Foreign & Commonwealth Office | Department for International Development | Ministry of Defence

Questionnaire to inform the review of the current 3-year UK National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 women, peace & security and the development of the 2014-2017 National Action Plan

In 2006, the UK developed a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and strengthen its ability to reduce the impact of conflict on women and to promote their participation in conflict resolution and peace-building. The NAP was substantially revised in 2010 following the 10-year anniversary of UNSCR 1325.

The distribution of this questionnaire and review of responses is carried out in conjunction with Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) and is targeted at Civil Society Organisations and a number of posts within HMG's internal network. The purpose is to inform the review of the UK's delivery of the current NAP (2010-2013) and will help to shape the development of the new 3-year NAP (2014-2017), due to be published in March 2014. This consultation process builds on recent work undertaken by an independent consultant to evaluate the current UK NAP and will feed into the three year progress report of the 2010-2013 NAP that will report to Parliament in October 2013.

Feel free to provide further feedback or evidence on relevant items not covered in the questionnaire separately.

The deadline for submissions is Friday 6th of September at 18:00 GMT to **Shah.Rahman@fco.gov.uk**

If you feel comfortable with doing so, please provide your details below:

***Name of Organisation*:** Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS)

Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) is an expert network of peacebuilding, human rights, humanitarian and development NGOs, academics and grassroots peace builders. Through research, campaigning and advocacy, we work to bridge the gap between the realities of women at the local level in conflict-affected countries and UK decision makers and practitioners working on peace and security. GAPS members include: Action Aid, Amnesty International UK, CARE International, International Alert, International Rescue Committee, Northern Ireland Women's European Platform, Oxfam GB, Saferworld, Soroptimist International, United Nations Association – UK, UN Women UK, Widows for Peace through Democracy, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Womankind, Women for Women International, and independent consultants.

***Type of Organisation*:** x **NGO** □ **Government** □ **Other ……..**

***Country*:** UK, with partners with global operations

***Contact Person (optional)*:** Hannah Bond, Director

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1. How would you rate the UK's work on Women, Peace and Security in comprehensively covering all aspects of UNSCR 1325?

   Rate between 1-5: 2.5

Comments:

GAPS commends the steps that HMG has taken to incorporate UNSCR 1325 into aspects of its work and the international leadership it has shown. That said, increased efforts are required before UNSCR 1325 and its related UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) are comprehensively incorporated and integration is achieved in HMG's policies, programmes, systems and processes.

GAPS understands the importance of the UK NAP in providing a foundation for and documenting the UK's work on WPS, UNSCR 1325, and its related resolutions. Whilst GAPS notes the major advances that have been made in some areas of HMG's WPS work, there remains a gap between commitments in the NAP and its implementation. GAPS also suggests that as conflict and human rights policies are developed, they should be assessed against commitments in the NAP and UNSC WPS resolutions to ensure that HMG comprehensively assesses how such policies are designed and implemented in accordance with UNSCR 1325 and the UK's international commitments on WPS.

GAPS welcomes promising developments since the last NAP such as the FCO Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) and DFID's upcoming Call to Action on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Emergencies which have furthered the UK's WPS agenda. However, with a large focus on the 'protection' pillar of UNSCR 1325 and some efforts on prevention of sexual violence, HMG needs to ensure work plans are developed for the 'participation', 'prevention' (gender-sensitive conflict prevention), and 'relief and recovery' pillars.

GAPS believes that despite the improvements presented by the 2010 - 2013 NAP from the previous plan, it currently is not a strategic document that outlines the UK Government's position and vision on WPS, and how it will achieve that vision by mainstreaming WPS in HMG policy, programmes, systems and processes. It is rather a collation of HMG's on-going and planned work on WPS within the given NAP period. GAPS believes that HMG can go further by outlining its vision for WPS in Government policy, programmes, systems and processes within a WPS Strategy. GAPS recommends that HMG formalises its vision on WPS in a clear and distinct WPS Strategy from which the NAP is drawn, ensuring that the Strategy comprehensively covers all UNSCR 1325 pillars, and that of its associated resolutions. GAPS suggests that the Strategy is developed during the first half of the 2014 – 2017 NAP and should inform the 2015 review and Report to Parliament. It should be cross-governmental, have a dedicated funding mechanism and should include extensive civil society consultation both during development and on-going review. Such a strategy would support HMG in developing a WPS plan that more effectively covers all aspects of UNSCR 1325. GAPS would welcome the opportunity to work with HMG on the development of a WPS Strategy.

