



IN BRIEF



DEVELOPING A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN ETHIOPIA

Photo: UN Women/Christopher Herwig

This brief has been developed based on the document *Developing a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in Ethiopia - Background Document*. Please refer to the full document for more comprehensive information on the functions of a National Action Plan and the process of its development.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its nine subsequent resolutions create a global framework referred to as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The WPS agenda recognizes the need for full and equal participation of women in peace and security governance at all levels, the need to protect women and girls during and after armed conflicts and the need to apply a gender perspective in the planning, implementation and monitoring of all peace and security related processes. The WPS agenda is often presented through the following four pillars:

- **Participation** of women in peace processes and all public decision-making processes linked to making and building peace.
- **Prevention** of conflict through incorporating women's perspectives into early warning systems, public education, and prosecution of violators of women's rights.
- **Protection** women during and after conflict by community, national and international security personnel.
- **Relief and recovery** that engages women and addresses their needs and invests in economic and social security.

Member States of the UN have the primary responsibility to implement the WPS agenda. To guide the implementation, Member States are urged to develop National Action Plans (NAP). A NAP is a tool to translate commitments of the global WPS agenda to national and local action. It is a document that identifies activities, priorities and responsibilities in a given timeframe and allocates resources needed for implementation of the WPS agenda. A successful NAP on WPS (also called NAP on UNSCR 1325) needs to be linked to other existing plans and strategies, for example in the areas of peace, security, gender equality and development.

Key Steps in Developing a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

Launching the NAP development process requires the **commitment** from main actors and stakeholders. At this point, the **lead ministry** is also identified. While the lead ministry is the owner of the overall process, it is a normal practice to set up a **task force or steering committee** to oversee the NAP development process and **technical committee** to lead the process of development.

In order to define the different needs, gaps, opportunities and existing resources in regard to the four pillars of the WPS agenda, **studies and assessments** are conducted. Using this information goals and targets can be set, and it serves as a baseline against which progress can be monitored based on specific indicators.

Collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, from the government to civil society organizations and from the academia to development partners, are vital to ensure the relevance of the plan as well as ownership and commitment to its implementation. This collaboration can take many forms, such as representation in the technical committee, task force or other working groups, consultations and validation workshops during all phases of the process. In particular, the **meaningful participation of civil society** lays the ground for an effective and comprehensive plan that includes women’s voices. Civil society holds a critical role in holding the government accountable and providing knowledge on local questions, needs and expectations.

In addition to identifying needs and listing activities, an important aspect of NAP development is defining responsibilities and setting up structures for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The National Action Plan should include indicators so that progress can be tracked and to allow for accountability. Without sufficient budget allocations, implementation of the NAP on WPS is impossible.

Challenges in developing a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

Divergent views among key stakeholders on how the process should be conducted and lack of political will might hinder the process. Advocacy to create political will and a clear roadmap may reduce the delay these challenges can cause.

Lack of effective coordination and communication among all stakeholders can hinder the NAP development process and lead to gaps in its implementation if all relevant stakeholders were not sufficiently informed of it during the development phase. Broad representation in task forces as well as regular communication are key to avoid these challenges.

If **civil society is not properly and meaningfully included in the process**, the plan’s relevance and civil society’s will to advocate for it might be at risk. In addition, **men should be included** to avoid the NAP to be seen as only a “women’s issue” rather than a question of inclusive and sustainable

peace and security. Understanding the components and importance of the WPS agenda is important in order to create a comprehensive NAP. During the NAP development process, attention should be paid to **raising awareness and increasing capacity** of all stakeholders on the WPS agenda and issues relevant to it.

Finally, **lack of financial and other resources** might hinder, delay or even halt the NAP development process. Appropriate resource allocation should be secured at the start of the process with discussions with partners, where necessary.

BOX 1

Key characteristics of successful WPS NAP development:

- Political will and broad participation of several ministries or government agencies
- Participation of civil society in the process and inclusion of women’s voices
- Awareness-raising and capacity building activities
- Strong leadership and effective coordination by the lead ministry or agency
- Identifying context specific priorities and activities
- Systematic monitoring and evaluation frameworks with timebound indicators
- Sufficient resource allocation for implementation
- Flexibility to adapt to emerging situations including volatile security situations