



CORPORATE EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT TO

# **NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**



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# FOREWORD

UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), together with nine subsequent resolutions, has been the central framework for tackling the many challenges that women face in situations of conflict. Over the last decade, UN Women has played a crucial role in supporting the development and implementation of WPS National Action Plans (WPS NAPs) as the main tool by which these global WPS frameworks are translated into concrete strategies, actions and outcomes at national level.

The Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) undertook this evaluation as part of its corporate evaluation plan with the aim of assessing the relevance, coherence and coordination, effectiveness, organizational efficiency, sustainability and extent to which a human rights approach and gender equality principles were integrated in UN Women's support to WPS NAP development and implementation processes in order to meet WPS commitments and adopt accountability frameworks in conflict and post-conflict countries. UN Women's WPS NAPs work was assessed across the Entity's integrated mandate: normative, operational and coordination at country, regional and global levels.

The evaluation found that UN Women has been effective in facilitating WPS NAP processes that build awareness and consensus at the national level and strongly contribute to their adoption. This work has contributed to laying the foundations for transformational change in gender equality and human rights. UN Women supports high-impact criteria for developing NAPs, which includes strong leadership and effective coordination, inclusive processes, costing and budgeting, a monitoring and evaluation framework and flexibility to adapt to emerging situations; however, this support has not always translated into effective NAPs mainly due to external challenges. The evaluation also found that UN Women would benefit from

a theory of change to help support national governments with implementation of their WPS NAPs, recognizing the importance of national ownership of WPS NAPs for their long-term sustainability, and ensuring that this ownership is a central element of UN Women's engagement on WPS NAPs.

The evaluation recommends that UN Women devise a strategy to harmonize its external coordination efforts, with a focus on strengthening and linking global, regional and national-level coordination processes, and continue to expand its current strategies to support WPS NAP development. The Entity should also define a clear and consistent strategy for support to WPS NAP implementation. UN Women should enhance its internal reporting systems related to tracking financial resources and results towards WPS NAPs to better demonstrate impact and results. It should also strengthen technical leadership to ensure a harmonized approach to WPS NAP support.

The management response and action plan presented by UN Women acknowledges the need to use this evaluation to further advance UN Women's work on WPS NAPs. It confirms UN Women's commitment to learn from its experience and use gender-responsive evidence of what works to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.



**Lisa Sutton**

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# ACRONYMS

<b>AP</b>	Asia and the Pacific
<b>AS</b>	Arab States
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AWP</b>	Annual Work Plan
<b>BPfA</b>	Beijing Platform for Action
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CO</b>	Country Office
<b>CRSV</b>	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>ECA</b>	Europe and Central Asia
<b>ESA</b>	East and Southern Africa
<b>EVAW</b>	End Violence Against Women
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GE</b>	Gender Equality
<b>GRB</b>	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
<b>IEAS</b>	Independent Evaluation and Audit Service
<b>IES</b>	Independent Evaluation Service
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring & Evaluation
<b>MIMPAZ</b>	Inter-institutional Table on Women, Peace and Security
<b>NAP</b>	National Actions Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>RAP</b>	Regional Action Plan
<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinators Office
<b>RMS</b>	Results Management System

<b>RO</b>	Regional Office
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SP</b>	Strategic Plan
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNSCR 1325</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
<b>WCA</b>	West and Central Africa
<b>WEE</b>	Women's Economic Empowerment
<b>WLPP</b>	Women's Leadership and Political Participation
<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Security





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### CORPORATE EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT TO

# NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

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Over the last two decades, **UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)** has been the central framework for addressing challenges faced by women in situations of conflict, along with subsequent supporting resolutions in this area. National Action Plans for implementation of WPS objectives (WPS NAPs) are the main mechanisms by which these global WPS frameworks are translated into concrete strategies, actions and outcomes at national level. Responsibility for implementation of WPS NAPs lies with national governments as outlined in UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions. As of November 2020, 92 UN Member States and territories had adopted a NAP on WPS, while several regional and subregional organizations had also developed Regional Action Plans (RAPs) for implementation of UNSCR 1325.

UN Women plays a pivotal role in forwarding WPS objectives at global, regional and national level. Globally, UN Women provides leadership, knowledge sharing and advocacy on WPS, and coordinates UN system work in this area. At regional level, UN Women supports an enabling environment for regional and subregional organizations to advance WPS objectives. At national level, UN Women supports countries to develop, implement, monitor and review their WPS NAPs, including by providing coordination, technical expertise, guidance and tools, and lessons and best practices.

UN Women makes significant financial investments in the area of WPS, specifically related to work on NAPs. For the period 2015–2019, UN Women's expenditure on its Strategic Output 4.1/4.1.2, '*WPS commitments and accountability frameworks adopted and implemented in conflict and post-conflict situations*', was US\$ 88.45 million, while the amount budgeted was US\$ 114.29 million. Ninety-six per cent of this funding came from non-core resources.

### Evaluation purpose and focus

The evaluation assessed UN Women's support to NAPs development and implementation processes in order to meet WPS commitments and adopt accountability frameworks in conflict and post-conflict countries. Support to WPS NAPs development was assessed through UN Women's interventions, while the assessment of support to the implementation process focused on UN Women's contribution to establishing an enabling environment and processes that allow WPS NAPs to be implemented effectively. Effectiveness was assessed by looking at the extent to which UN Women promoted the five elements identified in the 2015 Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as critical for a high-impact NAP that is likely to be implemented and generate change. The five elements were strong leadership and effective coordination; an inclusive design process; costing and allocated budgets for implementation; a monitoring and evaluation framework; and flexibility to adapt to emerging situations.

The evaluation focused on the period 2015–2019 and covered results from the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014–2018 and the first two years of the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan.

