



GENDER ACTION FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

GAPS Response to Possible UK Aid cuts

GAPS is deeply concerned about the impact that any possible [cuts to foreign aid](#) on key areas such as conflict prevention, climate change and global health would have on women and girls. While we welcome the Foreign Secretary's commitment and prioritisation to restoring funding to women and girls, it is critical that this forms part of a broader, sustained approach to conflict prevention. This is essential in both reducing the devastating impacts experienced by women and girls in times of conflict - as demonstrated in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Myanmar - while mitigating the disproportionate effects that climate change and global health crises are already having on the safety and security of women and girls, helping to ensure that broader UK aid efforts tackling these issues can be successful in the long term.

GAPS and its members' extensive evidence-based research consistently highlights the effect that [climate change](#) and [global health](#) threats have on the lives of women and girls, particularly in terms of exacerbating conflict. The UK Government itself accurately recognised the harmful impact climate change, Covid-19 and other health burdens has had on women and girls in the Global South and the importance of addressing the "underlying political, social, economic and environmental drivers" of conflict in its [Integrated Review](#) of Security, Defence and Development, yet could potentially be taking steps to cut funding to programmes and projects tackling these issues directly, in particular conflict prevention, with devastating consequences for women and girls' lives.

In this critical global moment, as [humanitarian crises](#) around the world [intensify](#), as [record temperatures are reported](#) and as Covid-19 and other global health burdens continue to [deepen inequalities](#) in the Global South, the UK must uphold its commitments to the [women, peace and security agenda](#), recognising that **all conflicts and crises** have specific gender dimensions. While we acknowledge that it is important for the UK Government to respond to crises as they emerge, this should not come at the expense of longer-term development funding that tackles the root causes of these crises. As a global leader in promoting and facilitating the [participation of women and girls in peace and security processes around the world](#), the UK can help to secure positive dividends for global health and climate-related risks, and tackle the systems and structures that make women and girls more vulnerable to these shocks in the first place by **conflict prevention**. [Learning](#) also shows that carrying out gender-sensitive conflict analysis can help to strengthen programming and deliver on wider development objectives prioritised by the UK government, such as youth participation, skills provision, and economic development.

The UK Government must engage in consultations with civil society and women's rights organisations to ensure that women and girls are meaningfully included in any decisions that would have long-standing impacts on their lives. As part of the International Development Strategy due to be published in Spring 2022, we urge the UK government to provide an ambitious plan for involving women and girls as part of a coherent conflict prevention approach, reducing their vulnerability to both existing and newly emerging crises. We also stand alongside the 200 NGOs that have signed a [letter](#) calling for the Foreign Secretary to immediately stop any proposed cuts, and echo their call to restore the UK's 0.7% GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment.