through such consultation allows them to define their own understanding of security and their own protection needs. This should be directly linked with the JACS methodology and the EU human rights defenders guidelines. It is vital that Security Sector Reform programming always includes extensive consultation with women, girls and women's rights organisations to ensure that programming reflects the needs of women and girls. GAPS also recommends that HMG undertakes mapping exercises in Bilateral Section NAP countries to ensure its plans are informed by existing programming and plans. This will ensure greater coordination with national policies and other donors and will also increase the impact of the NAP. This mapping should take a multi-sector approach and should be survivor-centered. It needs to be reflected in DFID's Theory of Change on Tackling VAWG and must be based on national need, priorities and programmes.

2.3. Participation:

GAPS believes that participation is key to the successful implementation of UNSCR 1325. GAPS encourages HMG to ensure that it maintains and increases its work on the participation pillar. GAPS therefore recommends HMG takes steps to increase the number of women in UK and international peace and security structures. GAPS encourages HMG to also continue to advocate for and include women in international conferences that focus on conflict-affected and fragile environments. The importance of women's representation at this level is key based on their input into discussions and to begin to breakdown social norms around women's participation. GAPS also encourages HMG to ensure that the informal role that women often play in peacebuilding can be transformed into a formal role in which they are able to participate in community level and national peacebuilding.

GAPS recommends HMG undertakes an assessment into best practice and evidence basis for women's participation in peace processes, and that the results are used to develop guidance and training for officials on how they can effectively implement activities under the participation pillar. GAPS believes HMG should ensure staff operating in conflict-affected and fragile environments should also have access to practical operational guidance tailored to their needs, particularly the needs of those designing, supporting and managing SSR and related programmes.

GAPS suggests HMG always undertakes gender analysis and consultation on the role women have and are playing in peace and reconstruction processes when intervening in conflict-affected and fragile environments. GAPS believes that a sound gender analysis will ensure that MOD, DFID and FCO interventions are supportive of women's role in peacebuilding and ensure that women's voices are at the centre of programming.

GAPS recommends government increases resources to women's rights organisations to build their capacity to participate in peacebuilding and to support women's rights organisations' peacebuilding

programming. Women's rights organisations are often at the heart of peacebuilding and it is important that their role is recognised and fostered through funding mechanisms which draw on the informal role that women play. GAPS also recommends HMG continues its support for quotas at national, regional and local levels for both political elected representatives and civil servants.

2.4. Relief and Recovery:

Gender sensitive relief and recovery systems have been identified as gaps both in the UK NAP and WPS work and globally. Gender perspectives must be central to relief and recovery to ensure women are protected and included in decision-making processes. This includes undertaking a gender analysis and assessing the underlying causes of conflict and VAWG, and to build upon women's agency and role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Despite much best practice guidance and dialogue, international intervention and programming remain predominantly gender blind in emergencies. Valerie Amos, Head of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, stated "In natural disasters, women tend to die in much larger numbers than men. During the Asian tsunami, for example, three times as many women lost their lives. In conflict, by contrast, men tend to die in larger numbers as a direct result of conflict – but women and girls die due to indirect causes, as they are left extremely vulnerable, have less access to health care, struggle to maintain households alone, and find themselves prey to sexual violence".

To date, the Relief and Recovery pillar of UNSCR 1325 has been the received the least attention in the NAP. Whilst the HMG is supportive of a number of international efforts to improve how humanitarian actors incorporate gender responses in emergencies, such as the IASC Gender Marker - a coding system attached to project proposals which measures whether those proposals take account of differences in needs - these efforts are not cross referenced to the WPS agenda.

The forthcoming DFID hosted Call to Action on VAWG in Emergencies in November 2013 offers an opportunity to better link these two agendas and identify mutually reinforcing recommendations such as improving the number of women that take part in humanitarian assessment needs and improving consultation with women in emergencies to ensure their views are heard and responses are more effectively designed, and improving the collection of gender disaggregated data in emergencies. It is important that recommendations from the Call to Action are incorporated into the 2014 – 2017 NAP. Beyond humanitarian response, donors should drive support for implementation of the UN Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security (2011 – 2020) which contains goals to prevent VAWG in conflict and post-conflict, protect the rights of women and girls, ensure their specific relief needs are met and their roles as agents in relief and recovery are reinforced. The 2014 – 2017 NAP should include these commitments.

3. Northern Ireland Recommendations:

GAPS and NIWEP partner in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP) commends HMG's Bilateral and Regional focus on Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nepal, particularly in the areas of participation in decision making and VAWG. However, GAPS and NIWEP recommend HMG implements UNSCR 1325 in Northern Ireland to ensure that the women of Northern Ireland are not excluded from the important benefits that inclusion in the UK NAP would afford them. GAPS and NIWEP encourage HMG to implement the recommendations of the Concluding Observations of CEDAW in 2008 and 2013.

NIWEP calls on the UK Government to fulfil its international obligations in Northern Ireland by planning negotiations which will lead to Northern Ireland being included into the UK NAP by:

- Participating in the Northern Ireland Assembly All Party Working Group on a UNSCR 1325 Inquiry; and
- Including political, civil servant and civil society representatives from Northern Ireland in the full evaluation of the NAP in 2013 and development of the 2014 – 2017 NAP.