

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

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



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**UN WOMEN ETHIOPIA COUNTRY
OFFICE**

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I. What is a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS NAP)?

For centuries, women have been excluded from the spheres of peace and security. Although representing half of the world's population, they are gravely underrepresented in national and international security forces; almost absent from peace negotiation tables; underserved by relief and recovery activities; underrepresented in legislative and other decision-making structures; and particularly vulnerable to sexual violence in conflict situations. In addition, their multiple roles in peace and security as mediators, combatants and supporters, have not been sufficiently recognized in global and national decision making.¹ The Women, Peace and Security agenda aims to tackle this issue.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions² 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. It is an important element of a comprehensive approach to prevent and resolve conflict. It 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** of women of 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 United Nations are the key actors in

implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. They also have the primary responsibility to ensure that national policies, laws and budget processes are in line with their global commitments and obligations on Women, Peace and Security. In line with this, the UN Security Council has called³ for the Member States to create strategies and national action plans to translate their commitments in to action. National Action Plans (NAP, also referred to as WPS NAP or NAP 1325) are therefore tools that ought to guide the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

A NAP is a tool to translate commitments of the global WPS agenda to local and national action. It includes current and future activities of the Government in a given timeframe. It is a document that identifies priorities and responsibilities and allocates resources needed for implementation of WPS.

It is desirable that a NAP covers all of the four pillars and reflects the holistic intention of the WPS agenda, taking into account the national and local contexts in a given country. A NAP should be produced together with different government ministries, civil society actors and other relevant actors, such as the academia, media and partner countries, so that it can capture the different needs, priorities and perspectives of different groups and sectors. A successful NAP needs to be linked to other existing plans and strategies, for example in the areas of peace, security, gender equality and development. It can include both national and foreign policy perspectives and priorities. The development of a WPS NAP provides improved monitoring and evaluation and enhanced accountability in the area of women, peace and security as the actions of different actors are compiled in a single framework, the implementation of which can be tracked.

Currently, 103 member States have adopted a WPS NAP, out of which 30 are African countries. NAPs have been adopted in conflict (e.g., in South Sudan and Yemen) and post-conflict situations (e.g., in Liberia and Nepal) as well as in countries that have not experienced violent conflict for a long time (e.g., Jordan and Namibia). In addition to national ones, there are regional action plans and frameworks, such as the Continental Results Framework of the African Union,

¹ See, e.g.: UN Women. *Facts and figures: Women, peace, and security* (webpage): <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures>; and Council on Foreign Relations. *Women's Participation in Peace Processes* (webpage): <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/>.

² United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1820 (2008); 1888 (2008); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2010); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015); 2467 (2019); and 2493 (2019).

³ Presidential Statements S/PRST/2002/32; S/PRST/2004/40; and S/PRST/2005/52.

which serves the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the various instruments and commitments on WPS in Africa by the African Union (AU) Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

II. Process of developing a WPS NAP

A WPS NAP can have many concurrent functions; it can be a tool to address the status of women in the country, to domesticate international law relating to women's participation and peace and security, to bring together existing commitments towards WPS into a single framework, to enhance the country's capacity to prevent conflict and to set priorities for foreign policy. The process of developing a WPS NAP is different in every country, but at its core it means that a government and other stakeholders identify needs and priorities, plan actions to address those needs and make a commitment to act on them. This chapter addresses the main steps of this process.

The initial step to start the discussion on developing a WPS NAP can come from many sources. For example, in **South Sudan**, after the country's independence, the Government saw the need to improve the status of women and girls during conflicts. Hence, the government initiated the development of the WPS NAP to complement other national policies and plans, such as the National Gender Policy.⁴ In **Namibia**, the NAP was produced to accelerate the work that had already been done to include women in peace and security processes and to bring them all under one framework.⁵ A different example comes from **Cameroon**, where the civil society's advocacy was instrumental in creating the commitment to develop a WPS NAP.⁶