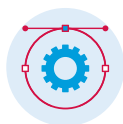
## EVALUATION OBJECTIVES



Assess the **relevance** and coherence; **effectiveness** and organizational efficiency; and **sustainability** of UN Women's global, regional and national work to support WPS NAPs development and implementation processes



Analyse how **human rights** perspectives and **gender equality principles** are integrated into UN Women's support to WPS NAPs development and implementation processes



Identify a menu of evidence of **what works and what doesn't** work in terms of UN Women's support to NAPs development and implementation to facilitate choices about future investments



Identify **lessons learned** and provide action-oriented **recommendations** to solidify UN Women's work in this area

In addition to these initial objectives, the evaluation's focus was expanded during the inception phase to include a light-touch assessment of the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for WPS and UN Women's work in this area.

The evaluation findings are intended to inform strategic decision-making, organizational learning and accountability in relation to UN Women's WPS NAP work. The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN Women Executive Board, UN Women senior management and programme staff at the global, regional and country levels. The evaluation is also intended to be useful for other actors working on WPS, including partner governments, international and national level non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), UN agencies and development partners.

## Methodology and limitations

The evaluation was both summative and formative in nature, summarizing information on existing UN Women strategies and offering recommendations for future work. It adopted a mixed-methods approach and involved four main components of data collection:

- **Desk review:** summaries of annual workplans and WPS NAP work were created for 60 countries, with detailed in-depth review of documentation on WPS NAP work for 20 countries plus headquarters.
- **Virtual case studies** in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Iraq, Mali, Nepal, Uganda and at headquarters level; and 143 interviews were conducted (127 female; 16 male).
- **Surveys:** three surveys were conducted with UN Women country offices (response rate 56 per cent/31), CSOs and government partners (response rate 30 per cent /42), and international organizations (response rate 22 per cent/18).
- **Analysis of data from UN Women systems:** OneApp Dashboard, DAMS, ATLAS and RMS.

The evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative analysis, with the evaluation matrix providing an overarching framework for analysis across all evaluation components. A reconstructed theory of change was developed for UN Women's work on WPS NAPs and was used as the overarching theory to understand how change happens in this area of work. Contribution analysis was used to develop an overall performance story and assess plausible contributions to observed changes. The evaluation was conducted in line with gender equality and human rights principles as set out in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation used the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations<sup>2</sup> and the UN Women Handbook "How to manage gender-responsive evaluation."<sup>3</sup>

The most significant limitations to the evaluation resulted from the outbreak of COVID-19. COVID-19 related travel restrictions meant that all field missions had to be replaced by virtual case studies. Therefore, it was not possible to conduct the planned focus group discussions with beneficiaries to gather first-hand evidence on the impact of UN Women's work. In addition, the COVID-19 situation meant that not all identified stakeholders were available for interview.

1 UNEG (2017) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (United Nations Evaluation Group).

2 UNEG (2014) Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluations <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

3 UN Women (2015) UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation <https://www.UNWomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>



**CONCLUSION 1**

**UN Women's WPS NAP support is strongly grounded in SDGs 5 & 16 and in an understanding of local WPS priorities and contexts, allowing the Entity to advance these global goals in a contextually relevant way.**

UN Women used multiple strategies to understand the priorities of local stakeholders and to align its support to the country context. These strategies were effective and ensured that UN Women's WPS NAP work was relevant in a variety of contexts and was able to address different types of WPS challenges. They included working closely with government and civil society stakeholders on WPS NAPs, for example, in Kyrgyzstan strong engagement with CSOs increased the local relevance of UN Women's WPS NAP work. In addition, supporting national entities to lead WPS NAP development, as in Uganda where UN Women emphasized strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Gender to lead the WPS NAP process. Connecting WPS NAP work with wider national plans and processes was another strategy for alignment with local context, for example, in Tunisia UN Women's support was well aligned to existing government plans. Similarly, learning from previous NAP processes, as in Nepal where taking account of lessons from the first WPS NAP helped to increase the national relevance of UN Women's support to the second WPS NAP.

UN Women's WPS NAP support was closely aligned with the SDG framework across all countries. In addition, the evaluation found alignment between UN Women's NAP

support and CEDAW in a number of countries, including examples where CEDAW or the Beijing Platform for Action were effectively used as an overarching framework to advocate for WPS.

The evaluation found that UN Women's WPS NAP work could be better aligned to a broader set of normative frameworks at both global and regional level, and that achieving such alignment requires building knowledge and commitment about these frameworks and their relevance to WPS. For example, in Uganda, the training on linkages between WPS and other normative frameworks provided during the WPS NAP consultation process was a key factor in facilitating alignment. The evaluation found that work on the NAP/RAP agenda at regional level was particularly weak and there were insufficient efforts to link national and regional plans and processes. An important factor that could help to make WPS at the regional level potentially successful was the strength and effectiveness of the regional institutions themselves, including adequate staffing, financing and technical expertise. This suggests that UN Women's work at the regional level could be more strategic in assessing when and how engagement with regional bodies and processes could add value and is worth investing in.

**CONCLUSION 2**

**UN Women's normative and coordination activities in support of WPS NAPs are the most visible and valued by all stakeholders.**

UN Women was widely recognized as playing a unique role in relation to normative and coordination aspects of WPS NAPs and as adding significant value in these areas. However, there appears to be limited reflection, either at organization-wide level or at field level, on how the different roles that UN Women plays in relation to WPS NAPs can operate in synergy to generate greater impact.

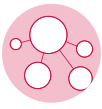
At country level, UN Women's inclusive approach, strong convening power and perceived neutrality enabled it to fulfil its coordination mandate in the area of WPS NAPs effectively. At global level, UN Women's normative role allowed it to lead on WPS within the global policy space, as well as establish standards for national NAP processes.

However, there was less recognition among stakeholders of UN Women's operational role and activities in support of NAPs.

The evaluation found that there is significant value in UN Women's mandate to support all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions on WPS, as this gives the Entity traction and influence on WPS with all countries, including development partner countries. However, the importance of this mandate was only recognized by global level actors, suggesting it is less visible to actors at the national level.

## CONCLUSION: COHERENCE AND COORDINATION |

## CONCLUSION 3



**UN Women engages in external coordination on multiple levels. There is space for strengthening coherence between these levels so that they better support each other.**

UN Women was perceived as having a clear mandate to lead coordination on WPS and as being strong in this coordination role. The Entity engages in coordination at national, regional and global level, with the strongest focus on national-level coordination. This national coordination work included the mobilization of stakeholders and resources, as well as the establishment of NAP development processes and national coordination mechanisms. It generally involved leading three separate but interconnected coordination processes: coordination of national government, CSOs and other national stakeholders; coordination of UN system engagement; and coordination of development partners. An example of successful national level coordination can be seen in the establishment of the 'Friends of WPS in Mali' and informal group of like-minded development partners, which is used to share information, develop common strategies and has been key to generating external funding for Mali's WPS NAP implementation.

At the regional and global level, UN Women coordinated knowledge generation and exchange; standardization of approaches; and, to a lesser extent, resource mobilization and funding. The extent and efficacy of UN Women's

regional coordination work was found to vary considerably between regions and appeared to be heavily dependent on the RO's capacity. UN Women ROs have coordinated some regional level interaction on WPS and NAPs among different sets of stakeholders in the Middle East and North Africa, South East Asia and the Western Balkans. Meanwhile, UN Women's global level coordination role was primarily focused on wider WPS objectives, with less reference to WPS NAPs specifically, and included participation in important global level coordination and funding mechanisms related to WPS.

The evaluation concluded that more could be done to strengthen, extend and connect the different elements of UN Women's external coordination on NAPs. It also identified some challenges that UN Women faces in its coordination role including difficulties in coordinating with larger UN agencies; weakness in developing synergies with other international actors; challenges in engaging with a wider set of government actors beyond those directly involved with the NAP; and limited ability to reach beyond the national level to support local level NAP coordination.

## CONCLUSIONS: EFFECTIVENESS |

## CONCLUSION 4



**UN Women is effective in facilitating national NAP processes that build awareness and consensus and strongly contribute to the adoption of NAPs.**

In most contexts, UN Women plays a unique and effective role in bringing together multiple actors and providing neutral convening spaces for dialogue over WPS and NAPs. The Entity's inclusive approach and perceived neutrality have enabled it to play this role. These processes generate commitment and awareness of WPS issues among a wide range of stakeholders; allow discussion on sensitive issues; and build consensus for the WPS NAP. For example, in Guatemala the NAP process facilitated by UN Women opened up new spaces for dialogue, created more awareness of WPS and stimulated significant institutional changes. Meanwhile in Nepal, NAP processes supported by UN Women brought together various elements of government, the army, the police, CSOs and CRSV survivors and

enabled discussion and consensus building, including on how to address sensitive issues within the NAP.

UN Women's convening role enabled the Entity to increase awareness of WPS objectives and of context-specific WPS issues. These included issues related to the pursuit of recognition and justice for victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Nepal and Guatemala and gendered implications of Prevention of Violent Extremism among youth in Kyrgyzstan, as well as women's participation in the management of water resources, the role of women mediators and the value of community conflict resolution in a number of countries.

UN Women's convening work on NAPs also supported the development of important relationships among different stakeholders, which could then be used to advance wider WPS objectives. For example, in Guatemala, the WPS NAP process convened by UN Women provided a basis for civil society actors to then engage with government actors outside this process and advocate for issues such as reparations for victims and survivors of CRSV.

UN Women's strong relationship with civil society, women's machineries and the other sectors involved in contributing to gender equality is recognized as adding value to WPS NAP development and implementation. However, while UN Women field presence generally had a good relationship with actors in sectors involved in advancing gender equality, they did not always have strong relationships with wider elements of state and society that are also important for advancing NAPs.

## CONCLUSION 5



### **UN Women supports high-impact criteria for NAPs, but this support does not always translate into effective NAPs due to external challenges.**

The evaluation assessed the extent to which UN Women promotes the high-impact NAP criteria identified in the Global Study: strong leadership and effective coordination; an inclusive design process; costing and allocated budgets for implementation; a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework; and flexibility to adapt to emerging situations. It found that UN Women focused most strongly on promoting the high-impact criteria of strong leadership and coordination and of inclusive NAP design processes, and that the Entity has been largely effective in doing so.

UN Women supports strong leadership and coordination for WPS through a range of strategies including advocating for the establishment of effective national coordination bodies; identifying and building the capacity of champions within key institutions who can drive NAP processes forward; and supporting CSO leadership to play a watchdog, advocacy or implementation function in relation to NAPs. Particularly strong examples of UN Women's support for leadership and coordination were found in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nepal and Nigeria, as well as in Georgia, where a UN Women project succeeded in supporting the establishment of a national coordination mechanism located in the Prime Minister's Office to oversee WPS NAP implementation. However, UN Women's efforts to develop strong leadership and coordination for NAPs were frequently hindered by high turnover of government officials and by reorganization of government structures.

UN Women supports inclusive NAP design processes, including by supporting long and complex NAP consultation processes to ensure that all relevant stakeholders can participate and by promoting the participation of a wide range of actors. For example, the WPS NAP development process in Uganda involved in-depth consultations with civil society and state partners, as well as with women survivors of CRSV, and engaged non-traditional stakeholders such as religious leaders. However, the evaluation found that there is space to further improve support

for inclusivity, including by engaging a wider range of groups such as youth, internally displaced persons, indigenous people and women with disabilities. It identified that major challenges to inclusive NAP design processes include poor security situations and weak regional level capacity and infrastructure, both of which prevent outreach beyond capital cities.

The evaluation found that UN Women's support for the other elements of a high-impact WPS NAP was more mixed. UN Women supports costing and budgeting of NAPs in some contexts, primarily through organizing costing exercises and discussions, and supporting preparation of draft costing plans. However, such support rarely results in a costing plan that is adopted by governments as an integral part of the WPS NAP, or translates into annual operational budgets of implementing institutions. This type of support has become more prominent in the latest generation of WPS NAPs. An example of successful work in this area was in Uganda, where UN Women supported the costing of the WPS NAP and development of operational plans and budgets for each ministry/agency involved in implementation.

UN Women supports the development of M&E frameworks within most WPS NAP processes. However, a common pattern appears to be that, although an M&E framework is established, actual monitoring processes are weak due to limited capacity or commitment. The most widely used strategies by UN Women to advance M&E were providing technical and financial support for the development of M&E guidelines and frameworks, and capacity building for implementation of M&E frameworks. There was limited evidence of UN Women's support for the development of flexible WPS NAPs or for adapting NAPs to respond to changing contexts, although in Afghanistan and Iraq stakeholders reported that the NAP in these countries was adjusted to reflect the changing security situation.

While UN Women mostly supports the high-impact WPS NAP criteria, the extent to which such criteria were included in the final WPS NAP is mediated by the complexity of context, the actors involved and interests at play, and the final decisions of governments. In particular, the inclusion of these criteria in the final WPS NAP is often hindered by lack of financial resources; lack of political commitment;

political turbulence; limited capacities of national stakeholders to manage the process; and violent conflict. Other barriers that were mentioned included weak coordination among ministries; difficulties in including stakeholders outside the capital and major cities; turnover in the government; and lack of institutional infrastructure to support localization.

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## CONCLUSION: GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS |

### CONCLUSION 6



**UN Women's WPS NAP work contributes to laying the foundations for transformational change. However, the Entity would benefit from a clear Theory of Change (ToC) in this area.**

While UN Women's support to WPS NAPs helped to lay the foundations for transformational change, the Entity did not have a well-developed understanding of how such change comes about. Nor did it have a range of standardized intervention strategies that could be adapted to local contexts to support WPS implementation that would lead to transformational change. It would therefore be useful for UN Women to elaborate a ToC that demonstrates how its WPS NAP work can move from lower to higher outcomes reflected in progress towards WPS NAP goals. This understanding would facilitate the development of more effective strategies for supporting transformation of gender inequalities and women's empowerment.

The evaluation found that UN Women's WPS NAP support advances gender equality and women's empowerment by promoting inclusive processes; raising awareness of gender equality and women's empowerment; promoting the inclusion of these issues in WPS NAP documents; supporting women's empowerment and leadership; and building the capacity of partners on gender equality. However, the evaluation was unable to assess whether these strategies contributed to actual transformative change in the lives of women and girls, because such transformation tends to be a slow and non-linear process driven by local actors.

In all countries, UN Women promoted an inclusive WPS NAP process and sought to engage a wide range of marginalized rights holders, including some of the most left behind groups, notably conflict-affected women and survivors of CRSV. The evaluation found that UN Women's support to the WPS NAP development process in Uganda

was a good practice in this regard, as it brought together a wide variety of duty bearers and rights holders in nine regional consultations. However, in other cases the evaluation found that UN Women could improve its support for inclusivity and provide more space for the most marginalized voices within WPS NAP consultation processes.

In Nepal, Guatemala and Mali, UN Women-coordinated WPS NAP processes contributed to increasing women's confidence; informing them about their rights; and empowering them to raise their voices and make demands of duty bearers. In Nepal, the WPS NAP process supported by UN Women helped marginalized groups such as indigenous and Dalit women, CRSV survivors, female-headed households and female former combatants articulate their needs with government stakeholders. In Iraq, UN Women supported the Women Leadership Institute to provide psychological, social, legal and economic support to displaced, abused and marginalized women and to inform these women about their legal rights.

UN Women's WPS NAP work has included strengthening the capacity of partners to advance gender equality. UN Women's support to civil society to implement parallel accountability mechanisms to ensure gender equality was embedded in WPS NAP processes has been very valuable. The evaluation also identified numerous examples of UN Women building the capacity of both civil society and government partners to integrate these issues more effectively into their work.

**CONCLUSION 7**

**Given the human and financial resources available for NAP development and implementation, the activities implemented produced satisfactory results.**

While results were satisfactory given the resources invested, these investments were mostly a small fraction of UN Women's overall spending on WPS at the country level. Overall, UN Women's spending on WPS NAP activities (not including staffing costs) comprised just 6.3 per cent of the WPS budget in the period under evaluation (2015–2019). However, there were some notable exceptions in this regard, with investments on WPS NAPs in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Nepal and Tunisia comprising more than 35 per cent of the WPS budget in this period.

The extent to which UN Women's human and financial resources were adequate to support WPS NAP development and implementation processes was mixed and there was some dissatisfaction among stakeholders in this regard. The evaluation team conducted a comprehensive

efficiency analysis highlighting these challenges. The evaluation found that in active conflict contexts, high staff turnover limited the ability of field offices to ensure adequate human resources to support effective NAP development, while in other contexts COs faced challenges in ensuring adequate personnel to address political complexities and ensure sustainable progress.

The evaluation notes that additional financial resources could have leveraged additional results, in particular in relation to NAP implementation. However, it also identified that to better understand how the money spent on WPS NAPs translates into results, UN Women needs to invest in better systems for tracking and reporting results with the right indicators.

**CONCLUSION 8**

**Limited internal thematic and organizational coherence in UN Women's support to WPS NAPs has implications for how the Entity reports results and manages knowledge and guidance.**

There is not always thematic and organizational internal coherence in how UN Women supports WPS NAPs. While the majority of support to NAP development and implementation was programmed within the WPS agenda, in some field presences it was programmed within other areas such as End Violence Against Women (EVAW) or Women's Leadership and Political Participation (WLPP), and therefore reported under these areas. These weaknesses in internal coherence and coordination limited UN Women's ability to have effective oversight of its work on NAPs, or to comprehensively understand and assess how this work contributes to wider outcomes within its Strategic Plan.

The evaluation found that there was thematic coherence of NAP development work within WPS, although there was potential for NAPs to be more effectively utilized as a framework for all UN Women's WPS work within a given country. It also found that UN Women's NAP work contributed to other areas of UN Women's work including EVAW, WLPP, Humanitarian Action, GRB and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE). In an example of best practice, the UN Women CO in Uganda adopted an integrated approach to coordination, policy support and programming across thematic areas, in which it explicitly linked each NAP pillar to its other thematic areas to create synergy (i.e.

prevention was linked to EVAW work; participation to governance work; and recovery to WEE work, etc.) This means that there were shared goals for NAP implementation and shared responsibilities for advancing policy-level changes across UN Women's different thematic areas.

The evaluation found mixed results in terms of UN Women's standardization of learning and knowledge products to inform global normative processes. The evaluation identified demand for better packaged and systematized knowledge to inform country-level actors, in particular: best practices and lessons learned on NAPs; guidance on how to address NAP implementation gaps; and lessons on how to assess and capture the impact of NAP implementation and present concrete evidence. Overall, the evaluation assessed that collection, systemization and sharing of best practices in NAP development and implementation within the organization was an institutional weakness and an area where UN Women could significantly strengthen its systems and practice. Despite this, the evaluation did identify some interesting initiatives for sharing knowledge and best practice, including UN Women support for regional-level learning in the Arab States region and 'twinning' between Jordan and Tunisia NAP processes.



**CONCLUSION 9**

**UN Women recognizes the importance of national ownership of WPS NAPs for their long-term sustainability, and building this ownership is a central element of UN Women’s engagement on WPS NAPs.**

Advancing national ownership was a central element of UN Women’s work on WPS NAPs, primarily through facilitating inclusive processes; promoting strong coordination; and building national actors’ capacity for sustainable implementation. Support for inclusive WPS NAP development processes was the most common strategy for promoting ownership. For example, in Iraq, the inclusive drafting process for the second WPS NAP helped to facilitate its strong national ownership; ensure that the process was led by the government and CSOs; that the NAP was not seen as a UN Women document; and took account of regional and ethnic diversity in the country.

Capacity building and technical support among duty bearers was also frequently used to advance national ownership. For example, in Uganda UN Women focused on strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to lead the NAP process; while in Nepal, UN Women built the capacity of institutions tasked with NAP implementation at both central and local level. A central strategy of UN Women to build ownership in a number of countries was in supporting the development of strong coordination mechanisms among national actors responsible for WPS NAP implementation. For example, UN Women supported the establishment of a cross-sectoral task force for NAP implementation in Iraq. A related strategy was to ensure that a powerful government entity was responsible for leading implementation and coordination. In Georgia, UN Women encouraged a shift from the WPS NAP being located in the legislative to being located in the executive branch, which increased government ownership.

The evaluation found that UN Women largely focused on promoting ownership among a relatively limited group of actors directly involved in NAP processes. In most countries, there was limited emphasis on building broader ownership among wider actors and institutions, such as other government ministries. For example, in Iraq, while the WPS NAP process had been inclusive, it was reported that for real sustainability more participation from wider groups such as youth, the private sector and academia was required. Similarly, in Guatemala, aside from the MIMPAZ, it was reported that many institutions were still not familiar with the NAP and more actors need to be involved to ensure ownership and accountability.

The evaluation also identified that UN Women could do more to link NAPs to broader policy and planning processes and make the case for their relevance to wider policy goals. The evaluation observed that where UN Women did successfully support the integration of NAPs into wider policy frameworks or plans they were more likely to be sustainable. For example, UN Women Nepal supported the integration of the WPS NAP into local district development plans, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainable implementation; while it was identified that in Kyrgyzstan the NAP is currently seen as an isolated “women’s document” and that UN Women could support its integration into other policies to gain traction. The evaluation also identified that UN Women could provide more support for work to address the norms and attitudes that prevent WPS NAPs and broader WPS objectives from being accepted and owned by wider society and at local level.

**CONCLUSION 10**

**Sustainable implementation of WPS NAPs requires meaningful translation to the local level and ensuring adequate funding. UN Women needs a clearer strategy for how it can support such sustainable implementation.**

The evaluation found that UN Women engages in NAP implementation across multiple countries, although this engagement was not always systematic and there was no standard approach. The most consistent component of UN Women’s support to implementation has been the Entity’s support to coordination bodies or other mechanisms responsible for WPS NAPs to monitor, regularly report and/

or evaluate progress. In some instances, field presences have also supported the implementation of specific NAP activities such as harmonization of policy frameworks in the defence and security sectors; provision of embedded personnel within government; support for civil society organizations and women mediators in communities; and activities with direct links to the humanitarian portfolio.

Taking into account lessons from UN Women's activities to support WPS NAP implementation, and also the activities of other agencies and national stakeholders, the evaluation team developed an embedded ToC to identify potentially effective methods for supporting NAP implementation and to inform UN Women's future work in this area.

Effective WPS NAP localization was identified as critical for meaningful ownership and sustainable implementation, especially building ownership among local actors and integrating WPS NAP priorities into local plans. UN Women provided support for localization in some contexts, including through development of municipal WPS NAPs; advocacy for integrating WPS NAP priorities into municipal development/workplans; establishment of conflict resolution structures in villages and local communities; and engagement of women mediators and cross-border dialogue activities in conflict-affected areas. However, this support could be more widespread and stronger. In some contexts, there have been significant challenges with localization due to insufficient outreach to local communities and lack of access to provinces in contexts with high conflict and insecurity.

Factors related to funding were the greatest barriers to sustainable WPS NAP implementation. Lack of costing and budgeting and insufficient funding for NAP implementation were cited by multiple categories of stakeholders in Nepal, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan and Uganda. GRB was identified as way to generate some sustainable funding for NAPs, although it was noted that GRB alone is unlikely to raise sufficient revenue. UN Women has been working with several countries to incorporate GRB into their WPS NAP work, either during the development stage or when supporting government ministries to budget their NAP for implementation. For example, in Liberia UN Women was launching a project that aimed to enhance allocation of financial resources for implementation of the second NAP through innovative financing and GRB. Pooled funding was also cited as a valuable way to generate sustainable financing, for example, in Jordan UN Women and the Jordanian National Commission for Women were jointly implementing a programme for WPS NAP implementation, supported by pooled funding from five donors.

CONCLUSION: COVID-19 |

## CONCLUSION 11



**UN Women has supported COVID-19 responses that take account of WPS issues. There is strong potential for WPS NAP principles and priorities to inform national responses to COVID-19, but so far this is mostly not happening.**

UN Women supported a gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 and adapted its WPS work to be relevant to this changing context, both by joining the UN integrated COVID-19 response and by refocusing its WPS work to directly address the challenges posed by COVID-19. The Entity has undertaken advocacy work such as social media campaigns, online information sessions and radio broadcasts raising awareness of the linkages between WPS and COVID-19. It has also produced a range of knowledge generation and dissemination activities on gender-sensitive responses to COVID-19. In addition, UN Women provided support to CSOs and women peacebuilders, including a funding scheme set up with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) through the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) to fund its COVID-19 responses.

It appears that, globally, WPS has largely stalled due to the pandemic. National processes to adopt or implement WPS NAPs have been delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic in certain countries, while stakeholders reported significant concern that funding for WPS will evaporate,

as funds are diverted to respond to COVID-19. This stalling of WPS is despite the significant impact of COVID-19 on women in conflict-affected contexts and the recognition by many stakeholders interviewed that WPS could be a useful gender-sensitive framework for responding to the pandemic.

Although WPS NAPs are well suited to inform national COVID-19 responses, there was little evidence that they were being used to do so. This was despite 70 per cent of UN Women field personnel reporting that the NAP supported by their CO was flexible enough to respond to emerging challenges such as COVID-19. For example, in Nigeria, Pillar One of the current NAP focused on Prevention and Disaster Preparedness and contained provisions broad enough to incorporate women's economic/health security in the face of a global pandemic crisis; while in Uganda commitments to enhance women's participation in government responses to disease outbreaks were integrated into the most recent WPS NAP. However, the evaluation did find some exceptions where NAPs were being used to inform COVID-19 responses.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agency for Gender Equality and the Coordination Board of the Council of Ministers issued recommendations for a gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 which were explicitly framed within both the Gender Equality Law and UNSCR 1325. Similarly, in Lebanon, UN Women and the National Commission for Lebanese Women published a joint policy brief outlining actions to implement the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security during the COVID-19 lockdown.

More broadly, the evaluation found that, while key WPS principles and priorities contained in WPS NAPs could be useful in informing national emergency responses

– including responses to COVID-19 – they were rarely used in this way. This was in large part because institutions leading emergency responses typically had limited awareness or ownership of the NAP. Most stakeholders interviewed recognized the importance of having flexible WPS NAPs that can respond to emerging challenges and crises and can provide a blueprint for actors to coordinate a sustainable gender-responsive emergency action plan. UN Women should focus on developing broad, overarching, flexible NAPs within which strategies and activities can be adapted to respond to emerging challenges, although this could inevitably make monitoring results more difficult.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS: RELEVANCE |

### RECOMMENDATION 1

#### UN Women's WPS NAP support should connect with and scale up a wider range of global normative frameworks, as well as regional frameworks and processes to increase traction.

Priority

LOW

Timeframe

Long term

UN Women should examine how it can connect its work on WPS with a wide range of normative frameworks and review processes (beyond those strictly related to UNSCR 1325 or conflict) at global, regional and national levels, which can provide traction for NAP work and where there are entry points for UN Women's deeper engagement. This could provide an opportunity for advancing WPS at the normative level. Developing such a strategic approach to alignment would require strengthening knowledge on wider normative frameworks and their relevance to WPS among UN Women personnel, especially at the country level.

**ACTION:**

- UN Women WPSHA section and ROs to map global and regional opportunities for engagement on WPS and NAPs and assess the potential of different global or regional frameworks, structures and processes for advancing RAPs and NAPs.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

#### UN Women should strengthen the synergy between its normative, coordination and operational roles in support of WPS NAPs to enhance its impact.

Priority

LOW

Timeframe

Medium term

UN Women should strengthen its understanding of how the different roles and intervention strategies it adopts to support NAPs can connect to and build upon each other. In particular, UN Women should identify, and clearly articulate to personnel, what such an integrated approach to NAP work would look like at country level and how it can be achieved.

**ACTION:**

- WPSHA Section to identify and document good practice examples of an integrated approach to NAP support and develop and disseminate guidance on what an integrated approach looks like and how it can be achieved.

RECOMMENDATION: **COHERENCE AND COORDINATION** |**RECOMMENDATION 3**

**UN Women should devise a strategy to harmonize its external coordination efforts, with a focus on strengthening and linking global, regional and national-level coordination processes.**

Priority

**MEDIUM**

Timeframe

**Long term**

**UN Women should strengthen its coordination role in relation to knowledge generation and sharing, in particular ensuring that evidence, lessons and best practices are shared between multiple levels.**

**ACTIONS:**

- WPSHA Section to identify and share effective approaches to NAPs in different contexts as part of its role as coordinator of global and regional communities of practice
- UN Women to channel knowledge and evidence generated from its national-level coordination work to the regional and global level. Such knowledge sharing could be funded from mechanisms such as PBF, WPHF and others.

**There is a need to strengthen and expand UN Women's coordination with external actors, such as UN agencies and international organizations at all levels.**

**ACTIONS:**

- WPSHA section and national focal points to engage a wider range of national stakeholders in NAP processes to deepen participation and ownership, and to use the Entity's external coordination with development partners to mobilize funding for NAP implementation.
- WPSHA section at the global level to strengthen links and synergies with other actors and processes whose work has relevance for WPS and NAPs. For example, further strengthening partnership with PBSO and UNHCR, as well as with UNFPA on UNSCR YPS Resolution 2250.