In addition, to ensure UNSCR 1325 is comprehensively covered in HMG's WPS work, GAPS believes that there is a need for HMG to work more effectively at cross-and inter-departmental levels. HMG should ensure that WPS is integrated in the work of all London-based and post/country-office staff (including both Civil Servants and locally appointed staff) who work in and on conflict-affected and fragile states. This will help to ensure that WPS is not a separate stream of work from peace and security issues, and that officials are supported to work strategically in achieving the NAP objectives.

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation of the UK's National Action Plan? How could it be made more effective?

Rate between 1-5: 2.5

GAPS is encouraged that HMG is looking at how to improve the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) mechanisms of the NAP for the 2014 – 2017 period. GAPS commends HMG's annual Report to Parliament, which is important for transparency and accountability purposes. HMG should continue its commitment to reporting in the 2014 – 2017 NAP and should allocate greater resources to ensure that MEL can provide an effective means for HMG to improve upon its WPS work. GAPS believes that strong monitoring mechanisms are important within Government to ensure HMG is accountable for its WPS work, and progress on UNSCR 1325 made in an efficient and effective manner. Despite the annual Report to Parliament, there is significant room for improvement within the MEL of the NAP.

HMG has, thus far, reported only in a narrative format, and not against objectives of the NAP. In the 2014 – 2017 NAP, HMG should report directly against its indicators and activities. GAPS also recommends that HMG develops impact level objectives with SMART indicators and clear targets that support its reporting. GAPS also suggests indicators should be established with a discrete timeframe. HMG should draw on its own resources, particularly within DFID, to develop these indicators and ensure it is achieving impact with its NAP, rather than achieving against activities and outputs only. GAPS would be happy to work with HMG to develop indicators for the 2014 – 2017 NAP.

GAPS welcomed the 2013 evaluation of the NAP and was glad to have been consulted. However, GAPS believes that this should have included more in-country consultation and that the evaluation and its findings should be made public and shared with civil society and governments in the Bilateral Section of the NAP. HMG should also consult with civil society and relevant stakeholders outside of London, particularly in Northern Ireland, as well as Scotland and Wales. GAPS would encourage HMG to conduct an evaluation of the 2014 – 2017 NAP, which includes extensive CSO and government consultation in the UK and in-country, including both NAP focus and non-focus countries. A commitment to an evaluation and UK and in-country consultation should be included in the 2014 – 2017 NAP and dedicated funding allocated to ensure civil society in the UK and in-country are able to participate without using their own resources.

3. How would you rate the UK NAP in helping you to achieve your organisation's goals on Women, Peace and Security?

Rate between 1-5: 3

Comments:

The NAP has been a useful document for GAPS and GAPS members as it brings the activities that HMG is undertaking to implement UNSCR 1325 into one UK Government policy document. It provides a foundation for discussions with HMG in-country and at international levels, and is useful for civil society as it outlines the UK's commitments. A more comprehensive NAP which incorporates HMG's WPS vision and all aspects of policy relating to conflict-affected and fragile environments would ensure that the NAP is a more useful document for GAPS and GAPS members, particularly in relation to conflict prevention and women's inclusion in conflict resolution and peace building.

For GAPS partners in Northern Ireland, the NAP has been a useful tool to enable them to better understand the UK's work outside of the UK. However, it does not reflect HMG's commitments to women in Northern Ireland. GAPS recommends HMG implements UNSCR 1325 in Northern Ireland where the UK has both a commitment and need to ensuring implementation. Currently women in Northern Ireland are excluded from the benefits that inclusion in the NAP would afford them. This was noted in the recommendations of CEDAW in 2008 and 2013. See 2013 CEDAW Recommendation 43 (b):

43. The Committee calls upon the State party:

(b) Ensure the participation of women in the post-conflict process in Northern Ireland, in line with Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).

4. How would you rate the UK Government's bilateral support to other countries in the NAP? What do you feel has or has not worked?

Rate between 1-5: 3

Comments:

GAPS welcomed the inclusion and extension of the bilateral and regional sections of the NAP in 2010 and again in 2012. GAPS believes that the Bilateral Section is a vital way in which HMG implements UNSCR 1325 and WPS in conflict-affected countries and provides a useful guide for London and post/Country Office level dialogue on WPS. GAPS encourages HMG to expand the number of countries in the Bilateral Section and to strengthen the ways in which it mainstreams WPS to ensure that more conflict-affected and fragile states are included, improving accountability mechanisms.