The development of a NAP can be a process that familiarizes different actors, e.g., government and civil society organizations with the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It increases knowledge on WPS a, thus creating networks and

trust between, for example, the government and civil society. The process in itself can also act as an instrument of conflict resolution or reconciliation as different groups and actors come together to share experiences. Developing a NAP on Women, Peace and Security should therefore be seen as a process of which the Plan is not the only outcome. This was the case in **South Africa**, where the process took very long, but was at the end seen in a positive light as the time allowed different actors to build consensus and common understanding around the topic.⁷

Key characteristics of a successful WPS NAP development process include:^{8,9}

- Political will and broad participation of several ministries or government agencies
- Participation of civil society in the process; 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

Defining lead ministries and setting up task forces

Based on global experiences, a NAP development process has better outcomes when several ministries and government agencies take part as this allows for more perspectives to be included and the plan to have a comprehensive approach to issues relating to women, peace, and security.

⁴ Republic of South Sudan (2015) *South Sudan National Action Plan 2015-2020 on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Related Resolutions*: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SS-NAP-1325.pdf>

⁵ Republic of Namibia (2019) *Namibia National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Namibia-NAP-2019-2024.pdf>

⁶ Women's International League of Peace and Freedom. *WILPF welcomes the adoption of Cameroon's UNSCR 1325 NAP* (webpage): <http://www.peacewomen.org/node/101027>

⁷ Republic of South Africa (2020) *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security – 2020 to 2025 South Africa*:

<http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/sa-national-action-plan-women-peace-security-2020-2025.pdf>

⁸ UN Women (2015) *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: Global Study on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, Chapter 10: <https://wps.unwomen.org/resources/>

⁹ UN Women (2012) *Women and Peace and Security: Guidelines for National Implementation*: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2012/10/wps-sourcebook-02b-planonwomenpeacesecurity-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1154>

In addition, the choice of lead government ministry or agency is an important step. In many countries, the ministry responsible for women and gender affairs has acted as the lead but there are also other alternative approaches. For example, having a line ministry, such as the Ministry of Defense or Foreign Affairs, acting as the lead and coordinator can support the mainstreaming of the plan in all relevant sectors as it sends a signal of the Plan's centrality to issues of peace and security. In the case of **Liberia**¹⁰, on the other hand, the constant and vocal support for the creation of a NAP of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf created political will in the country.

In **Mozambique**, the Gender, Children and Social Welfare Ministry acted as the lead agency. In **Cameroon**, the lead agency and initiator of the process was the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and in **the Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children had the same role.

In addition to appointing a lead ministry or agency, many countries have established a working group, steering committee, or task force to coordinate and lead the work between different actors taking part in the development of a NAP. Represented in these task forces have been, depending on the country and context, different ministries, the parliament, NGOs and other civil society organizations, security sector agencies, UN agencies as well as partner and donor countries. The role of these task forces is to oversee the NAP development process, bring together voices from different stakeholders and to ensure that the WPS NAP is in line with other global and national plans, policies, and commitments.

In **Sierra Leone**, the Government-Civil Society Task Force comprised of 35 government, civil society, and local organizations. It was chaired by The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs. In **Namibia**, a National Task Team, consisting of the Ministry of Defense as the chair, Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation, and UN technical advisors, was responsible for the development of the NAP.

In the NAP adoption process, the use of experts and technical advisors to facilitate the data collection and drafting process as well as the work of the task force or steering committee is common. For example, in **Namibia**, an expert was appointed to facilitate and guide the process and a technical advisor from the UN Women South Africa Multi

Country Office (SAMCO) provided support for the process. In **South Sudan**, two consultants (national and international) facilitated the development and compilation of the Plan.