**A strategic approach is required to coordination in the area of NAPs that builds upon the unique coordination role that UN Women plays on WPS at multiple levels.**

**ACTION:**

- WPSHA section to expand global-level networks and spearhead more dialogues at regional level to strategically feed into global-level recommendations, and to draw in national-level actors and facilitate multi-level dialogue on NAPs, for example by including national CSOs in the Global Network of Focal Points for 1325.

RECOMMENDATIONS: **EFFECTIVENESS** |**RECOMMENDATION 4**

**UN Women should continue to expand its current strategies to support WPS NAP development. It should also define a clear and consistent strategy for support to WPS NAP implementation.**

Priority

**HIGH**

Timeframe

**Short term**

UN Women should continue its existing strategies to support inclusive and well-coordinated NAP UN Women should continue its existing strategies to support inclusive and well-coordinated NAP development processes, in line with high-impact criteria and using standardized methodologies. The Entity should ensure wide cross-sectoral participation of all relevant actors from government (security, gender equality etc.), civil society and other stakeholders, in particular those outside the capital or major cities.

**ACTIONS:**

- UN Women needs to decide what role the Entity should play in supporting NAP implementation, as part of its broader support to implementation of WPS objectives, as this is currently unclear. It is recommended that UN Women build upon the embedded ToC outlined in this evaluation and develop a related strategy to inform its support for NAP implementation and that it engages in specific support to implementation actions, based on this ToC and strategy and on an assessment of where the Entity best adds value.

RECOMMENDATION: **GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS** |**RECOMMENDATION 5**

**UN Women should strengthen its understanding of how to support transformational shifts in gender equality and women's empowerment, and should use this to inform its work on WPS and NAPs.**

Priority

**HIGH**

Timeframe

**Medium term**

**ACTIONS:**

- UN Women to build upon the embedded ToC outlined in this evaluation to develop a framework for understanding how transformational change in gender equality and women's empowerment happens in conflict-affected settings, and how UN Women can support such change as part of its work on NAPs.
- UN Women to generate more learning from its own interventions regarding which approaches best advance gender equality and women's empowerment in different types of conflict contexts.
- UN Women to develop strategies and tools that could be used to assess what types of transformational change are most critical for delivering on WPS objectives at the country level.
- UN Women to identify partners to implement work in this area, as well as ways to capture the results and impact of such work.

RECOMMENDATION: **EFFICIENCY** |**RECOMMENDATION 6**

**WPS management should enhance its internal reporting systems related to tracking financial resources and results towards WPS NAPs to better demonstrate and enhance results. It should also strengthen technical leadership to ensure a harmonized approach to WPS NAP support.**

Priority

**HIGH**

Timeframe

**Short term**

**ACTIONS:**

- UN Women to undertake an assessment of the financial resources required to provide meaningful support to NAP implementation. Based on this assessment, the Entity could make an informed decision about the strategy it should adopt and the investments it should make to support NAP implementation.
- WPS management, COs and ROs to enhance their internal reporting systems to include stronger impact indicators, as well as strengthen the Entity's understanding of how financial resources are linked to results. They should also develop effective systems to store and manage knowledge and invest in building institutional memory so that knowledge and experience on NAPs are captured, retained and can be drawn on in the future.
- UN Women to consider maintaining a pool of WPS NAP experts with specific Terms of Reference and technical support from headquarters, from which expertise could be deployed to support national NAP development and implementation.



RECOMMENDATION: **SUSTAINABILITY** |**RECOMMENDATION 7**

**UN Women should expand the range of actors and processes that it engages with on WPS NAPs to broaden and deepen national level ownership and integrate its engagement on WPS NAPs with its other areas of work at the national level to support sustainable NAP implementation.**

Priority

**MEDIUM**

Timeframe

**Medium term**

Broad national ownership of NAPs across multiple sectors and at multiple levels is critical for sustainable implementation.

**ACTIONS**

- UN Women to expand the range of actors and processes that it engages with to build broader based ownership of the NAP. In particular, the Entity should reach out beyond the most directly involved actors to engage with those working in other sectors and demonstrate the relevance of NAPs to their work. Similarly, UN Women should strengthen its engagement with local-level actors and processes, and should use this as an entry point to support localization efforts.
- If UN Women wants to support sustainable NAP implementation, the Entity should integrate its NAP support with its other areas of work such as GRB or humanitarian work at the national level, thereby leveraging this wider work in support of NAP implementation in a consistent manner.

**ACTION**

- UN Women to promote the integration of NAPs into other strategies and plans at the country level that UN Women supports (e.g. national gender strategies or development plans). UN Women should also connect its NAP work with its other areas of work at country level, including linking UN Women's GRB programming and NAP work to support the use of GRB to finance NAP implementation; harnessing UN Women's existing work with civil society on norms and attitudes to address the attitudinal barriers to meaningful NAP implementation; and using UN Women's work on themes such as gender-based violence to help meet NAP goals in these areas.

RECOMMENDATION: **COVID-19** |**RECOMMENDATION 8**

**UN Women should address the immediate need to integrate WPS principles into COVID-19 responses, as well as the longer-term challenge of ensuring that NAPs are used to inform emergency planning.**

Priority

**HIGH**

Timeframe

**Medium term****ACTIONS:**

- UN Women needs to make urgent, strong and consistent efforts to advocate with national, regional and global actors for the consideration of WPS principles in COVID-19 responses.
- The Entity should also develop longer-term strategies to link NAPs to emergency policy and legal frameworks and planning processes at national level, so order that actors working on emergencies understand the relevance of NAPs and that emergency plans and processes integrate key NAP priorities and principles.



Photo ©Photo: Photo: Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

# BACKGROUND

## 1. Global context

### United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the wider normative framework

In October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which has four central pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. This resolution has become the focal point for worldwide efforts to deal with the many challenges that women face in situations of conflict. Responsibility for its implementation lies primarily with national governments, the UN system, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and international and regional security institutions. Over the last two decades, these actors have formed unprecedented partnerships at the international, regional and national levels to advance the WPS agenda.

