

**OSCE STUDY ON NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD -p.5

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS -p.8

INTRODUCTION -p.13

METHODOLOGY -p.15

1. THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA -p.17

1.1 The slow progress of implementation -p.21

2. WHY NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325 -p.24

2.1 National Action Plans as tools for increased policy coherence and effectiveness -p.27

2.2 National Action Plans as tools for greater military operational effectiveness -p.30

3. OSCE AND UNSCR 1325 -p.33

4. NATIONAL ACTION PLANS OF OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES: ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES -p.38

4.1 General lessons on content and technical aspects of the National Action Plans -p.39

4.2 Analysis of the content of the four pillars -p.49

4.2.1 Participation -p.49

4.2.2 Prevention -p.53

4.2.3 Protection -p.60

4.2.4 Relief and Recovery -p.68

5. TOOLS FOR ACTION -p.74

REFERENCES -p.81

FOREWORD

Ensuring sustainable peace and economic prosperity is fundamental to the long-term security of the 57 OSCE participating States. The OSCE approach to security aims at preventing and settling conflicts in a comprehensive way. This includes the full integration of women in all stages of the conflict cycle. For the OSCE and its 57 participating States, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and the Women, Peace and Security agenda form part of its commitments and constitute a tool to achieve substantive equality between men and women at all times in societies not affected by conflict, before, during and after conflict and to ensure that women's diverse experiences are fully taken into account in all peacemaking, peace-building, and reconstruction processes.

To date, many publications have focused on the importance of enhancing women's active role in all stages of the conflict cycle, but very little advice on concrete technical steps which are needed to effectively implement UNSCR 1325 on a national level has been offered. Often the emphasis is on trying to achieve gender balance in a certain activity or organization. Therefore gender mainstreaming is still a process that needs to be explained to many actors.

This study has been launched in order to address the issues surrounding the implementation of these commitments. It contains an analysis of the 27 National Action Plans on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the OSCE region. The aim of the study is to provide tangible tools for action for the revision or development of such plans. It highlights common challenges and shares good practices from the OSCE region. The examples presented in the document aspire also to offer entry points for closer co-operation with civil society on implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, e.g. through cross-learning exercises with practitioners. It further draws

attention to both domestic and international elements of National Action Plans and underlines the relevance of creating and maintaining national capacity on UNSCR 1325 at home and abroad.

Moreover, this study includes a short introduction to the seven resolutions that make up the Women, Peace and Security agenda, which helps the reader to understand why ensuring higher female participation as well as gender mainstreaming is crucial in everyday political and military operations as well as in conflict or post-conflict situations.

The study further presents a short overview over OSCE's activities in the field of Women, Peace and Security, in particular in the development of National Action Plans. As such, this document aims at providing guidance to OSCE participating States that are in the process of developing or renewing their National Action Plans. It takes into account all key actors, including civil society partners, whose contributions to the creation and implementation of these plans tend to be overlooked or underestimated.

The OSCE has been particularly successful in assisting host countries of OSCE Field Operations, such as the OSCE Mission to Serbia, or the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, to co-ordinate with all relevant national stakeholders and create recommendations for a first draft of a UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans. Thus, this publication also serves as background material for future OSCE co-ordination meetings where the revision or drafting of a new plan or strategy will be discussed.

So far, women's experiences of conflict and their specific needs in a post-conflict context continue to be neglected, although a growing number of states have already changed their perspective on women's ability to engage effectively in peace and reconciliation efforts. But only when we fully understand the real value of gender mainstreaming in peace processes and act accordingly will the impact of the activities proposed in UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans and other strategies be visible. We hope this publication will play a part in achieving this goal.

This study has been conducted by the OSCE in close collaboration with author Christin Ormhaug and the Gender Research Group at the Peace Research Institute Oslo, PRIO.

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Ambassador Miroslava Beham
OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS




The Women, Peace and Security agenda has gained importance since the first UNSCR on the topic in 2000, however, implementation is slow and incoherent. There is a need for a better understanding of what gender mainstreaming means in concrete and practical terms; an understanding that goes beyond a mere balance in the number of women and men. While recognizing the importance of all national implementation strategies, this paper primarily focuses on National Action Plans. It reviews 27 National Action Plans that currently¹ exist in the OSCE region on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions, as a response to the need for systematically collecting information on plans or strategies to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

¹ September 2014

This study has identified two fundamental reasons that are, among others, responsible for the lack of progress in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda:²

- 1 Lack of capacity and commitment of the actors involved;
- 2 Scarce resources being earmarked to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

 Essential components that need to be in place for a successful implementation of the Women, Peace and Security are, amongst others:

CLEAR GOALS, BUDGETS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The development of national implementation strategies with clear goals, budgets and responsibilities.

CONCRETE ACTIONS

The need for concrete action to be better connected with the objectives and goals set forth in the National Action Plans. This is a finding which has relevance for many of the documents reviewed. Without a clear link between stated goals and actions that are proposed to lead to these goals, any plan will be difficult to implement.

DOMESTIC RELEVANCE

Recognition that national implementation strategies are relevant for all countries, and not only for those involved in conflict. States should examine how women and gender issues are included in their own structures and mechanisms dealing with peace and security domestically.

2 UN Security Council, S/2013/525

ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS

Both, domestic and international elements of National Action Plans or other strategies are equally relevant. Without a pool of experienced women at home it is not possible to contribute competent female candidates to positions abroad. Further, the Women, Peace and Security commitments are beneficial for all states. Several studies have shown that including more women and gender issues in management, as well as in military and peacekeeping structures and operations, has the potential to greatly enhance operational effectiveness.

 **General findings related to the development of National Action Plans:**

CIVIL SOCIETY

Co-operation with civil society is vital. Plans need to be developed with a broad national consultation process in order to be effective. It is thus imperative to establish clear rules explaining how this co-operation should be conducted.

CO-ORDINATOR

The role of an overall co-ordinator is crucial. Once a co-ordination mechanism is set up regular meetings on the development and implementation of a National Action Plan should ensue. A main co-ordinator is imperative in order to keep up the momentum and he/she should have enough resources available to work effectively.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation process should be defined at the conception of the National Action Plan. It is necessary to clearly distinguish between concrete goals that are obtainable within a certain time frame from those that are of a more long-term nature, in order to link the related activities accordingly. Short- and long- term goals are often mixed up in the National Action Plans reviewed.

Findings related to the four pillars of UNSCR 1325:

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

This is the pillar that participating States have focused on the most in their National Action Plans. However, when it comes to specific actions on how women's participation should be enhanced, the language is often less clear.

In this context it is important to note that gender adviser posts are often linked to concrete actions that are proposed in National Action Plans to promote women's participation. This creates confusion as the advisers are not necessarily women, and they are not primarily employed in order to increase the number of women in the security sector or peace processes.

PREVENTION

Few National Action Plans focus on women's participation and gender perspectives in conflict prevention. This aspect is clearly the least developed in the National Action Plans reviewed. However, while conflict prevention is complex, participating States have individual measures that are available to them (such as early warning, mediation, peace education, quiet diplomacy, etc.), but only few participating States include relevant language in their National Action Plans.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Only very few references can be found in the reviewed National Action Plans on how states can prevent conflict parties, other than their own troops, from perpetrating sexual violence. A number of National Action Plans seem to assume that by including more women in the police and military forces, sexual violence against women can be prevented. However, merely including women does not necessarily lead to a decrease or an absence of sexual violence. Further structural measures have to be introduced.

PROTECTION

Activities to protect women and girls that are mentioned in the National Action Plans are similar to those proposed for prevention of such violence, and center on creating awareness amongst own personnel and enforcing prosecution and/or offering assistance to victims. A concern in this context is that when cases of sexual violence are referred to the courts, there is little or no reflection in the National Action Plans on the challenges women face in the course of justice.

Many participating States intend to set up mechanisms to improve the reporting of sexual violence. The number of incidences reported is sometimes used as an indicator for an increase or reduction of violence. However, this can be misleading as there might be other reasons for a change in the number of reported incidences.

RELIEF AND RECOVERY

This is the pillar which includes the widest range of different activities proposed by states, such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration plans. They often mention women's participation in these efforts. Yet, including women does not automatically ensure that women's interests are taken into account in Relief and Recovery. Furthermore, the reviewed National Action Plans rarely pay attention to gender-sensitive Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programs, including access to justice for women, although they are mentioned specifically in UNSCR 1325.

Several National Action Plans portray women as 'natural peace builders' when they argue for women's inclusion in peace processes. This risks perpetuating an image of women as inherently different from men. Women should be included in peace-building efforts because it is their democratic right to do so, and because they have a different role in society with different interests and perspectives than men.

INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed the ground-breaking resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security which calls for greater inclusion of women in all decisions related to peace and conflict.

Fourteen years later, however, there are still concerns over the slow implementation of the resolution. To enforce implementation, the UN in Presidential Statements S/PRST/2004/40 and S/PRST/2005/52 as well as in UNSCR 2122 (2013) called for the adoption of National Action Plans and/or other national strategies as a way of concretizing and setting forth the steps that need to be taken in order to translate the resolution into practice. As a response, many countries have adopted such plans. These exist in different forms as there has not been a widely accepted template³ on how a national strategy should be developed. Early recommendations by the UN on developing National Action Plans underlined that the plan needs to be in accordance with other existing national legislative frameworks and policies in order to further implementation.

However, there is no homogenous set of policy instruments to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In addition, there are technical aspects of the National Action Plans that are often missing which would enhance practical implementation of UNSCR 1325, such as clear indicators, timelines, lines of responsibilities, budget allocations and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. There is therefore a need to analyse and discuss how the different

3 Some guides for the development of National Action Plans have been produced, like those from the Civil Society Advisory Group (2005), UN-INSTRAW (2006), United Nations and International Alert (2010) and more recently the UN Women Sourcebook (2012). It is not clear from the National Action Plans how much these have been used.