Conducting studies and assessments to identify needs

A good practice to support the development process of the NAP on Women, Peace and Security is to conduct a gender assessment or baseline study. In countries such as **Burundi**, **the Democratic Republic of the Congo**, **South Sudan** and **Rwanda**, among others, the formulation of NAPs has been preceded by baseline studies using information gathered at the community level. In **Cameroon**, a civil society organization (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Cameroon) conducted a national baseline study under the supervision the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and the technical supervision of UN Women. Such studies have been important tools to map priorities and needs as they can help to identify the most relevant priorities in the national or local context. Using this information goals and targets can also be set, and it serves as a baseline against which progress can be monitored based on specific indicators. Examples of topics included are the number of women in national security forces, the prevalence of gender-based violence, existing conflict early-warning systems, security threats faced by women and men in different areas of the country and the number of women participating in local and national peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

Institutional audits can map the current landscape, such as laws and norms relating to the Women, Peace and Security agenda and existing financial and human resources. Studies and assessments can also be used to map different actors already working in the area of women, peace and security in the country, and the priorities of their work, and to gain insights on the existing understanding of the WPS agenda among them.

Baseline studies and assessments should seek to identify the status and existing needs in all four areas (pillars) of the WPS agenda. It is essential to approach the issues of peace and conflict as phenomena that have their roots in the

¹⁰ Republic of Liberia (2009) *The Liberia National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Resolution 1325*:

http://peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/liberia_nationalactionplanmarch2009.pdf

wider society and exist also outside conflict-zones.¹¹

Consultations with stakeholders and ensuring the participation of civil society

A comprehensive and functional action plan requires a wide and sometimes lengthy consultative process to ensure representation, participation, and ownership of the plan among government institutions, civil society and other stakeholders, such as UN agencies, academia and partner countries. Higher levels of participation in the development of the plan can also lead to higher levels of ownership and commitment to its implementation.

While the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family took the lead in developing the National Action Plan in **Cameroon**, other entities were involved in the process. These included members of the government and parliamentarians, representatives of decentralized territorial communities, universities, civil society organizations, and international organizations, among others. In **Nepal**, participants in regional consultations spanned from UN entities to children affected by conflict and from national NGOs to local women's groups. Stakeholder consultations can either be government or CSO-led. Their goal is to provide information, hold discussions and gather input from a broad base of people in an inclusive manner. Consultations should be arranged in such a manner and time that the discussions and opinions of participants can meaningfully direct the development of the NAP.¹² In addition to consultations intended to gather input and to steer the drafting process, validation workshops are often used to present the final draft to stakeholders before its official approval.

Civil society holds a critical role in holding governments accountable, e.g., by monitoring and following up on implementation. The participation of civil society also lays the ground for a more effective and comprehensive plan as civil society actors hold knowledge and ideas that can complement those of the government. For example, formal and

informal women's groups can be influential in involving women and girls in hard-to-reach areas or displaced populations, resulting in a plan that is more responsive to their needs. It is therefore essential to include them in all steps of the process of developing a National Action Plan.

Civil society organizations and women's networks can be involved in the development of a WPS NAP in different ways. To ensure best participation, CSOs should be involved from the beginning of the process. For example, in the **Philippines**, CSOs were members of the Preparatory Committee which outlined the process of WPS NAP development from the very beginning.¹³ In many countries, as presented above, civil society organizations are members of national task forces that coordinate the process. In **Sierra Leone**, the advocacy of civil society was very central to the process of developing a WAP NAP as it was initiated by civil society actors. Additionally, the broad representation of different actors in the Government-Civil Society Task Force has facilitated a strong local interest to adapt the action plan to different contexts in the country.¹⁴

Taking part in consultations and participating in task forces are formal ways to include CSOs in the development of a WPS NAP. CSOs can also give their input in informal ways, such as through advocacy campaigns and producing reports. For example, **Cameroonian** and **Ugandan** women's groups arranged awareness raising activities to increase knowledge on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and to advocate for NAP development.

