

Getting it Right: Putting Women, Peace and Security at the Centre of the Integrated Review

The Integrated Review is an opportunity for the UK Government to reaffirm its commitments to gender equality, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We welcome the Minister of State, James Cleverly's remarks at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security and GAPS meeting in Parliament event on 13 July 2020, that "gender equality is an issue we seek to promote on the world stage...it is an integral part of security and development policy". The stated purpose of the integration of DFID and the FCO is to re-shape development goals so that they more closely align with UK trade and security interests; the Women, Peace and Security agenda is an integrated, holistic approach that brings together security, peacebuilding and development.

The new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has an opportunity to set an ambitious vision for the next five years. One that delivers on the promises of the [National Action Plan](#) on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) and the UK's commitments to international aid under the International Development Act 2002 and the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014. The history of cross-departmental work on Women, Peace and Security shows what is possible. In order to deliver meaningful progress on women and girls' rights, peace and security, the right combination of vision, policies, capabilities and funding is necessary.

We recommend that the UK Government fully considers the following four priorities throughout the process of the Integrated Review:

1. Integrated Review Policy – Women, Peace and Security Agenda:

As part of the Integrated Review, GAPS is calling on the UK Government to put women's and girls' human rights at the core of its new foreign, development and security strategy. The UK has positioned itself as a global leader on the rights of women and girls globally and especially in fragile and conflict affected contexts. The [Cross-Government NAP](#) and DFID's [Strategic Vision for Gender Equality](#) outline the Government's commitments to gender equality in peace, security, sustainable development and humanitarian policy. The Integrated Review and the FCDO should commit to these strategies and policies that lead the Government's work in this area. The UK Government should:

- a. **Prioritise Women, Peace and Security policy:** Building on the NAP, Women, Peace and Security should be a specific policy priority in the Integrated Review to ensure that it is integrated into all other areas of the Review and resulting policies, programmes and plans.
- b. **Embed gender-conflict analysis and a conflict prevention approach:** Acting on the recognition that all conflicts and crises have specific gender dimensions. All UK business plans, strategies, policies and programmes in fragile and conflict affected contexts should be based on gender-conflict analysis.
- c. **Develop and publish context-specific gender strategies:** Develop context-specific gender strategies for all countries where the UK has foreign affairs and development priorities to set the strategic direction and reinforce the importance of gender equality commitments across all contexts that go beyond defence and security. These should build

on the NAP, Strategic Vision for Gender Equality and existing commitments to gender equality in humanitarian response and be consulted on and made publicly available.

- d. **Promote women's full, equal and meaningful participation:** The UK, as one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council needs to 'lead by example', as said by James Cleverly MP by championing women's involvement in decision-making at all levels from community to global spaces, including increasing the number of high level women envoys, senior mediators, peacekeepers and only funding peace processes where a critical mass of women will meaningfully participate.
- e. **Meet its arms control commitments:** ensure the UK Government is in full compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty, particularly given the use of arms in Yemen, Syria and South Sudan.

2. Integrated Review – Capabilities:

The UK should ensure the capabilities section of the Integrated Review is an opportunity to build its own capabilities in order to deliver on its commitments to gender equality, peace and security and ensure departmental continuity and policy coherence. It is essential that expertise is maintained and expanded so that the new department is able to build upon good work in the future. The UK Government should:

- a) **Invest in expertise:** The UK must have the right expertise in the right places. This includes specific capabilities in the form of: a Gender Equality Unit/Team; Gender Advisors in London and at post; a gender focal point in all UK Missions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts; greater participation and representation of women in UN peacekeeping; and among high-level UN envoys and senior mediators.
- b) **Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning systems:** The UK Government should ensure it collects and uses evidence of what works in its gender, equality, peace and security policies and programmes. [What Works to end VAWG 1 and 2](#) are examples of large scale UK monitoring, evaluation and learning initiatives which should be built upon.
- c) **Build Capacity:** The Government needs to invest in capacity strengthening and training to ensure that all staff, especially those at senior, decision-making levels, have the skills and expertise needed to implement the Government's commitments to gender equality, peace and security. The Gender Conflict and Stability training led by the Stabilisation Unit should be mandatory for all FCDO work in fragile and conflict affected contexts. The British Peace Support Team should expand the delivery of its specialist human security and gender training.

3. Integrated Review Policy – Funding:

A crucial test of the Government's strategic commitment to women and girls' rights and gender equality will come not just from vision statements and policies but from funding decisions. In light of anticipated falls in ODA due to COVID-19, how the Government chooses to allocate development assistance is more important than ever. As well as extending the commitments in the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014 to the new FCDO, the UK Government should:

- a) **Increase the proportion of ODA spend that has gender equality as the main objective:** Commit that all ODA funded programmes and projects meet the OECD's Gender Equality Marker (GEM) 1 requirements to address in some part gender equality

and that 15% of all funding meets the GEM 2 requirements to have gender equality as the main objective.

- b) Prioritise conflict prevention:** Re-commit to prioritising conflict prevention by allocating the equivalent of 50% of ODA to fragile and conflict-affected contexts, including those facing protracted humanitarian crises and increasing targeted investments in peacebuilding and conflict prevention with diplomatic, non-ODA and ODA activities.
- c) Allocate specific, ring-fenced budget to women, peace and security:** Mandate the Comprehensive Spending Review to provide a budget for the UK's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
- d) Recognise women and girl human rights defenders and women's and girls' rights organisations as experts and partners:** Guarantee funding for gender equality and the rights of women and girls by increasing the provision of accessible, flexible long-term funding and other forms of support to and protection of women's and girls' rights organisations and women and girl human rights defenders.

4. Integrated Review – Consultation, Accountability and Transparency

GAPS and its members note with increasing concern the lack of public information on the recommencement of the Integrated Review, and the absence of formal channels for consultation and civil society engagement. Meaningful engagement (as defined by the [Beyond Consultations](#) tool), that is timely, inclusive, transparent and substantive, should be at the heart of both the Integrated Review process and the future foreign, security and development policies it shapes.

The UK Government should:

- a) Ensure the Integrated Review is a consultative process:** If the Integrated Review is to be effective, the UK Government must ensure a widely consultative process. The first step would be to finalise and publish a full Terms of Reference for the Review, detailing - at the very minimum - the consultation process that will be followed, who will be invited to give evidence, what format that will take and how this input and expertise will be utilised.
- b) Institutionalise meaningful consultation across policy and practice:** Building on the UK Government's commitment to consultations to date, one outcome of the Integrated Review process should be a clear commitment to meaningful consultation and engagement with civil society and women's rights organisations as experts and partners across foreign, security, and development policy and practice.
- c) Maintain high levels of transparency and accountability:** To ensure all UK aid is fully transparent and accountable to the British taxpayer and people the countries in which it is spent, the Integrated Review should include the 2015 commitment for all government departments spending aid to be ranked 'good' or 'very good' in the Aid Transparency Index, develop a cross-departmental House of Commons select committee for ODA spending, maintaining the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, and publishing the details of all UK aid programmes to DevTracker.

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