National Action Plan formats have worked and what we can learn from each other's experience. The OSCE is a platform for discussing these questions. Currently, 27 OSCE participating States have developed National Action Plans and several are in the process of reviewing or creating new National Action Plans. It is therefore appropriate to take stock of common lessons learnt and provide tools for action for the development of such plans.

The OSCE has a particularly important role to play with 57 participating States in Europe, North America and Central Asia. The OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization and a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. The security concerns of both women and men in the OSCE region are at the heart of the OSCE's comprehensive security concept. This is reflected in the OSCE policy framework such as the 2004 OSCE Gender Action Plan, and Ministerial Council Decisions⁴ that reinforce the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The Organization has Field Operations in South-East and Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia where many of these have assisted the host countries in setting-up structures for UNSCR 1325 implementation and in promoting strategies for increasing the number of women in the security sector. The OSCE Gender Section and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) are on the policy level, and through trainings, very active in supporting OSCE participating States to enhance the resolution's implementation in the OSCE region. Through a number of initiatives the organization assists participating States to initiate and/or improve National Action Plan development and implementation processes. It additionally acts as a platform for the exchange of regular information on National Action Plans.

4 MC.DEC.14/04 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality; MC.DEC.14/05 Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and MC.DEC.03/11 Elements of the Conflict Cycle, related to Enhancing the OSCE's Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation.

Objectives and scope of study

This study was launched to get a clearer understanding of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 throughout the OSCE participating States and to identify common problems and challenges, as well as to share best practices. With this publication the OSCE hopes to aid the development of new National Action Plans as well as to strengthen the revision of existing ones for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

While recognizing the importance of all national implementation strategies such as action plans of certain ministries or relevant parts of gender equality action plans, this paper primarily focuses on the 27 National Action Plans that exist in the OSCE region for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. An in-depth qualitative analysis of other implementation strategies proved to be beyond the scope of this study. Such a study would demand further research, but also the active support by participating States in order to identify the various gender equality mechanisms that exist in each country. Another challenge is the lack of English language versions of most of national gender equality mechanisms.

Methodology

The 27 National Action Plans that have been part of this study are analysed in terms of their inclusion of the four pillars of UNSCR 1325:



The 27 National Action Plans were examined using a directed qualitative content analysis,⁵ paying particular attention to aspects of the four pillars.⁶ As states interpret the pillars differently it was often challenging to code the text, and many plans contain references to several pillars at once.

In addition to this desk-based exercise, a questionnaire was sent out to all the participating States. Answers from the 32 states which responded were analysed, and key interlocutors provided further information. Interviews about the National Action Plan development process were further conducted with key informants, and a workshop to discuss a draft version of the study was held in Vienna on 4 April 2014. Many of the recommendations from this workshop have been incorporated in the text.

The first chapter provides background information on the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and the second chapter contains information on National Action Plans for the implementation of this agenda. The third chapter presents a short overview of UNSCR 1325-relevant work in the OSCE, and the fourth chapter is devoted to the analysis of National Action Plans in the OSCE region with general recommendations. The fifth chapter outlines “Tools for Action” for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

The main audience for this study are participating States wishing to develop or improve their National Action Plans for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as well as those wishing to implement these elements via other national strategies. We stress that this involves working with civil society partners, who might also find some aspects of the study interesting.

5 Schreier 2014

6 Since the advent of qualitative content analysis, this approach has been broadened substantially so that it is now better described as a research strategy than a single method of analysis (Titscher et al. 2007: 55). Since all the National Action Plans were analysed there was a well-defined sample that was fully researched. The lead researcher coded the text, looking for relevant parts in terms of the four pillars participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery (including peace-building and prosecution). Inter-coder reliability was not tested.

1.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda

1. The Women, Peace and Security agenda

Over the last decade there has been a positive shift in the understanding of the importance of bringing women and women's perspectives into security related decision-making. The incoherent implementation of this agenda is perhaps a reflection of the different speeds by which various actors are changing their perception, but a growing number of states have acknowledged the significance of these issues. This is also reflected in the adoption of six subsequent resolutions in addition to UNSCR 1325, and the seven resolutions together make up the Women, Peace and Security agenda.⁷

The Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security



UNSCR 1325 (2000) is the first of the thematic resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. It stresses the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in peace-building and the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It encourages states to increase women's participation in decision-making regarding peace and conflict and in preventing conflicts and

⁷ 'Sex' refers here to men and women as biologically distinct human beings. 'Gender' refers here to the social construction of roles, behaviours and attitudes associated with being male and female in a particular context. Gender is not a synonym for women. (...) using gender as a synonym for women sees them as a separate group from the male "norm", while ignoring the male gender aspects which remain un-addressed. (OSCE Guidance Note on Enhancing Gender-Responsive Mediation).

violence against women and girls, to enhance protection of women and girls and their rights, and to integrate a gender perspective in relief and recovery activities.

UNSCR 1820 (2008) focuses on sexual violence in armed conflict. It states that rape and other forms of sexual violence are sometimes used as a tactic of war, and recognizes these atrocities as a possible war crime, a crime against humanity or a constitutive act of genocide.

UNSCR 1888 (2009) focuses on sexual violence in armed conflict and reinforces UNSCR 1820. It calls for the UN Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

UNSCR 1889 (2009) specifically deals with the role of women in post-conflict situations. It urges actors on different levels to ensure women are better represented in conflict resolution and peace processes.

UNSCR 1960 (2010) focuses on sexual violence in armed conflict, and expresses concern with the lack of progress on this issue. It argues sexual violence should be seen as a criterion for targeted sanctions against guilty parties.

UNSCR 2106 (2013) focuses on combating sexual violence in the context of armed conflict, calling on all parties to do more to combat these crimes. It further notes that the risk of arms being used to perpetrate gender-based violence is a criterion that exporting states shall consider, according to the new Arms Trade Treaty.

UNSCR 2122 (2013) reiterates commitments made in Resolution 1325. It focuses on women's access to justice in transitional and post-conflict periods, including reparations to victims. It further emphasizes women's empowerment and participation in all aspects of decision-making regarding conflict.

A recurring theme among the resolutions is the call for more data and a systematic assessment of the impacts of armed conflict on women and girls. There is additionally a recognition that there needs to be better understanding of what gender mainstreaming means in practical terms, beyond achieving a balance in the numbers of women and men. This review of the National Action Plans is a response to the need for systematic collection of information on plans to act on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

The pillars of these resolutions are:

- Women's **participation** in all peace, security and conflict-related matters;
- Inclusion of women and a gender perspective in the **prevention** of conflict and of gender based or sexual violence;
- **Protection** of women and girls and their rights in peacetime and during conflict;
- Inclusion of women and a gender perspective in **relief and recovery activities** (including the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based crimes and peace-building or peacekeeping activities).

These four pillars are inter-connected. Women's participation is an overarching theme, but it is both a means and an end itself. On the one hand women should be given the opportunity to participate in peace and conflict-related activities simply because it is their democratic right to do so. But women's participation is also a means to achieving greater gender-awareness in conflict analysis; ensuring women's perspectives are taken into account in peace settlements; increasing protection of women; including them in reconstruction efforts and so on. These linkages show that the four pillars are inherently related and often mutually reinforcing.

1.1 Slow progress of implementation

Today we have achieved an increased awareness of the relevance of women's participation in peace and conflict related decision-making on an international level. However, we still need to see greater practical implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in everyday work for peace and security. At an OSCE conference on 1325 in November 2013, the OSCE Secretary General stressed the need to fundamentally change the way we understand security noting that the resolutions on Women, Peace and Security request us to analyse security from a male and female perspective in order to gain greater understanding of the needs of society as whole.⁸

A report by the UN Secretary General issued 4 September 2013⁹ stressed elements that need to be strengthened to enhance implementation such as an increased focus on monitoring, preventing and prosecuting violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations. The lack of progress is partly due to scarce financial resources allocated to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and to a lack of capacity and commitment to this agenda by the actors involved in the implementation in conflict prevention and subsequent reconstruction efforts.

A closer look at OSCE structures shows that women's participation in senior level management positions was at 35 per cent in 2013 and is steadily growing. However, the number of appointed female Heads of OSCE Field Operations and Institutions since 1992 still remains very low. Though there was a gender balance on the level of Deputy Head of Field Operation positions in 2013, so far only eight out of 130 Heads of Field Operations have been women. The last Annual Evaluation Report of the OSCE Secretary General on the implementation of the 2004 Gender Action Plan showed that in the field there were no women working in the

8 Video message by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier for the International Conference on 11-12 November 2013 in Almaty, organized by the OSCE, UN Women, and the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

9 UN Security Council, S/2013/525

military dimension in 2013.¹⁰ Statistics on UN structures reveal a similar trend - women continue to be severely under-represented in the security sector, making up 30% of UN civilian mission staff, but only 8% of police officers and a mere 2% of military personnel in UN peace keeping operations (2009).¹¹ It was not until 2014 that a woman became leader of a UN Peacekeeping force with the appointment of Major General Kristin Lund to head the UN forces in Cyprus.

Especially in peace processes, women's participation remains very low. In 2012 UN Women published a study revealing that in 31 peace processes between 1992 and 2011 women participated only in 17 of the 31 negotiating teams.¹² Furthermore, only 9% of the negotiators were women. Women constituted only 4% of signatories and 2.4% of chief mediators in the same peace processes. In the case of the OSCE, no Special Representative for the protracted conflicts has thus far been a woman.¹³

Rape and enslavement were prosecuted specifically as crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia set up in 1993. It took until 2001 before the first verdicts of this tribunal were passed and three men were convicted for rape and enslavement in the Foča case (BiH).¹⁴ Few perpetrators have been sentenced since. There have been some awareness raising campaigns on a high political level on the issue of sexual violence in conflict to strengthen commitments, such as the initiative by the former UK Foreign Secretary William Hague

10 See OSCE Annual Evaluation Report by the Secretary General, June 2014

11 United Nations Peacekeeping Fact Sheet: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/factsheet.pdf>

12 UN Women: Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence, 1. Edition August 2010.

13 The OSCE is engaged in mediation efforts in three unresolved conflicts: the 5+2 negotiations on a Transdniestria settlement, the Minsk Group process on the conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Geneva International Discussions initiated following the August 2008 conflict in Georgia. (Guidance Note on Enhancing Gender-Responsive Mediation, p.7).

14 http://www.peacewomen.org/news_article.php?id=6166&type=news

and Special Envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Angelina Jolie, but this has not yet translated into concrete results on the ground.

These examples show that significant gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda still remain, not only at a global, but also at a regional and national level.

2.

National Action Plans for
the implementation of
UNSCR 1325

2. Why National Action Plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325?

The UN Security Council has encouraged its member states to implement UNSCR 1325 several times. The first call for the development of National Action Plans was done, as already mentioned, in Presidential Statements S/PRST/2004/40 and S/PRST/2005/52. In the latest UNSCR 2122 of October 2013 the call was reiterated and the role of regional organizations in promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda highlighted.¹⁵

Also, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) issued General Recommendation No. 30 on 18 October 2013¹⁶ on women in conflict prevention, and conflict and post-conflict situations which called for the adoption of National Action Plans and other strategies for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

A National Action Plan is a strategy developed by a state to implement UNSCR 1325 and other resolutions of the Women Peace and Security agenda. Plans should contain concrete recommendations on how women should be included in all peace and conflict related decisions and processes, and how a gender perspective should be included in efforts to prevent conflict and sexual violence, protect women and girls, and in relief and recovery activities. They provide an opportunity to assess priorities for the states' work both nationally and internationally and to co-ordinate relevant actors, including co-operation with civil society. Plans should contain clear goals, actions and responsibilities and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

15 UN SCR 2122: "Welcoming the efforts of Member States, and recognizing the efforts of regional and sub-regional organizations, in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent women, peace and security resolutions at the regional, national and local levels, including the development of action plans and implementation frameworks, and encouraging Member States to continue to pursue such implementation, including through strengthened monitoring, evaluation and co-ordination".

16 CEDAW/C/GC/30

National implementation strategies are relevant for all countries, not only for those involved in conflict.¹⁷ States are often affected by conflicts as neighbours, countries of the same region or as donor countries that are involved in peace efforts. In addition, states should examine how women are included in their own structures dealing with peace and security issues domestically. Several studies have already pointed out that including more women in military and peacekeeping structures and operations has the potential to greatly enhance management and military operational effectiveness.¹⁸ This shows that Women, Peace and Security commitments are beneficial for all states.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda not only focuses on situations where peace is immediately threatened, but also aims at ensuring higher female participation in the political sphere overall.¹⁹ It is not possible to comply with this agenda by suddenly including more women only in conflict or post-conflict situations – women must be included in everyday political and military life and operations to make their participation meaningful. There is a clear linkage between domestic and outward looking activities for 1325 implementation, and it is important to maintain coherence within all policies, including those related to domestic issues.

The commitments agreed upon in the Women, Peace and Security agenda are therefore relevant to all participating States, at all times.

17 Hudson, Natalie Florea. 2013. National and Regional implementation of Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Background Paper for Global Review Meeting. United Nations.

18 Olsson, Louise and Johan Tejpar (eds.). 2009. Operational Effectiveness and UN Resolution 1325 - Practices and Lessons learned from Afghanistan. Swedish Defence Research Agency; Whitman, Toby and Jacqueline O'Neill. 2012. Attention to gender increases security in operations: Examples from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Institute for Inclusive Security.

19 The first article in UN SCR 1325 'Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict'.

2.1. National Action Plans as tools for increased policy coherence and effectiveness

Many participating States report that National Action Plans have been an efficient tool to co-ordinate a wide range of actors - from various ministries to the NGO sector - that are needed to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Germany is a recent example of a country which at first incorporated Women, Peace and Security measures into different national strategies, but later chose to develop a separate National Action Plan on 1325.

These are the reasons Germany gave for developing a National Action Plan instead of keeping separate action plans on various gender and security issues:

“Individual areas of the resolution are already covered by the Federal Government’s reports on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, the Action Plan “Civilian Crisis Prevention”, Action Plans I and II of the Federal Government to combat violence against women and the Development Policy Action Plan on Gender. Nevertheless, the Federal Government, by initiating its own action plan, intends to redouble the strategic orientation of its efforts in the implementation of Resolution 1325. Through the plan, it will anchor the topic more solidly than has so far been the case as a cross-sectorial element in its foreign, security and development policy and give its measures a uniform frame of reference. In the process, the Federal Government hopes to achieve added synergy and mobilization effects and to communicate its activities more effectively both to the interested public and to the international partners.” (German National Action Plan pp 4-5)

As seen in the German example, there may be several different reasons for creating a National Action Plan. It is important to highlight that just having a National Action Plan is not a goal in itself and does not ensure action, but the act of creating one might start a beneficial process.

Some of the most commonly listed advantages include:²⁰

- Oversight and comprehensiveness.

Creating a National Action Plan gives governments a chance to go through all Women, Peace and Security policies carried out by different governmental bodies, ensuring that the full Women, Peace and Security agenda is taken into account and no crucial areas are missed out.

- Co-ordination and avoiding duplication of efforts.

When the work of several government agencies is co-ordinated, synergies are created which assists the different agencies to work toward the same goal. It further helps to avoid duplication of work when expertise and knowledge are shared instead of being collected by each agency on its own.

- Awareness-raising.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda might not be equally known to all relevant government bodies or well known to civil society. Creating a National Action Plan enables relevant government actors, as well as civil society, to be informed.

- Ownership.

Creating a National Action Plan where different ministries and agencies contribute might bring a greater sense of ownership of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

- Accountability.

With a National Action Plan in place it is easier to keep track of relevant action that is taken, and by whom it is taken.

20 United Nations and International Alert 2006

● Monitoring and evaluation.

Having a National Action Plan makes monitoring and evaluation easier by highlighting the status quo and action taken in different areas, and subsequently assessing whether the action is sufficient for reaching the government's stated goals.

Some countries have opted for not developing a National Action Plan, but instead they are incorporating elements of UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent resolutions into other forms of national strategies, such as those that aim at increasing the participation of women in the police and armed forces. There are also national gender equality plans that incorporate aspects of security issues.

Switzerland, for example, has considered the possibility of including 1325 relevant measures into strategies for controlling small arms and light weapons or strategies for the prevention of genocide.

Implementing UNSCR 1325 at a national level could also be done through changes, amendments or adoption of new domestic legal provisions. For example, the Israeli Equality of Women's Rights Law included the mandate to have more women represented in peace negotiations, in line with the commitments on Women, Peace and Security.²¹ As already mentioned above, the armed forces of various states have developed their own action plans or gender policies in order to comply with the resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. A recent example is the Czech Republic which is finalizing its draft action plan on UNSCR 1325 for their armed forces in 2014. Albania is another country which has recently adopted an action plan for gender equality in the armed forces 2013-2015.

Regardless of whether a state has developed a National Action Plan or other strategies to

21 Natalie Florea Hudson. September 2013. National and Regional Implementation of Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security. UN Women Background Paper for Global Review Meeting.

implement UNSCR 1325, it is crucial for promoters of the Women, Peace and Security agenda to attempt to change national legal frameworks and establish strong and binding commitments in order to avoid setbacks due to political changes and to secure permanent recognition and attention of these issues.

2.2. National Action Plans as tools for greater military operational effectiveness

As already emphasized, including more women and gender issues in management, as well as military and peacekeeping structures and operations, has the potential to greatly enhance military operational effectiveness.

Several studies have pointed out specific aspects in this regard that improve military effectiveness:²²

- Enhancing awareness and knowledge of specific security threats.

By collecting information from more varied sources in the local population (i.e. not only men), military forces get access to a greater range of knowledge. This increases awareness of possible threats.

- Promoting gender-sensitive development.

By promoting development that is responding more accurately to women's needs, military forces gain increased legitimacy and contribute to a more stable environment. In situations where 'winning hearts and minds' is important because the local population is hostile, this factor might be crucial.

22 Olsson, Louise and Johan Tejpar (eds.). 2009. Operational Effectiveness and UN Resolution 1325 - Practices and Lessons learned from Afghanistan. Swedish Defence Research Agency; Whitman, Toby and Jacqueline O'Neill, 2012. Attention to gender increases security in operations: Examples from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Institute for Inclusive Security.

- Including more women in the forces.

By including more women, the forces can draw upon a greater source of experience, and reach out to a greater share of the local population.

National Action Plans are effective tools to better systematize these approaches and outline the activities needed to reach greater military operational effectiveness.



3.

OSCE and
UNSCR 1325

3. OSCE and UNSCR 1325

As of September 2014, 27 OSCE participating States had adopted National Action Plans for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.²³ Some participating States: (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Italy) have already launched a second plan.

The OSCE can be useful in various ways for participating States, when it comes to the development or reviewing of National Action Plans. The organization is a key regional instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. This agenda, is at the heart of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security. The inclusion of the needs of both women and men in peace-building and security at political, economic and social levels, is seen as crucial in order to ensure sustainable peace, economic prosperity and long-term security.

Most of the OSCE participating States include references to collaboration with the OSCE in their National Action Plans: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and UK.

23 Austria (2007, updated plan 2012); Belgium (2009); Bosnia-Herzegovina (2010); Canada (2010); Croatia (2011); Denmark (2005, updated plan 2008); Estonia (2010); Finland (2008, updated plan 2012); France (2010); Georgia (2011); Germany (2012); Iceland (2008, updated plan 2013); Ireland (2011); Italy (2010); Kyrgyzstan (2013); Lithuania (2011); Netherlands (2007, updated plan 2011); Norway (2006, updated plan 2011); Portugal (2009); Serbia (2011); Slovenia (2011); Spain (2007); Sweden (2006, updated plan 2009); Switzerland (2007, updated plan 2010); the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2013); United Kingdom (2011, updated plan 2012); and United States (2011).

For this reason, the OSCE has created its own policy framework to assist OSCE participating States with the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and has thereby covered all four pillars of UNSCR 1325 on participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery including peace-building and prosecution.²⁴

Based on this framework, the OSCE executive structures, Institutions and Field Operations continuously work on enhancing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the organization itself and among OSCE participating States. This study is part of the OSCE's continuous and concrete support for the development of National Action Plans. Some structures such as ODIHR and the Field Operations in Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Montenegro and Kosovo have directly contributed to National Action Plan development or other action plans by facilitating dialogue with different stakeholders, advising ministries how to set up structures for a National Action Plan process, or assisting with drafting recommendations or guidelines on how to develop a National Action Plan.

Furthermore, with local partners, the OSCE initiates and runs projects on empowering women in post-conflict situations, and on building local capacities and expertise on gender issues.

Example of OSCE activities in Kyrgyzstan

Due to the events in June 2010 and the role played by women both during and after the violence, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek decided to support the establishment of so called Women Initiative Groups that focused on empowerment through capacity-building on conflict prevention and resolution. The Women initiative Groups were an attempt to support

24 The most relevant OSCE policies comprise MC.DEC/14/04 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, MC.DEC/14/05 Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation, MC.DEC/15/05 Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women, MC.DEC/3/11 Elements of the Conflict Cycle, Related to Enhancing the OSCE's Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation, and MC.DEC/8/13 Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition which takes note of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013).

existing resources and efforts. The female members of the groups had been active during the June events providing assistance across all ethnic groups which was made possible due to the status they enjoyed across the divided population. The Women Initiative Groups now have 95 members in three provinces and mainly work as focal points in the communities helping to bridge relations with state and local institutions.

One of the key partners is the police. The Women Initiative Groups deal with issues of gender-based violence, early marriages (awareness-raising), bride kidnapping, unregistered births, integration of problematic families, schooling, and humanitarian aid. In 2012 the OSCE Centre supported an initiative whereby male leaders co-operated with the Women Initiative Groups in order to include women in decision-making.

Moreover, the OSCE has developed guidelines and toolkits for key stakeholders involved in creating, implementing and monitoring National Action Plans.

For example, in 2013 the OSCE Gender Section launched a publication on Enhancing Gender-Responsive Mediation which provides a practical guide for mediators engaged in formal peace negotiations of how to include women in the discussions, as well as how to gender mainstream the mediation process. ODIHR, together with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW), developed the Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit. Designed as a complement to this toolkit, DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE Gender Section developed a series of guidance notes on Integrating Gender into Internal Police Oversight, Integrating a Gender Perspective into Internal Oversight within Armed Forces and Integrating Gender into Oversight of the Security Sector by Ombuds Institutions and National Human Rights

Institutions, published in 2014.²⁵

The OSCE also offers courses and training on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 for government officials, civilian and military staff, as well as for civil society representatives. ODIHR continues to provide trainings on modules of the Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit mentioned above. On the basis of the gender-responsive mediation guidance note, the OSCE Gender Section and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Section are in the process of developing a training seminar on gender-responsive mediation for OSCE high-level mediators and Special Representatives.

Through its military body, the Forum for Security Co-operation, and in particular in the framework of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the OSCE acts as a facilitator for information exchange on the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including National Action Plans as well as other national strategies. Fostering regional collaboration and learning through sharing knowledge on the development and implementation of National Action Plans is one of the priorities of the OSCE Gender Section, which is part of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General. In this context, a project on a regional co-operation is under way, which enables Central Asian countries to gain from the process of National Action Plan development and implementation in the Western Balkans, as well as to learn from the experience of creating a regional network.

Throughout the executive structures, including Field Operations, the OSCE has established a network of Gender Focal Points who work on implementing the OSCE comprehensive security concept that covers also the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, deployed in March 2014, includes a full-time gender adviser who trains the mission staff on how to address gender issues in their daily work and reaches out to women's organizations in the country.

25 See: <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Guidance-Notes-on-Integrating-Gender-into-Security-Sector-Oversight>

4.

National Action Plans of
OSCE participating States:
Analysis, recommenda-
tions and best practices

4. National Action Plans of OSCE participating States: Analysis, recommendations and best practices

The following chapter provides an analysis of the 27 OSCE participating States National Action Plans. The first part outlines general observations and recommendations about technical aspects of the National Action Plans. The second gives a more detailed analysis of the content of the plans, using the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 as categories. Under each pillar there are some recommendations and examples of best practices from existing plans.

4.1 General lessons on content and technical aspects of the National Action Plans

The National Action Plans reviewed here fall into two categories: Plans take the structure and pillars of UNSCR 1325 as given, and present their own focus and priorities to be implemented on the local, national and international levels according to the existing pillars; and plans that take these three levels – the local, national and international – as their point of departure, and present their policies and priorities in regard to Resolution 1325 for each level.

The inclusion of an external and internal focus

Previous research and lessons learned show that it is important to include both domestic and international elements in plans since they reinforce each other. Without a pool of experienced women at home it is not possible to contribute competent women candidates to positions abroad. Maintaining national capacity and competence on Women, Peace and Security and

gender mainstreaming domestically strengthens this agenda both at home and abroad.

In the National Action Plans reviewed, some participating States focus more on external activities, like sending peacekeeping troops and donating aid, whereas countries which have recently experienced conflict on their own territory tend to be more focused on domestic issues. It is however necessary to include a balanced set of measures.

Co-operation with civil society and other partners

Since the origin of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the co-operation between state and civil society has been vital for its development. The same is true for National Action Plans. Plans that are created without a broad national consultation process or adopted solely due to external pressure are unlikely to be effective.²⁶ However, it is important to acknowledge that many governments might find it challenging to co-operate with civil society, and OSCE participating States have very different traditions on how decision-making is discussed with civil society partners. Establishing clear rules about how this co-operation should be conducted has the potential to increase satisfaction for all parties:

- Civil society partners should be selected in a transparent manner.
- Clear parameters and roles for National Action Plan development partners should be identified in the consultation process.
- Finally, it should be made clear at what point, on which questions and to what extent civil society consultations should take place.

Almost all the National Action Plans reviewed here mention that there has been some co-operation

26 National Action Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit, Institute for Inclusive Security 2013

with civil society. It is however very difficult to assess to what degree civil society's recommendations and concerns were taken into account. A report by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) from 2013 finds that National Action Plans which are developed through an inclusive process where civil society is involved are better implemented.²⁷

Best practice example:

Ireland worked extensively with civil society organizations in order to create its National Action Plan. In the process various stakeholders were consulted, including women affected by conflict (for example from Sudan, DRC and Liberia) who are now living in Ireland, as well as women affected by the conflict in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Cross-learning exercises with women from Liberia, Timor Leste and Northern Ireland were further conducted, adding to the rich and varied input to the Irish National Action Plan.

In addition to working with civil society, a number of countries have drawn upon existing National Action Plans and other countries' experiences when developing their own action plan. A few participating States have embarked on twinning projects, where they co-operate with another country in developing National Action Plans and therefore can share experiences and learn from each other.

Finland has started co-operation with Kenya, Nepal and Afghanistan in the development of their National Action Plans. Particularly with Afghanistan there has been a series of joint meetings in both countries, and exchange of lessons learned and experiences from the different national contexts.

Austria offers to "provide active support to partner countries in preparing a National Action Plan on the Implementation of Resolution 1325" (Austrian National Action Plan II, page 15).

27 EPLO. UNSCR 1325 in Europe: 20 Case Studies of implementation (2013); EPLO. 2013. Joining the dots: from national to European level implementation of UN SCR 1325.

Georgia has co-operated with UN Women on training women mediators under the auspices of their National Action Plan, and has worked with female leaders of civil society organizations in peace-building initiatives from Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia. They have further plans to train two women participating in the Geneva talks.

Co-ordinating mechanisms

A third important aspect for the development, implementation and review of National Action Plans concerns the role and function of a co-ordination mechanism. This mechanism involves, for example, establishing a co-ordination body, instituting regular meetings etc. Most states have chosen to have a ministry in charge of co-ordination such as the ministry of foreign affairs, the ministry of defence or a ministry working with gender equality. Selecting the most appropriate ministry in charge is an important decision, bearing in mind that historically ministries of defence or foreign affairs have carried more weight than ministries of women or family affairs.

The role of the overall co-ordinator is crucial to drive the work forward. As the Women, Peace and Security agenda is broad as well as continuously evolving, there is a need to disseminate and anchor knowledge about the agenda within different sections of ministries as well as ensure co-operation across different bodies. Continuous knowledge transfer and motivation of collaborators is important. Several states have pointed out that the role of the co-ordinator is a challenging one that should be accorded sufficient resources, and not just added to someone's existing portfolio.

It has been emphasized by some states that it can be challenging to select appropriate co-operation partners (both at civil society and government level). While sometimes this is due to a real lack of adequate partners, this can also be due to a lack of awareness of the Women, Peace and Security

agenda across a state's governing bodies. Co-ordinating efforts to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda is crucial for effective outreach to all relevant partners.

Participating States have chosen different ways of co-ordinating all inputs needed in the process of creating and implementing their National Action Plans. As a positive effect of these co-ordination efforts, many states report that new alliances and networks of contact and co-operation between different government bodies and civil society have been established.

Best practice example:

Serbia established two new institutional mechanisms to overview National Action Plan implementation: the Political Council is a high-level body overseeing and reporting on plan implementation, and a multi-sectorial Co-ordinating Body is responsible for realization of the plan. Such bodies have the potential to promote good co-ordination of actions.²⁸

Baseline study

Before developing a National Action Plan, it is useful to collect information on Women, Peace and Security issues and actions that different government bodies and other entities are already taking. This avoids duplicating tasks and creates cross-departmental awareness of information and knowledge. In addition, baseline information for example on the number of women in the police, armed forces and other governing bodies should be collected in order to be able to measure progress of implementation. However, if resources or time is limited when developing the National Action Plan, such information can also be collected through selecting a few indicators which, over time, will give a starting point and provide knowledge of ongoing trends.

28 Interview with Dragan Knezevic, Serbian Gender Equality Directorate.

It should be noted that very few of the reviewed National Action Plans mention explicitly the number of women working in different sectors or how the promotion of women and women's views is normally carried out, making monitoring very difficult.

Best practice example:

Bosnia and Herzegovina lists the number of women (and the percentage) represented in various government agencies and the security sector. This breakdown of numbers makes it much easier to monitor whether there has been progress of women's formal participation or not.

Clear lines of responsibility

Most commonly the responsibility to execute or oversee a certain element of a plan will lie within a government ministry. Information about who performs certain tasks within the ministry should ideally be made available for those who ask for it to allow for a sustained communication flow between different actors. The hierarchy amongst ministries should also be considered when overall responsibility for a National Action Plan is allocated to ensure that the lead role is given to the ministry best suited to co-ordinate efforts.

The review of the 27 National Action Plans shows that most often, the responsibility for a given task lies with a certain ministry. There are, however, examples of plans where it is 'the government' of a participating State that carries out such tasks. This diffuse allocation of responsibility makes it harder to identify and contact the parties responsible for the National Action Plan or to monitor and evaluate how the plan was executed.

Budget

Developing, maintaining and implementing National Action Plans requires a number of activities:

meetings need to be co-ordinated; reports have to be written; training of staff undertaken; surveys of women's special needs in vulnerable situations conducted, and so on. Resources are needed for the completion of these tasks. It is therefore vital that a budget is allocated to the actions laid down in the National Action Plan.

This study has revealed that almost none of the National Action Plans had a specific budget allocated to implement the plans. This lack of resources means that the implementation of the National Action Plans is viewed as an additional task within given human and financial resources, thus seriously constraining implementation.

Best practice example:

The Netherlands have included an overview of the financial resources set aside specifically for UNSCR 1325 activities, along with an overview of some of the main recipients of these funds.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

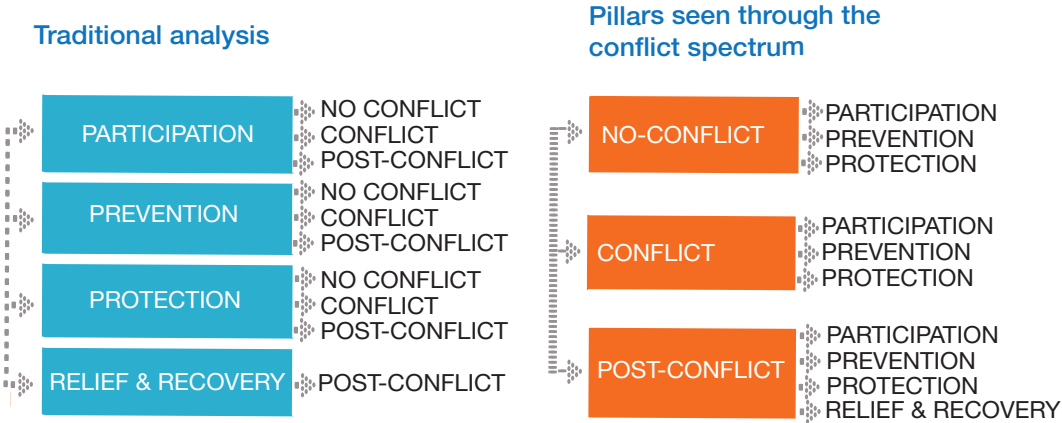
Implementation

As mentioned previously in this study, UNSCR 1325 is commonly seen to have four pillars: participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery. The term pillar, however, suggests that these are individual entities operating in isolation from each other. This is misleading as the relationship between them is layered and complex and there are significant inter-linkages as noted in for instance the Australian National Action Plan.²⁹ In fact, UNSCR 1325 calls for action on 13 different issues, which includes applying a gender perspective in peace operations, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), prevention of sexual violence, etc.

29 The Australian Action Plan calls the pillars 'thematic areas' and has added a fifth one - the normative one. See: http://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/aus_nap_on_women_2012_2018.pdf

Implementation strategies identified in several of the National Action Plans analysed for this study reflect the inter-linkage of the pillars. Suggested goals have proven hard to translate into concrete activities as the proposed actions do not fall neatly into one of the pillars, thereby blurring the lines of what should be done in each pillar. As a consequence of the confusion in regards to the pillar structure, some of the defined 13 areas for action are more neglected than others, while some, such as participation, seem easier to tackle. Naturally, participating States need to adapt the areas covered in their National Action Plans to their circumstances, but the confusion of actions in each pillar regrettably leaves out areas that arguably could have been beneficial to develop further. One such area is the prevention of conflict, where many states not experiencing conflict tend to disregard the development of preventive mechanisms.

One possible way to lessen the confusion in connection to the pillars is to look at them through a different lens: no conflict, conflict and post-conflict. This structure would still allow for the four pillars to be integrated, but would perhaps enable clearer tasking and identification of actions needed as suggested in the graph below:



Monitoring and evaluation

The goal of the monitoring and evaluation and reporting system is to strengthen institutional capacities to monitor progress and efficiency of implementation. States which have ratified or acceded to CEDAW are obliged to submit regular reports on measures they have taken to comply with the Convention, including the new Recommendation No. 30 dealing with security issues. UNSCR 1325, however, lacks such a formal monitoring mechanism.

In order to assist with monitoring and reporting of the implementation of UNSCR 1325, focus has recently been on the development of indicators that would help in measuring progress and areas that need to be improved. The UN General Assembly and the EU for instance, in an attempt to enhance monitoring and evaluation of National Action Plans, have developed their own lists of indicators for this purpose. Participating States are encouraged to adapt these to their own needs and/or develop their own set of indicators to enable the revision and updating of their National Action Plans on a regular basis. This would in turn promote reporting on progress made and activities undertaken for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It could also possibly improve the collection of data, enhance activities included in the National Action Plan, as well as facilitate management and help overcome challenges during implementation. The reporting on National Action Plans should be done regularly as is the case with the commitments implemented under CEDAW.

'Protecting women's human rights at all times, advancing substantive gender equality before, during and after conflict and ensuring that women's diverse experiences are fully integrated into all peace-building, peacemaking, and reconstruction processes are important objectives of the Convention.' CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

Progress and evaluation reports should be made public. Some participating States (like Switzerland and Canada), are obliged to report on progress to their parliaments, which is a model other states should consider adopting.

Best practice example:

Bosnia and Herzegovina has worked with the Institute for Inclusive Security to enhance its capacity for monitoring and evaluation, and has revised its practice extensively from the first to the second National Action Plan. Regarding the second National Action Plan they have the following goals:

A simple and efficient monitoring and evaluation system will be established. The system will define:

- Methods and protocols for data collection.
- Structure of data collection and update of data (including information about who gathers data, who owns it and data sources).
- Adequate reporting mechanisms (including reporting forms, reporting dynamics as well as other forms of communication with actors on implementation of National Action Plan).

Goals

In the National Action Plans reviewed for this study it is at times difficult to understand how different concrete actions are tied in with the objectives and goals. To some degree this is due to the above mentioned confusion which stems from the ways the different pillars are interlinked. There are also examples of actions which seem unrelated to the goals they wish to implement. Furthermore, there is often no clear division between tangible and measurable goals and goals that are more difficult to obtain but no less important (like changes in attitudes and behaviour). It makes sense to include measurable goals because 'what has to be reported gets done', but National Action Plans need to be ambitious and also include non-measurable targets in order to

encompass all the change required in the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Also, short and long-term goals are often mixed up in the National Action Plans review.

Participating States should clearly distinguish between concrete goals that are obtainable within a certain time frame from those that are more long-term goals.

4.2 Analysis of the content of the four pillars

When analysing National Action Plans it is crucial to understand that they differ from each other in their content and priorities since they are tailored to the national context. They are also influenced by the different stages of discussions that followed the adoption of the UN resolutions subsequent to UNSCR 1325. Plans that are written at different times, therefore, naturally vary. This study focuses on the most recent versions of National Action Plans in the OSCE region and the language they contain regarding the pillars of UNSCR 1325: participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery (including peace-building and prosecution).

4.2.1 Participation

UNSCR 1325 on participation

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.

(...)

'Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict'.

Enhancing women's full participation in all processes related to peace and conflict is the cornerstone of UNSCR 1325. Participation is a cross-cutting theme that involves recruiting more women into the police and armed forces and including more women in all processes that involve peace and security issues. This is an act that is fundamentally democratic in its nature. Women's greater participation in decision-making, governance and formal and informal social and political structures is an overall objective of gender equality and not confined to conflict related situations only.

In studies on women's political participation it is common to distinguish between descriptive representation; substantive representation and symbolic representation.³⁰ Descriptive representation refers to the degree to which women are included in different peace and conflict-related processes; in other words counting the number of included women. Substantive representation refers to effects on agenda building and policy outcomes, and is inherently much more difficult to measure. Symbolic representation refers to the legitimacy of these processes, which is assumed to be enhanced by including more women. These different categories of representation will be used in the analysis of all the pillars.

Findings and recommendations

Women's participation in all decision-making bodies, both those found in governing the state and in the informal sector, is fundamentally important to the spirit of UNSCR 1325. This is the pillar that participating States have developed and focused on the most in the National Action Plans reviewed here.

30 Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2010

All the National Action Plans contain some language on promoting women's participation, in other words increasing their descriptive representation. Some states have created concrete targets for women's participation in the police or armed forces, which is also significant. However, when it comes to specific actions on how women's participation should be enhanced, the language is often less clear.

Increasing the number of women participating in peace and conflict negotiations is apparently assumed to lead to the enhancement and inclusion of (all) issues that concern women automatically. This is why in the National Action Plans women's participation and the representation of women's perspectives is often mistakenly understood as interchangeable even though these are not identical issues. In other words, descriptive representation is taken to be the same as substantive representation.

Several National Action Plans have stated goals to promote women's participation, yet much of the concrete actions that are proposed tend to focus on increasing the number and use of gender advisers. This is not enough. Gender advisers can provide information and advice on gender issues and thereby enhance a gender perspective in adopted policies. However, these advisers are not necessarily women, as is often assumed by many states. Furthermore, the gender advisers may not be able to increase the number of women participating in different peace processes or adequately represent the full diversity of women's views. A study by Olsson and Tejpar³¹ shows that the responsibility to increase the number of women and incorporate a gender perspective into missions cannot lie solely with the gender advisers – ultimately it must be the responsibility of the mission leaders.

Overall, the National Action Plans confirm that promoting women's full participation in all matters related to peace, security and conflict requires the active participation of civil society. Civil society organizations have an important role to play in informing women of their rights,

31 Olsson and Tejpar 2009

providing information on women's issues, encouraging their participation, offering capacity- building and so on. Many National Action Plans recognize this although it is unclear to what extent this is put into practice in terms of real co-operation. This link between acknowledging the importance of civil society organizations and the practical co-operation between state and non-state actors needs to be explored further since it is important for the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the following resolutions.

Only very few participating States (for example Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia) provide data on the number of women who currently participate at various levels of governing bodies and in the security forces. This baseline information is crucial for efforts to monitor whether there is any progress in enhancing female participation.

Very few National Action Plans aim to create rosters of potential female candidates for important positions, which might be useful to have when positions become available.

Best practice example:

Finland lists concrete steps that can be taken to promote women's participation:³²

- In democratic support that Finland provides at international and local level, the right to maternity leave and family leave must be taken into account;
- In crisis management and other international tasks related to peace:
 - Recruitment processes must be transparent;
 - Job descriptions must be gender neutral;
 - Women should be encouraged and promoted to managerial positions.

32 See: <http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=98322&GUID={3DAB961C-AE41-42D3-99CB-4BE77BA8941D}>

4.2.2 Prevention

This pillar covers both prevention of armed conflict as well as prevention of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls. Several of the resolutions following UNSCR 1325 focus specifically on sexual violence in conflict, as a particularly heinous crime. This sub-chapter will therefore first focus on conflict prevention and then on the prevention of sexual violence.

Prevention of conflict

Examples of UNSCRs on prevention of conflict:

'Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building'... UNSCR 1325 (2000)

'Deeply concerned also about the persistent obstacles and challenges to women's participation and full involvement in the prevention and resolution of conflicts' ... UNSCR 1820 (2008)

'Reiterating the need for the full, equal and effective participation of women at all stages of peace processes given their vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peace-building' ... UNSCR 1889 (2009)

Preventing violent conflict and its recurrence requires a comprehensive approach to security. In the OSCE, conflict prevention involves creating security and stability of societies in the politico-military, economic, environmental and human rights area as well as tackling root causes of conflict as a preventive measure. Conflict prevention also comprises early warning, confidence-building measures, dialogue facilitation, preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts. The prevention of conflict is important for the maintenance of peace and security, for

peace-making and peace-building in all societies. By including women in all these efforts, the rights, capacities and needs of the whole population can be addressed which enhances stability and security significantly.

Findings and recommendations

Bearing in mind the enormous advantages of preventing conflict, it is disappointing to find that very little in the National Action Plans focuses on women's participation and the inclusion of a gender perspective in conflict prevention. This aspect is clearly the least developed. Participating States in the OSCE include some of the world's most powerful nations and by not addressing the role of women and gender issues in conflict prevention in their National Action Plans a huge potential for peace-building is lost.

Conflict prevention is a broad area, but there are a number of specific measures that are available to participating States, either on a national level or as partners with the OSCE, from including women and a gender perspective in the domestic security sector (reform) to engaging women in confidence-building measures, mediation or arms control. These are activities where the OSCE is traditionally involved. Only very few states include explicit texts on some of these actions and women's participation (examples are the USA and Georgia). Even in those cases where conflict prevention is singled out as a priority in the National Action Plans, the concrete actions proposed are more likely to revolve around issues of protection or participation.

In order to identify action in the context of prevention, it is also helpful to consult CEDAW General Recommendation 30 which recommends the following:

- (a) Reinforce and support women's formal and informal conflict prevention efforts;
- (b) Ensure women's equal participation in national, regional and international organizations, as well as in informal, local or community-based processes charged with preventive diplomacy;
- (c) Establish early warning systems and adopt gender-specific security measures to prevent the escalation of gender-based violence and other violations of women's rights;
- (d) Include gender-related indicators and benchmarks in the early warning system's result management framework;
- (e) Address the gendered impact of international transfers of arms, especially small and illicit arms including through the ratification and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (2013).

Prevention of conflict is also an area where co-operation with civil society could prove important. Civil society, including women's organizations, can be expected to have knowledge of potential threats to peace which a government might not know about until it is too late. Crucially, preventing conflict might require a commitment to peace among the population, and such a commitment cannot be instilled by governing bodies alone. Conflict prevention activities that only include elites, turning a blind eye to the grass root level, are much less likely to succeed.³³ Activities to prevent conflict need to begin at an early stage with awareness-raising of the population as a whole and continue with identifying practical prevention steps, involving as many in the population as possible. Any future and revised National Action Plans should take this into consideration.

33 <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/principles.shtml>

Instead of taking into account all the above mentioned issues also during times of stability and peace, participating States in their National Action Plans focus on preventing conflict later in the conflict cycle, in peacekeeping activities. While there is clear connection between preventing conflict and building peace to avoid conflict from re-erupting, it is also clear that by preventing conflicts at an early stage, one saves lives and stops hatred from building up. When violence has broken out, restoring and building peace becomes much harder.

Best practice examples:

Georgia has many concrete recommendations in its National Action Plan on how women and women's interests can be included in conflict prevention activities:

- Include Women, Peace and Security principles in the meetings within the framework of Geneva talks and Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM);
- Co-operate with international and civil society organizations to train women mediators;
- For confidence building purposes support joint implementation of economic/trade, healthcare, educational, social, cultural, environmental and other projects with participation of the population residing on territories separated by occupation lines, especially women and girls;
- Involvement of media and its active participation in peace initiatives and activities for the promotion of a peace culture (on the needs of women and children).

Belgium pays attention to the specific position of women and children in the context of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, since women and children frequently are the first victims of violence committed with these weapons.³⁴

34 See: http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/binaries/women_peace_security_tcm312-66266.pdf

Finland works proactively to promote mediation and to improve its quality, inter alia, by attaching attention to women having their role at all levels and stages of peace processes in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution 65/283 on mediation:

- It strives to create practices that strengthen and facilitate women's participation and to secure that mediation and peace processes have access to high-quality gender equality expertise, taking advantage of the know-how held by the civil society.
- It supports the nomination of women to international mediation assignments.

Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls

Examples of UNSCRs on prevention of sexual violence

'Affirms (...) that effective steps to prevent and respond to (...) acts of sexual violence can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security'... UNSCR 1888 (2009)

'Affirming that women's political, social and economic empowerment, gender equality and the enlistment of men and boys in the effort to combat all forms of violence against women are central to long-term efforts to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations' ... UNSCR 2106 (2013)

Preventing sexual and gender-based violence is an important topic that has received increased attention since 2000. For example, prevention of and protection against such violence is the main focus of Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106. At the G8 summit in London in April 2013, a declaration was adopted to enhance prevention of sexual violence in conflict. At the initiative of the UK, another document referring to prevention, the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, was signed by 113 Member States attending the 68th UN

General Assembly in September 2013. A Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, held in London in June 2014, was the largest gathering ever on this topic with 1.700 delegates from 129 countries.

Women are the main victims of sexual violence and they should be involved in prevention efforts. However, it is also crucial to include men and boys if prevention is going to be successful.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has further emphasized how sexual violence in conflict arises due to gender discrimination and inequality in non-conflict settings: 'forms of gender-based violence in wartime are based on the private violence against women in many homes'.³⁵ The point raised by Ban is very important and highlights how the Women, Peace and Security agenda is linked with everyday actions. Prevention of such violence requires long-term strategies and is connected to gender relations in general.

'There is a correlation between the increased prevalence of gender-based violence and discrimination and the outbreak of conflict. For example, rapid increases in the prevalence of sexual violence can serve as an early warning of conflict. Accordingly, efforts to eliminate gender-based violations also contribute in the long term to preventing conflict, its escalation and the recurrence of violence in the post-conflict phase.' CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

35 Statement by Ki-moon during the annual open debate on UN SCR 1325, October 18 2013.

Findings and recommendations

The concrete actions proposed in various National Action Plans in order to prevent sexual and gender-based violence focus mostly on providing training and building awareness of the Women, Peace and Security agenda regarding sexual violence. This involves both civilian and military personnel. Several states promise to enforce a zero tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation by their own troops.

The policy of zero tolerance highlights how prevention of sexual violence is often discussed in terms of deterrence. The prosecution of offenders is another issue which has been included as an example of a preventive measure in recent years. (Prosecution could arguably also be addressed as part of reconstruction efforts and is also discussed as a protection measure – this highlights how intertwined the various pillars are). For such policies to be effective, promoting awareness of possible consequences is necessary and this requires long term strategies.

Another issue that has been found in this study is the fact that there are few references in the National Action Plans as to how states can prevent conflict parties - other than their own troops - from perpetrating sexual violence. In the long term the establishment of the International Criminal Court and other courts prosecuting such violence might have a deterring effect, but for now combat parties seem to be able to act with impunity and are largely out of reach of the Women, Peace and Security prevention measures.

A further central observation concerns how National Action Plans portray the relationship between women's participation and prevention of violence. A number of National Action Plans seem to assume that by including more women into police and military forces, sexual violence against women as well as prostitution will be prevented. Again, enhancing women's descriptive representation (the number of women) is expected to lead to an automatic improvement in the substantive representation of women. This assumption is perhaps tempting to make, but recent research shows that this connection is not self-evident. Olivera Simić argues that

women included in peacekeeping operations are somehow expected to take on the responsibility for preventing sexual exploitation and protecting local women from such abuse.³⁶ This essentially puts the responsibility for prevention on female peacekeepers rather than on the troops of contributing countries, where responsibility ought to be firmly anchored. Changing attitudes towards sexual violence and exploitation does involve working with cultural issues and the structural barriers of the security forces and is a more complex process.

National Action Plans should take all the above mentioned issues into account and spell out more clearly how sexual violence is to be prevented, also through the inclusions of this topic in the broader agenda of conflict prevention measures.

4.2.3 Protection

In the Women, Peace and Security agenda protection refers to several issues. It includes the protection of the human rights of women and girls, the general and special protection of women due to the threat of specific risks, the protection from sexual and gender-based violence, and the special protection needs of displaced women. This pillar is therefore also closely connected with the previous ones and with relief and recovery issues.

Examples of UNSCRs on protection:

Protection of human rights of women and girls

'Calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

36 Simić 2013:2

(...)

Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;’... UNSCR 1325 (2000)

‘Remaining deeply concerned about persistent implementation deficits in the women, peace and security agenda, including in: protection from human rights abuses and violations; opportunities for women to exercise leadership; resources provided to address their needs and which will help them exercise their rights; and the capacities and commitment of all actors involved in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions to advance women’s participation and protection,’... UNSCR 2122 (2013)

General and special protection of women and girls

‘Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls’... UNSCR 1325 (2000)

‘Recalling that international humanitarian law affords general protection to women and children as part of the civilian population during armed conflicts and special protection due to the fact that they can be placed particularly at risk,’ ... UNSCR 1888 (2009) and UNSCR 1960 (2010)

Protection against sexual and gender-based violence

‘Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situation of armed conflict’ ... UNSCR 1325 (2000)

'Calls upon Member States to comply with their obligations for prosecuting persons responsible for such acts, to ensure that all victims of sexual violence, particularly women and girls, have equal protection under the law and equal access to justice, and stresses the importance of ending impunity for such acts as part of a comprehensive approach to seeking sustainable peace, justice, truth, and national reconciliation;' ... UNSCR 1820 (2008)

Including civil society in the protection against sexual and gender-based violence

'Underlines the important roles that civil society organizations, including women's organizations, and networks can play in enhancing community-level protection against sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and supporting survivors in accessing justice and reparations;'
... UNSCR 2106 (2013)

Protection and displacement

'Recognizing that an understanding of the impact of situations of armed conflict on women and girls, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, adequate and rapid response to their particular needs, and effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process, particularly at early stages of post-conflict peace-building, can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.

Calls upon all parties to armed conflicts to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and ensure the protection of all civilians inhabiting such camps, in particular women and girls, from all forms of violence, including rape and other sexual violence, and to ensure full, unimpeded and secure humanitarian access to them;'... UNSCR 1889 (2009)

Protection issues figure dominantly in the Women, Peace and Security agenda, but they are not confined to the protection against sexual and gender-based violence as it is often assumed. All OSCE participating States but one³⁷ have ratified CEDAW. With the ratification of this Convention states have committed themselves to protect women's human rights and advance gender equality at all times. In the framework of the Women, Peace and Security agenda this means protection of gender equality rights, women's specific needs and the physical and psychological integrity of women before, during and after conflict. Thus, a prominent feature of protection is that it is closely intertwined with the other pillars of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

However, this more comprehensive understanding of protection has not yet appropriately become part of the implementation of the international agenda on Women, Peace and Security. In recent years, reporting on sexual violence in conflict has increased and thus there is greater focus on it. This does not necessarily mean that the incidence of such violence has grown. Rather it reflects that there is greater awareness and that reporting has become more frequent. Another explanation is that increased reporting could be a result of changing norms and attitudes that allow women to speak about such assaults more freely, with less fear of shame and social condemnation by the community.

At this point it is also important to note that sexual violence is usually assumed to affect women and girls more than men. In fact, we do not know how many men and boys are victims of sexual violence as reporting such offences for male victims is made even harder by social norms. Hence, it is essential that women and men work together to protect everyone from such crimes.

It is also important to understand that sexual violence in conflict does not happen with equal

37 The United States have signed the Convention, but not ratified it; the Holy See is not a signatory of CEDAW.

frequency in all conflicts, nor do all combatants use sexual violence as a method or tactic of war. However, even if it is not used as a weapon of war, sexual violence can be prevalent in other ways, as it was the case, for example, in Northern Ireland where there were high rates of domestic violence during the conflict and strip searching was one of the methods of sexual abuse.³⁸

Protecting women from human rights violations, including sexual violence and discrimination starts in times of peace and is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and security in any society. Including women and a gender perspective in conflict prevention is one way to make sure that through prevention their protection is ensured. In situations of emerging conflicts and in conflict itself, when there is a breakdown of political, economic and social structures, rising militarism and growing violence, the vulnerability of women and girls is increasing disproportionately, and with this their protection needs. They are at greater risk of being subject to sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation or trafficking. In this context there are particular protection needs for women and girls in displacement since they might be exposed during the movement to particular threats (e.g. at check-points), might not have access to essential services, lack personal documentation etc.

The OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees have published a Protection Checklist which in a gender sensitive way addresses the displacement and protection of displaced populations and affected communities along the conflict cycle.³⁹ It has been developed for the use by OSCE staff in the field, but can be applied to any (emerging) conflict and post-conflict setting and can therefore give guidance to participating States on how to address gender sensitive protection of displaced populations in terms of appropriate measures to be defined in the National Action Plans.

38 Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs: Cross Learning Process on UN Security Council Resolution 1325

39 OSCE/ UNHCR: Protection Checklist. See: <http://www.osce.org/cpc/111464?download=true>

Findings and recommendations

Protection against sexual violence features as a priority for many of the countries with a National Action Plan. It is one of the most important pillar in terms of what participating States have chosen to focus on. Many of the National Action Plans include protection against sexual violence as an important reason to create Women, Peace and Security policies.

The concrete measures that are proposed to protect women and girls against sexual violence are often quite similar to those suggested for prevention of such violence and often center around creating awareness amongst own personnel and enforcing prosecution, as well as offering appropriate assistance to victims.

As with other proposed actions in the National Action Plans, it might be helpful for states to point out what is expected in the short term when it comes to protection versus the long term (e.g. measures intended to change masculine norms thought to lead to such violence against women). It is worth highlighting as well that there should be also a clear distinction between what can be achieved with one's own troops and what can be accomplished in terms of changing cultural norms and behavior in the local population.

Another aspect that is dealt with in the National Action Plans is the need for greater collection of information. Several states intend to set up systems for better reporting of sexual violence. An indicator which is used in this context is the number of incidences of sexual violence that are reported and acted upon. Again, this is perhaps more of a preventive measure, but in the long run it can enhance protection.

In terms of referring cases of sexual violence to the courts, there has been more of a focus on prosecution in the most recent Security Council resolutions. It is worth noting that women often 'get lost' between traditional justice processes (which are often discriminatory towards

women) and more formal judicial systems, which also prove prohibitive, because of the complexities, structures and requirements of the systems and in reality do not extend across the whole country's territory.⁴⁰ These insights are still not incorporated into National Action Plans, which with a few good exceptions are often quite vague when it comes to prosecution apart from using the International Criminal Court (ICC) system. The ICC clearly cannot cover all cases of sexual abuse in conflict, so states might want to reflect more on other opportunities and more specific measures to assist women to access justice (e.g. special victim support and protection, legal assistance, development of capacities to obtain and use forensic evidence etc.).

As indicated, the protection of women against sexual violence in conflict has a high priority in the National Action Plans. However, in addition to that, some participating States recognize in their plans more generally the importance of the protection of women's rights and needs in the different stages of the conflict cycle or in the bilateral co-operation with conflict-affected countries. Special focus in this context is also given to refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and to their vulnerabilities.

Best practice examples:

Germany supports the ICC, but in addition suggests other means of working to enhance legal protection of women:

- By supporting government and local authorities in the investigation and prosecution of cases of gender-based violence;
- By supporting legal reforms with the aim of recognizing rape and other forms of gender-based violence as criminal offences;
- By offering foreign judicial authorities legal assistance in criminal cases involving sexual

40 Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs: Cross Learning Process on UN Security Council Resolution 1325

violence and other forms of violence against women and girls, as well as in criminal cases before international courts of justice against those responsible for genocide crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The **Austrian** National Action Plans outlines as one of its objectives preventing gender-based violence and protecting the needs and rights of women and girls within the scope of peace missions, humanitarian operations, as well as in refugee and IDP camps. It also gives preference to supporting countries with an armed conflict or with a post-conflict situation that prioritize the protection as well as the respect of women's rights.

The **United States** stipulates co-operation with civil society when it comes to the prevention of trafficking and the protection of trafficked women and girls;

- Interventions are improved to prevent trafficking in persons and protect trafficking survivors in conflict and crisis-affected areas.
- Engage with international and/or civil society organizations to ensure that standard operating procedures are in place to prevent human trafficking, especially among refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), including appropriate assistance and procedures for unaccompanied minors, to identify potential trafficked persons, and to refer survivors to appropriate service providers. As appropriate, provide support to international and civil society organizations to set up emergency care services for trafficking survivors.

4.2.4 Relief and Recovery

The relief and recovery pillar concerns issues pertaining to activities like providing humanitarian aid and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) plans. In addition, working for full recovery and thereby hopefully a more sustainable peace, also includes issues of peace-building and the prosecution of perpetrators.

UNSCR 1325 on relief and recovery and peace-building:

'Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design,

(...)

Calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreement;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

(...)

Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

(...)

Emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regards stresses the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions’.

Including women in relief and recovery activities should be a natural result of the consideration that conflicts have different impacts on women, men, girls and boys. Those who experience the consequences of conflict are best placed to advise and implement policy measures. Similarly, meaningful participation of women is crucial in efforts to establish a democratic and just society after a conflict. A society which does not take into account the views of 50% of its population cannot be said to be fair and democratic.

Findings and recommendations

Relief and recovery is the pillar which includes the widest range of different activities proposed by states. Supporting relief, recovery and peace-building is a very comprehensive endeavour which requires a multi-faceted approach.

Prosecution has been mentioned earlier and is often presented as a remedy for both prevention and protection from sexual violence as well as for fair and just reconstruction efforts.

Relief and recovery activities often mention women’s participation in these efforts. Again,

including women (descriptive representation) does not automatically ensure that women's interests are taken into account (substantive representation) in relief, recovery and peace-building plans. These processes are often assumed to be automatically linked. In reality, women's participation is a necessary but not a sufficient factor in order to integrate a gender perspective into activities. Policies must be not only developed but also implemented by those in power.

In terms of relief and recovery activities, these are often presented in tandem with a concern for women's needs (e.g. in refugee camps). They therefore also appear to have a certain concern for protection built in. This is not a problem as long as states make sure they do not employ language where women are seen exclusively as passive recipients of protection, but take care to see women also as active agents.

Gender-sensitive DDR programs are mentioned specifically in UNSCR 1325, and it is perhaps surprising that the National Action Plans do not appear to pay great attention to this issue. Female ex-combatants often have different needs from their male counterparts, as the resolution outlines. It is perhaps true, as the first Dutch National Action Plan points out, that female ex-combatants are not perceived as a security risk to the same degree as men. Many DDR programs include, if at all, a much lower percentage of women than the number of women in the fighting forces should indicate. This is an area that participating States should not neglect in their National Action Plans.

According to the first Dutch National Action Plan, the Indian all-female police unit that was deployed in Liberia resulted in a large increase in the number of Liberian women who applied to become police officers. This is a practical example of how including more women in peace-building efforts can provide role models and perhaps change the image of a potential security sector employer - an issue which National Action Plans could address.

However, while UNSCR 1325 states that de-mining programs should take women's and girls' special needs into account this is misleading because it is in reality men who constitute the vast

majority of mine casualties.⁴¹ For instance Bosnia and Herzegovina included the number of mine victims in their National Action Plan, and reported that 21 men and two women were killed in 2009. Mine clearance programs are not often mentioned in the National Action Plans, and when they are, none appear to have taken into account that mostly men are killed or maimed. This shows the necessity of conducting gender-sensitive analyses before undertaking relief and recovery activities.

Lastly, many National Action Plans portray women as ‘natural peace builders’ when they argue for women’s inclusion in peace processes. This risks perpetuating an image of women as inherently different from men, and states should be careful in the language they choose. The fact that many women participate in peace-building networks during conflicts does not necessarily mean that they are essentially more peaceful than men, but they are rendered a very different role in society with other opportunities and constraints on their actions. Women should be included in peace-building efforts in order to present their perspective and their interests on these issues, because it is their democratic right to do so.

Best practice example:

Bosnia and Herzegovina proposes several actions that can be taken in order to reduce the problem of human trafficking and to assist victims of trafficking:

- Initiate changes to the legislation in the part relating to stricter criminal sanctions for traffickers of women and girls;
- Update the database on human trafficking victims (all data should be disaggregated by sex, age, nationality);
- Create and improve programs of healthcare and psycho-social assistance to victims

41 This has been confirmed year after year by the Landmine Monitor program.

of trafficking, organizing frequent meetings with the victims to assist them reintegrate into society;

- Co-operate with employment bureaus to economically empower victims of trafficking.



5.

Tools for Action

5. Tools for Action

National Action Plans should be created by relevant government entities in co-ordination with civil society partners. Creating a plan provides an opportunity to take stock of actions that are already or should be implemented by various institutions; it improves coherence and avoids duplicating efforts. In the process valuable networks may be established, so the process itself may be as important as the document that is created. Furthermore, a National Action Plan should not be seen as a final outcome but as a living document and should be revised and updated regularly. Several factors for a successful National Action Plan have crystallized during the preparation of this publication:

1.

Work with civil society, stakeholders and other partners

Co-operation with civil society is essential in the process of drafting and implementing a National Action Plan. The selection of participating organizations should be transparent, and expectations of the level of input and discussion should be clear.

2.

Create co-ordinating mechanisms

A co-ordinating mechanism, most often led by a ministry, should be established. Which ministry is most suited to lead the work should be carefully considered.

3.

Create a baseline study

Collect information on Women, Peace and Security work that is already carried out by ministries and civil society organizations. For instance, collect data on the number and positions of female participants in various sectors for the purposes of implementation and monitoring and include this in a baseline study to measure progress.

4.

Create tailored and focused National Action Plans

National Action Plans should be tailored to reflect national priorities, but also international commitments.

Participation: Promoting women's participation in decision-making regarding peace and conflict matters is essential to any action plan to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Prevention: Designing conflict prevention measures and plans for women's participation in such activities is a major contribution to stability and to gender mainstreaming conflict response. Increasing awareness of sexual violence, creating reporting mechanisms and prosecuting offenders will help to prevent such abuses in the long term.

Protection: Protection of the human rights of women and girls, protection against sexual violence and the special protection needs of displaced women are key issues of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Relief and recovery: Women's needs and interests should be taken into account when relief and

recovery activities are undertaken.

5.

Include indicators or measureable goals, but stay flexible

Goals should be clear yet adaptable to a changing environment. Select indicators and methods for monitoring that are realistic and possible to execute while still capturing key aspects of the work on Women, Peace and Security.

6.

Develop a timeline and prioritize

Some goals are possible to obtain in the short term and therefore should have a clear timeline attached, whereas other goals (like behavioral change) are inherently long-term and need sustained efforts. It is helpful to consider how much can collectively be achieved in the relative short time frame of the National Action Plan in order not to overburden institutions. This involves drawing up a list of priorities.

7.

Include budget considerations

It is important to recognize that action to further the Women, Peace and Security agenda cannot be made without the allocation of a budget. This can involve looking at both the mechanisms for upholding and executing the National Action Plan as well as implementing the actions outlined in the National Action Plan. A balance should be struck between choosing specific allocation and financing through regular budget lines.

8.

Outline clear responsibilities

Clear lines of responsibility are essential for tasks to be performed.

9.

Monitor and evaluate progress and challenges

Implementation of the plan needs to be monitored. Plans should be evaluated at regular intervals of about three to five years. Such evaluation also needs to consider the broader national context of the work of the National Action Plans in order to be useful.

10.

Update the action plans after some years

National Action Plans should be living documents, and therefore need to be updated on a regular basis.

11.

Be prepared to meet obstacles

Building awareness of the importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and influencing attitudes and behaviors is always difficult and might encounter resistance. Therefore, it can be useful to develop an understanding of reasonable expected outcome/goals. That is, how much change is expected during the time period? Further, if the expected outcome, was

not reached, there needs to be analysis of the reasons. Registering evidence of resistance should also be part of the monitoring task.

5.1 Limits to this analysis

National Action Plans are not the only way of implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda on a national level. Several states have gender action plans or strategies to promote gender equality in the armed forces and similar approaches, which in effect contribute to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. For the purpose of this study it was however not possible to get an overview of all such plans and strategies from the 57 participating States and we have therefore concentrated our efforts on the National Action Plans.

There are several elements on the Women, Peace and Security agenda that could have been analysed more thoroughly, including more specific aspects of training, prosecution, DDR efforts etc. An area that should be explored further is whether new national legislation has been implemented and whether existing national laws have been amended to align with the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Due to the limited scope in resources and time, reports on how National Action Plans are implemented have not been taken into account. Furthermore, several of the National Action Plans were recently adopted, making it too early to measure progress, and many states have not issued official progress reports in English. Furthermore some areas where change is wanted (including changing societal and cultural norms) are inherently slow to change as well as difficult to measure. This study has therefore concentrated more on National Action Plan process and content than on implementation.

Very often the goals, objectives and concrete actions that are proposed in the National Action Plans do not support each other in a manner that is easily understandable. This might be due to alignment with concrete divisions of responsibility within different ministries or governmental bodies responsible for different areas (that do not have anything to do with the Women, Peace and Security agenda). It was not possible for the authors to investigate this within the time allocated to the study. It may also reflect an unclear National Action Plan development process.

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