CSOs often create coalitions to maximize the impact on the WPS NAP development process, as in the case of the **Philippines**, **Liberia** and **Ireland**, where the civil society formed national networks. This supports the participation of diverse civil society groups in the process and helps bridge the

¹¹ UN Women (2012) *Women and Peace and Security: Guidelines for National Implementation*: <https://www.un-women.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2012/10/wpssourcebook-02b-planonwomenpeaceandsecurity-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1154>

¹² Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2014) *Leveraging UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans for Local Change. Civil Society Opportunities in the MENA Region*: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Leveraging-UNSCR-1325-National-Action-Plans-for-Local-Change.pdf>

¹³ Steinberg et al. (2015) *Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Israel. Implementing and Monitoring National Action Plans: Strategies of Women's Organizations*: https://il.boell.org/sites/default/files/nap-strategies_of_womens_organizations.pdf

¹⁴ Nairobi Symposium: Maximizing Impact of Women, Peace, and Security Policies in Africa was organized by the Institute for Inclusive Security, University of Nairobi and Cordaid in July 2014. Conference report: http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Nairobi_Symposium_Conf_Report.pdf

gap between policy and practice.^{15,16} In addition to WPS NAP development, CSOs can be assigned official roles in implementing the WPS NAP. In **Nepal** and **Sierra Leone**, CSOs have designated responsibilities for local implementation.¹⁷ In some countries, like the **Netherlands**, CSOs have also been co-signatories of the WPS NAP.¹⁸

Setting up structures for implementation, monitoring and evaluation

In addition to identifying needs and listing activities, an important aspect of NAP development is defining responsibilities of respective organs for implementation, as well as setting a clear structure for monitoring and evaluation. The National Action Plan should include indicators so that progress can be tracked and to allow for accountability. In case specific and realistic results and indicators have not been agreed on during NAP development, or the division of responsibilities concerning its implementation is unclear, the implementation phase may become less than satisfactory or ineffective in addressing the issues the NAP has been set to address.¹⁹ The UN has put together a list of indicators²⁰ that can be applied to NAPs based on national context.

In the **DRC**²¹, the second-generation NAP's implementation was designed to a unique three-tiered Steering Committee structure: national, provincial and local Steering Committees were each given responsibility for a different aspect of implementing the NAP. The national Steering Committee is responsible for the policy and design of the national process. It includes representatives of different ministries, the Parliament, CSOs, religious and traditional authorities, national security sector actors and development partners. The

provincial and local Steering Committees are responsible for harmonizing the NAP with their local contexts, implementation and evaluation.

The framework of the implementation of the NAP in **Cameroon**²² comprises of three organs: the piloting and orientation committee; the national technical coordination of 1325; the regional, divisional and sub-divisional units. The piloting and orientation committee is placed under the authority of the Secretary-General of the Presidency of the Republic and assisted by the Secretary-General of the Prime Minister's office. It is made up of 20 members, including the Presidency of the Republic, Prime Minister's Office, Senate, National Assembly, relevant ministries, security sector actors, Civil Society organization, representatives of the UN and the private sector. It defines general guidelines for implementation of the NAP and monitors its implementation. The National Technical Coordination, presided over by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family, is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and producing reports. Regional, divisional and sub-divisional units are placed under the authority of regional governors, senior divisional officers and divisional officers respectively and they monitor the implementation in their areas of competence and provide information to the national level.

In **Mozambique**, a Monitoring and Evaluation Committee was set up. The Committee includes both governmental and non-governmental actors and reports from both

¹⁵ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2014) *Leveraging UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans for Local Change. Civil Society Opportunities in the MENA Region*: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Leveraging-UNSCR-1325-National-Action-Plans-for-Local-Change.pdf>

¹⁶ Steinberg et al. (2015) *Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Israel. Implementing and Monitoring National Action Plans: Strategies of Women's Organizations*: https://il.boell.org/sites/default/files/nap-strategies_of_womens_organizations.pdf

¹⁷ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2014) *Leveraging UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans for Local Change. Civil Society Opportunities in the MENA Region*: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Leveraging-UNSCR-1325-National-Action-Plans-for-Local-Change.pdf>

¹⁸ UN Women (2012) *Women and Peace and Security: Guidelines for National Implementation*: <https://www.un-women.org/>

</media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2012/10/wpssourcebook-02b-planonwomenpeacesecurity-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1154>

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Report of the Secretary General S/2010/498, page 33: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20S%202010%20498.pdf>