GAPS believes that the Bilateral Section enables HMG to have specific plans that address the gender context in different conflict-affected and fragile states. GAPS therefore recommends that the Bilateral Section remains in the NAP for the 2014 – 2017 period and that it incorporates lessons learned since 2010. GAPS welcomes the Bilateral Section's commitment to HMG activity in specific countries, providing additional accountability to ensure WPS work is on-going in conflict-affected and fragile states. GAPS recommends that all HMG country plans are linked to a broader governmental WPS Strategy. HMG should also ensure WPS is mainstreamed into Country Business and Operational Plans of conflict-affected, non-Bilateral Section countries. This is a key way in which HMG will ensure WPS is integrated across its work in conflict-affected and fragile states.

GAPS recommends that the NAP be integrated into other HMG frameworks, such as DFID's Strategic Vision for Girls and Women, and the tri-departmental Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS). GAPS welcomes that the BSOS makes reference to implementing UNSCR 1325, and to the importance of supporting women's participation in peacebuilding. However, while the BSOS mentions commitment to the NAP, GAPS believes WPS should be mainstreamed throughout all of the UK's conflict prevention activities. To support implementation, GAPS recommends that a thorough gender analysis is included within HMG's conflict analysis process (known as Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability - JACS) for all country strategies, not just of those included in the Bilateral Section of the NAP.

The Bilateral Section plans should be based on expertise both within Government and civil society in the UK and in-country. These plans need to be founded on gender analyses and should be informed by consultation with local women's rights groups. HMG should commit to two stages of UK and in-country consultation during the life of the 2014 – 2017 NAP to ensure that it continues to be relevant as in-country contexts change and develop. We also

recommend that HMG increase its collaboration with other countries' NAPs to ensure the UK NAP and Bilateral Sections are complementary to their NAPs. For example, as more countries develop their own NAPs it is vital that HMG ensures the UK Bilateral Sections and the country NAPs are aligned.

GAPS-organised workshops in-country and in the UK in 2011 highlighted a number of key areas that civil society and national governments believe are key to the development of the Bilateral Section, which have not been sufficiently met. Participants recommended that the Bilateral Section should include a three stage process: engaging with host governments to ensure coordination with their own activities and strategies, engagement with the donor community to negate the risk of duplication and ensuring value for money, and engagement with local civil society and other experts, ensuring the plans reflect the needs and desires of communities in the countries the Plans are designed to assist. GAPS recommends HMG adhere to these three steps to ensure its plans are context specific and sustainable impact can be achieved.

5. What criteria should be used to determine target countries that the UK could support to develop their own NAPs? What other support should be offered to non-priority countries?

Comments:

GAPS welcomes the UK's offer to support the development of other countries' NAPS and encourages HMG to do so with financial resources and human resource expertise to ensure the NAPs comprehensively cover UNSCR 1325, are tailored to the specific country context and that resources are available for implementation. HMG should also ensure that support for implementing other country NAPs is integrated into the UK NAP to maximise coordination between the UK, other national governments and civil society.

GAPS believes that the UK should support and encourage the development of other country NAPs. However, we encourage HMG to ensure that its own learning is included in this, and that the development of other country NAPs includes significant consultation with local civil society, particularly women's rights groups, and on-going civil society engagement.

In order to determine criteria for NAP support, the UK should undertake an assessment of NAPs and support countries to improve or develop NAPs based on that assessment. The assessment should cover: in-country need; resources for NAP implementation after NAP development; and support from other donors. The UK should not support the development of NAPs alone and should be committed to supporting NAP development and implementation through human and financial resources.

6. How would you rate the UK Government's regional Women, Peace and Security support to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)? What do you feel has or has not worked?

Rate between 1-5: 2.5

Comments:

The inclusion of MENA was an important step for the NAP. GAPS welcomed HMG's acknowledgment of the need for WPS issues in MENA to be recognised in the NAP. As the MENA Regional plan has been operational for 18 months, GAPS suggests the Regional plan be replaced by country specific plans for MENA countries and be included in the Bilateral

Section. Most importantly, HMG should consult in-country with women's organisations and activists in different MENA countries to ensure that the NAP reflects the context specific WPS issues in the different countries of MENA. This will ensure plans account for the history, and current context affecting women. GAPS recommends that the 2014 – 2017 NAP should have a Bilateral Section for each priority country in MENA which outlines how HMG will implement UNSCR 1325 in each country and mainstreams gender and NAP objectives into Country Business and Operational Plans so that activities, indicators and objectives are country-specific.

7. Has the UK's multilateral engagement been effective? Which areas, if any, need to be strengthened?

Comments:

GAPS welcomes the UK's position globally on WPS and UNSCR 1325. We acknowledge the vital role that HMG and the PSVI played in UNSCR 2106 and the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. While extremely timely and important, GAPS is concerned that HMG's focus on sexual violence will detract from the importance of the agency of women in conflict-affected and fragile states and their on-going contributions to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. GAPS believes that the UK has the capacity to lead globally, on participation, conflict prevention, and relief and recovery and would encourage HMG to include this as a major feature of a WPS Strategy.

We encourage HMG to set a NAP objective of having global indicators on WPS adopted formally by the UN SC and made operational. We further encourage HMG to continue funding for UN Women, and include details on how this funding has been utilised in the 2014 and subsequent NAP Reports to Parliament. GAPS also suggests HMG considers how WPS commitments comply with the UNSCs resolutions and other aspects of international law, such as CEDAW, and how these have been integrated into the process for UPRs and are included in the UK's reporting and analysis. GAPS recommends that HMG adopts the recommendations of the UNSG and ring fences at least 15% of its conflict-related funds to support women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building.

8. Are there multilateral partners, other than the European Union and the United Nations, which we should be working with (e.g. African Union)?

Comments:

GAPS believes that HMG should ensure that WPS and UNSCR 1325 are mainstreamed across all of its work with multilateral organisations to ensure UNSCR 1325 can be implemented at a multilateral level. There are a number of ways in which HMG could achieve this, including through its funding mechanisms and expertise provided both to pooled funding or direct funding and expertise provided to multilateral partners.

Specific partners should be determined once the Bilateral Section countries have been identified. To ensure greater cross-government and inter-departmental coordination, it is important that HMG connects its work with multilateral partners to the Bilateral Section of the NAP.

9. In your opinion, what have been the major achievements and challenges that you have faced in implementing activities related to UNSCR 1325?

Achievements:

While GAPS members have a number of achievements in implementing our WPS work, we have highlighted the following examples given their relevance to the participation pillar, and the Regional and Bilateral Sections of the NAP.

The Arab Partnership Fund has allowed Saferworld to implement a regional project in Egypt, Libya and Yemen to strengthen women's public voice. Saferworld has conducted and will shortly disseminate research on the way women's safety and security concerns are affecting their political participation, and has set up the 'Our Voice, Our Strength' network to help strengthen ties between activists, and increase their level of engagement with national and international policymakers. WILPF has been working with women activists across the MENA region to support women's engagement with peace and security issues in their respective countries and communities - http://www.wilpfinternational.org/mena-agenda-1325/.

Womankind partner, the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO), works to achieve equity for Dalit women who face caste, gender and class based discrimination throughout Nepal. Supported by Womankind, FEDO implements a project to increase local women's participation in peacebuilding and democratic processes in four of the districts most affected by conflict. FEDO has established Dalit women's groups, pressure groups and awareness groups at the village and district levels which has supported Dalit women access to justice, develop skills, undertake income-generation activities and participate in local governance.

Challenges:

Challenges have included limited flexible funding, which could include the cost of staff time dedicated to implementation of gender, peace and security commitments. It is also unclear what funds are available for activities related to UNSCR 1325 and gender, peace and security. For instance, the NAP includes a commitment to commissioning research on gender and conflict, and this is assigned to the "relevant commissioning department". The FCO's PSVI fund and DFID's Research and Innovation fund have both been launched to tackle sexual violence in conflict and VAWG. While these resources are very much welcomed, there is no clear funding commitment for broader gender, peace and security initiatives, of which addressing sexual and gender-based violence is just one part.

Difficulty in coordinating with the three departments is an additional challenge, as work on UNSCR 1325 and the NAP is generally seen as an FCO lead. While the FCO may coordinate NAP activity, it is the responsibility of the FCO, DFID and MOD to ensure that all officials working on conflict issues are aware of the NAP and are able to engage effectively with civil society organisations and NGOs working on WPS. The level of understanding of gender mainstreaming and implementation of UNSCR 1325 across HMG has been a challenge to comprehensive, coordinated NAP implementation.

The need for HMG to recognise the wider significance of the WPS agenda in terms of transforming existing notions of peace and security to reflect women's concerns and experiences has been a further challenge.