²¹ The Democratic Republic of the Congo: *National Action Plan* (Unofficial translation, funded by ARC DP160100212 [CI Shepherd]): <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DRC-NAP-2019.pdf>

²² Republic of Cameroon (2017) *National Action Plan for the 1325 Resolution and Companion Resolutions of the United Nations Security Council on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2020)*: <http://pwnap1.tetra.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Cameroon-2018-English.pdf>

government and civil society perspectives.²³ In **Sierra Leone**²⁴, The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs is responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the plan. The process happens on three levels: National, Regional and District Steering Committees collect and analyze data on the implementation of the Plan. Regional and District Steering Committees submit data to the National Steering Committee, which informs the government, UN bodies and donors. In many countries, to ensure greater accountability, the civil society has been given a formal role in monitoring the implementation of the plan for example by including representatives of the civil society in national and local level steering committees and task forces, as in the cases of **Sierra Leone** and **Liberia**.

Ensuring sufficient resource allocation

For a NAP to be successful and become a transformative action plan, in addition to political will, it needs financial support. A NAP should include a budget with sufficient resources for the implementation of the activities as well as for coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and this should be considered from the beginning of the NAP development process. The lack of resources for implementation is an ongoing challenge in many countries, and currently only 36% of WPS NAPs worldwide include an allocated budget.²⁵ This issue does not only cause a big hindrance to the Plan's implementation but can also create cynicism and erode trust among stakeholders as a plan that was developed and committed to together doesn't get implemented.

NAP activities should be integrated into the Government budgeting process and, if suitable, also external funding sources should be considered. For example, in **Namibia**, activities of the NAP were not created as additions to budget frameworks but included in the Government budget. However, during the writing of the NAP it was recognized that government resources were not sufficient to cover all

activities of the Plan and therefore financial support from development partners and the private sector to bridge the resource gap were needed.²⁶ A NAP Costing and Budgeting Workshop can be a useful tool to create a realistic budget for the WPS NAP.²⁷

Examples of WPS NAP process outline

In **Namibia**²⁸, a formal commitment to develop a WPS NAP was made in April 2016. A National Task Team, chaired by the Ministry of Defense, was responsible for developing the NAP. Consultations were held with civil society and other stakeholders, such as women's organizations, traditional authorities, security sector institutions and international partners. Consultations spanned over the course of two years. A desk review was conducted on the current situation and needs during the process. The National Task Team held multiple meetings during the process and a final validation meeting for stakeholders was held in July 2018. The NAP was adopted by the Cabinet in February 2019.

In **South Sudan** the process was initiated by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MGCSW) in 2011. The MGCSW conducted two baseline studies. A National Steering Committee comprised of government ministries, commissions, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations was formed, and a consultative workshop was arranged for the Committee in 2013 to ensure a shared understanding of the WPS agenda and the process of developing a WPS NAP. The development and compilation of the plan were assigned to two consultants with advice from the Steering Committee's Technical Working Group.

A national consultative workshop was arranged for representatives of government ministries, United Nations agencies, development partners and civil society organizations to gather input and create awareness and networks among different actors. In addition, consultations were held in all ten states during the year 2013, facilitated by the

²³ Republic of Mozambique (2018) *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2022)*: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Mozambique-NAP-2018-2022.pdf>

²⁴ Republic of Sierra Leone (2010) *The Sierra Leone Action Plan for the Full Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008)*: http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/sierra_leone_nap.pdf

²⁵ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. *1325 National Action Plans (NAPs)* (webpage): <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/>

²⁶ Republic of Namibia (2019) *Namibia National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Namibia-NAP-2019-2024.pdf>

²⁷ Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2017) *No Money, No NAP. Manual for Costing and Budgeting National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325*: https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/GNWPCostingBudgetingManual_Eng_4web.pdf

²⁸ Republic of Namibia (2019) *Namibia National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Namibia-NAP-2019-2024.pdf>

consultants and members of the Steering Committee. These consultations had representatives from ministries, civil society organizations, community members, women's groups and traditional and religious leaders. The consultations were arranged to gather input from different actors in different levels as well as to create awareness on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The final NAP was adopted in 2015.

III. Implementing the WPS agenda without a National Action Plan

As an alternative to producing a stand-alone National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, some countries have opted for integrating the WPS agenda into other national or local strategies, plans and policies. **Colombia** is an example of a country that has not adopted a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security but has, nevertheless, applied a gender perspective to the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and FARC-EP which includes more than 100 provisions on gender issues. Women's organizations have also been successful in lobbying for legislation that considers the rights of victims of conflict.²⁹ Additionally, women's organizations and movements have localized the agenda by creating awareness and developing municipal action plans together with local governance.³⁰

Israel has also implemented the WPS agenda without adopting a National Action Plan. It has done so through national legislation and by including matters of the WPS agenda in other national plans and policies, as well as by advocating for the cause in the international arena. The Israeli civil society, however, still advocates for the adoption of a WPS NAP to ensure better implementation of the agenda. Civil society organizations have in fact drafted a

NAP that has not been adopted by the Government, although the Government has announced the establishment of a team to work on the creation of a NAP.³¹ In **Pakistan**, due to differing views on the scope of a WPS NAP inside the Government, the Ministry of Women's Development decided to produce a Consolidated Action Plan on Women's Empowerment instead. Matters relating to the Women, Peace and Security agenda would be incorporated into this broader plan that links together all commitments in the area of women's empowerment.

Integrating WPS matters into existing plans and strategies instead of producing a stand-alone NAP may require fewer resources and help ensure that all major plans and strategies regarding peace, security and development incorporate a gender perspective. It can also help to avoid duplication of work and ensure policy coherence. However, the disadvantage of this approach is that issues concerning the WPS agenda might become "add-ons" to existing plans without real commitment or ownership. A stand-alone NAP makes it easier to monitor and evaluate progress in the area of WPS as a whole and collect data regarding it. Additionally, if an alternative approach is chosen and WPS issues are only integrated into existing plans, they might be overdriven by other activities within the plan, including in terms of resource allocation.³² This has been the case in **Colombia**, where the implementation of gender provisions of the Peace Agreement has been slower than the implementation of the Agreement in general.³³

IV. Challenges in NAP development and ways out

Divergent views on how the process should be conducted may delay or challenge the process of developing a NAP on Women, Peace and Security. In **South Africa**, the process

²⁹ Steinberg et al. (2015) Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Israel. Implementing and Monitoring National Action Plans: Strategies of Women's Organizations: <https://il.boell.org/sites/default/files/nap-strategies-of-womens-organizations.pdf>

³⁰ Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2013) *Implementing Locally, Inspiring Globally: Localizing UNSCR 1325 in Colombia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, and Uganda*: <https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/GNWP-Implementing-Locally-Inspiring-Globally-Localizing-UNSCR-1325-in-Colombia-Nepal-the-Philippines-Sierra-Leone-and-Uganda-2013.pdf>

³¹ Degirmencioglu & Kahana-Dagan (2020) *UNSCR 1325: Implementation in Turkey and Israel. Can civil society*

cooperation improve the implementation process?: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16663.pdf>

³² UN Women (2012) *Women and Peace and Security: Guidelines for National Implementation*: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2012/10/wpssourcebook-02b-planonwomenpeacesecurity-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1154>

³³ Special Report of the Kroc Institute and the International Accompaniment Component, UN Women, Women's International Democratic Federation, and Sweden, on the Monitoring of the Gender Perspective in the Implementation of the Colombian Final Peace Accord (2018) https://kroc.nd.edu/assets/297624/181113_gender_report_final.pdf

came to a halt for many years after a first workshop discussion was held. However, after continuing discussions about the need for a NAP, the choice of lead agency and the focus of the NAP, and after advocacy work done by the civil society, there was finally enough political will from different sectors of the Government and the process began, with the participation of different actors and stakeholders. In **Pakistan**, the Ministry of Women's Development saw that due to differing views on the development of a WPS NAP within the government, it was better to produce a more comprehensive action plan on women that would include WPS matters, among others.

The **lack of political will** to address issues of women's empowerment and gender equality in general and seeing the WPS agenda as solely a "women's issue" rather than a matter of peace and conflict can lead to undermining the need to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda.³⁴ Therefore, it is important to advocate for the need to increase women's participation in the society in general, and in peace and security related matter in particular.

The **selection of a lead agency or responsible ministry** can also affect the political momentum for a NAP. This was recognized by participants of the Nairobi Symposium³⁵, representing 15 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, who stated that when NAPs are housed under ministries of gender or women's affairs, it sometimes sends a signal that undermines the relevance of the Plan to national security strategies as a whole. Thus, having other ministries, such as those of foreign affairs or defense, as the housing agencies was seen as a way to increase political will to develop and implement the NAP.

Coordination and communication with all participating actors during the planning process, to create a comprehensive and realistic plan, can be a major challenge. In **Liberia**, implementing ministries had not been informed about their responsibilities well enough before the implementation phase, which led to the NAP being de-prioritized by some of

them.³⁶ Ensuring broad participation in task forces or committees during the NAP development process is important to ensure information flows to all stakeholders. Burundi has tackled the issue of communication and knowledge sharing also during the implementation phase by organizing annual Open Days for all implementing parties of the NAP where actors share information on priorities and concerns.³⁷

In many countries, **civil society has not been sufficiently included** in the development of the NAP. The involvement of CSOs can also be tokenistic and without real possibility to have an impact on the outcome of the process.³⁸ Civil society should be provided a meaningful way to participate in the process from the beginning and their expertise on national and local questions should be given adequate value. Good practices to avoid this drawback are presented in section 2.3. CSOs can also proactively contribute to avoid this issue by identifying government representatives whom they regularly contact and advocate for the need for and importance of CSO involvement.³⁹

National and local authorities and civil society organizations might have a very **limited understanding of the Women, Peace and Security agenda** and the issues central to it, as was found to be the case in **Thailand**. Understanding the relevance of the WPS agenda not only in countries in active conflict but also in peaceful countries and in post-conflict situations is important to harness the full potential of the agenda.⁴⁰ It is therefore important to ensure that accessible materials and information are widely shared throughout the process and that awareness raising and capacity building activities are conducted as part of the NAP development process and during its implementation. In the **Solomon Islands**, the Women, Peace and Security Summit, a national event organized to gather input for the WPS NAP, included multiple sessions on topics relevant to the WPS agenda to ensure participant's sufficient knowledge. In many countries such as **Guatemala**, UN Women has supported awareness raising and capacity building activities as part of their

³⁴ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2020) *UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years: Perspectives from Feminist Peace Activists and Civil Society*: https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WILPF_UNSCR-1325-at-20-Years_Web.pdf

³⁵ Nairobi Symposium: Maximizing Impact of Women, Peace, and Security Policies in Africa was organized by the Institute for Inclusive Security, University of Nairobi and Cordaid in July 2014. Conference report: http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Nairobi_Symposium_Conf_Report.pdf.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Steinberg et al. (2015) *Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Israel. Implementing and Monitoring National Action Plans: Strategies of Women's Organizations*: https://il.boell.org/sites/default/files/nap_strategies_of_womens_organizations.pdf

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2020) *UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years: Perspectives from Feminist Peace Activists and Civil Society*: https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WILPF_UNSCR-1325-at-20-Years_Web.pdf

support to NAP development processes. Translating materials into local languages has also been identified as a good way to both support understanding on the WPS agenda and to enhance NAP implementation.⁴¹

The **lack of financial and other resources** can hinder the progress of NAP development. Planned activities might have to be cancelled or the progress can come to a complete halt. This issue is not only relevant to the government, but also to grassroots organizations and networks that may have very limited financial resources or capacity to apply and secure funding, but whose participation in the process would bring valuable insights.⁴²

Another challenge identified is the **inclusion of local level questions and concerns** in National Action Plans. This could be avoided by the inclusion of local level civil society representatives in the process and support to them and by conducting a baseline study that takes into account local questions. A good practice for tackling this issue comes from the **Solomon Islands**, where more than 100 women from around the country participated in the Women, Peace and Security Summit where participants were trained on the WPS agenda, priorities and activities for the draft NAP were identified and the need for a NAP was agreed on. A follow-up workshop was organized for six provinces to share information about the NAP and the work regarding WPS done in the provinces. This resulted in drafting provincial work plans for the six provinces with local questions. Similarly, 11 States in **Nigeria** have localized the WPS agenda with a State Action Plan and 5 Local Government Areas have published their Local Action Plans after the adoption of the National Action Plan.⁴³

Finally, a challenge in the planning and implementation of a NAP can be posed by **low levels of participation of men**. In **Thailand**, it was observed that men's participation in activities related to gender equality was very low and should be considered in the planning phase. Similarly, in **Uganda**, the low numbers of men advocating for women's empowerment and participation was recognized as a challenge

⁴¹ Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2013) *Implementing Locally, Inspiring Globally: Localizing UNSCR 1325 in Colombia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, and Uganda*: <https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/GNWP-Implementing-Locally-Inspiring-Globally-Localizing-UNSCR-1325-in-Colombia-Nepal-the-Philippines-Sierra-Leone-and-Uganda-2013.pdf>

⁴² Cordaid and Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2014) *Financing for the Implementation of National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution 1325*: <https://gnwp.org/financing-naps/>

during the implementation phase. To tackle this issue, trainings were conducted for men to become champions of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

In addition to the challenges related to the process of developing a WPS NAP, there are also a number of **challenges that may occur during the implementation phase** and should therefore be considered early on in the process. The main challenges have been discussed earlier in this paper: allocating sufficient resources for NAP implementation; setting realistic indicators for activities and establishing frameworks for monitoring and evaluation; and participation of different stakeholders, including the civil society. Moreover, ensuring that the Plan is implemented properly, instead of being forgotten about after adoption, is an ongoing challenge in many countries. This can be addressed by creating the NAP as an evolving document that will be revisited and updated regularly. It is also important to integrate and link the NAP with existing strategies and policies in order to ensure that its implementation is given sufficient attention and resources.⁴⁴ A clear division of responsibilities for implementation activities ensures that the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security can be implemented successfully.

V. The way forward in Ethiopia

In April 2019, the Government of Ethiopia made a commitment to develop a WPS NAP by August 2020. Since then, a technical committee has been set up and the preparations for NAP development have started.⁴⁵

All challenges presented earlier in this paper should be considered in the planning of the NAP development process in Ethiopia. The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs has the mandate to lead the process. All other relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of National Planning and the Ministry of Justice, should take part in developing a WPS NAP. Considering Ethiopia's federal

⁴³ International Alert & UN Women Nigeria. *Women, Peace and Security in Nigeria* (webpage): <https://wpsnigeria.net/>

⁴⁴ UN Women (2012) *Women and Peace and Security: Guidelines for National Implementation*: <https://www.un-women.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2012/10/wpssourcebook-02b-planonwomenpeacesecurity-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1154>

⁴⁵ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2020) *Call to Action on 2019-2020 commitments* (website): <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/103695>.

system, the representation and participation of all regional states in the process will be essential to ensure that the WPS NAP is relevant in all parts of the country. The responsibilities of different actors in the implementation of the NAP, including budgetary commitments, must be clearly defined.

The participation of CSOs as well as other stakeholders must be considered a priority in the process of developing a WPS NAP in Ethiopia. UN Women Ethiopia Country Office (ECO) has recently conducted an assessment of different actors working on WPS in the country. The assessment reveals that there are many CSOs, both local and international, that

are interested in working on WPS and should be included in the NAP development. However, capacity building is needed among all actors to ensure a high-quality NAP. ECO supports a CSO to organize awareness raising and capacity building activities for all relevant stakeholders and to organize activities for promoting and advocating for the WPS agenda.

In addition to UN Women, other UN organizations and the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security are important stakeholders that can support to streamline the NAP with international frameworks and commitments.

READING LIST

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