There is strong evidence that women's participation contributes to the effectiveness of peace processes;<sup>4</sup> and that including gender concerns and women's perspectives in the provision of security, protection, and relief and recovery is not just important from a gender equality (GE) and women's empowerment perspective, but contributes to wider stability, recovery and development goals.<sup>5</sup> However, despite this, women continue to be underrepresented in peace negotiations and peacekeeping, while only a small percentage of official development assistance (ODA) in fragile states is targeted to gender equality.<sup>6</sup> With growing and unprecedented challenges to global peace and security – from the huge increase in those in need of international assistance, to rising violent extremism and climate shocks exacerbating conflict – UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda remain critical for building sustainable peace.

Since UNSCR 1325 was adopted, the normative framework for advancing women's rights in conflict and post-conflict settings has expanded dramatically, both in terms of the rights and obligations understood to be contained within the agenda and in the institutions responsible for this agenda. This expansion has included a strong focus on protection of women in conflict settings, including from sexual violence, with the Security Council adopting five resolutions addressing this topic: 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), and 2467 (2019). The reporting and accountability framework on WPS has also been strengthened, with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation Number 30 (adopted in 2013) making clear that CEDAW is applicable to a diverse range of settings affected by conflict and political crisis.

Beyond gender-specific commitments and frameworks, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDGs 5 and 16, reflects a recognition that the solutions to peace and security and sustainable development are inextricably linked, and that gender equality is central to these solutions. Meanwhile the sustaining peace agenda espouses a whole-of-system approach that prioritizes conflict prevention and supporting lasting peace.<sup>7</sup> Both the SDGs and the sustaining peace agenda provide important frameworks for advancing WPS and connecting it to wider development and peace and security commitments and processes.

#### UNSCR 1325 PILLARS



Prevention



Participation



Protection



Relief and recovery

4 Research demonstrates that where women's groups exercise strong influence on peace negotiation processes, there is a much higher chance of an agreement being reached. See Paffenholz et al. 2016, "Making Women Count: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on the Quality and Sustainability of Peace Negotiations and Implementation". The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies: Geneva.

5 OECD, 2017. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations: A Review of Donor Support. OECD: Paris

6 OECD data shows that in 2014–15 only 5 per cent of ODA to states in fragile situations aimed to promote gender equality as a primary objective. OECD, 2017. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations: A Review of Donor Support. OECD: Paris.

7 UN (2015) The challenge of sustaining peace: report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 review of the United Nations peace-building architecture. New York: UN.

## National Action Plans (NAPs) as a tool to translate WPS commitments into action

National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS are important tools to guide implementation of this agenda by national governments. NAPs tend to cover the four pillars of UNSCR 1325: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. NAPs also provide an opportunity to address emerging issues such as violent extremism or climate change. By translating UNSCR 1325 into executable, measurable and accountable actions, NAPs provide an opportunity for national stakeholders to identify priorities, determine responsibilities, allocate resources and initiate strategic actions within a defined time frame. The full-scale implementation of UNSCR 1325 is the duty of a diverse group of stakeholders including UN Women, but it is important to note that Member States bear the primary responsibility of ensuring that global WPS commitments and obligations are integrated into national planning, budgeting, policies and laws.<sup>8</sup> Nation states are the most influential actors in implementation of WPS objectives, including through the development and implementation of NAPs. As of September 2020, 86 UN Member States and territories have adopted a NAP on WPS.<sup>9</sup>

Regional and subregional organizations have also developed Regional Action Plans (RAPs) for implementation of UNSCR 1325. Regional plans can encourage more countries to adopt NAPs and help define and implement joint WPS

policies that are complementary and mutually reinforcing of NAPs. As of September 2020, 11 WPS RAPs, frameworks and strategies were in place.<sup>10</sup>

The Global Study<sup>11</sup> led by UN Women for the fifteenth anniversary of UNSCR 1325 examined the use of NAPs as a tool for advancing WPS objectives. It found that NAPs were frequently unrealistic or lacked the political commitment and resources required for implementation. The Global Study drew together lessons from civil society, and using criteria developed by Inclusive Security, identified the following key elements as necessary for the development of NAPs as a tool for coherent, targeted and impactful action:

- strong leadership and effective coordination
- an inclusive design process
- costing and allocated budgets for implementation
- a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework
- flexibility to adapt to emerging situations.

Given the strong evidence that these five factors are crucial for developing a high-quality NAP that is likely to be implemented, the evaluation used these factors as criteria to measure the effectiveness of UN Women's support to national NAP processes.

### High-impact criteria: lessons from the literature

According to the NAP literature,<sup>12</sup> **high-level government commitment** is key to establishing an enabling environment for NAP development and implementation. This must include commitment from ministries other than gender ministries (such as security and defence), and there should be clear communication of this political commitment to all stakeholders. **Coordination mechanisms for NAP implementation need to be robust**, with a strong lead agency and extra resources provided for coordination functions. The coordinator needs the capacity to disseminate knowledge about WPS objectives and ensure cooperation across different bodies. Roles and responsibilities of all those involved in NAP implementation should be clearly

defined. Capacity development is required for stakeholders involved in coordination and implementation at multiple levels, including training on WPS issues.

The process of creating a NAP can be as important as the text itself. **If the process is inclusive** and comprehensive it can create space for actors to discuss WPS issues in ways not previously achieved. A wide range of stakeholders should be involved in the NAP consultation and development process, including multiple government departments/agencies, civil society, academics, regional organizations, international organizations, religious leaders and, where possible, rights holders directly impacted by conflict.<sup>13</sup>

8 UN Women (2015) Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: a global study on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Page 240.

9 The regional breakdown for NAPs (following the UN geoscheme system) is as follows: 33 in Europe, 24 in Africa, 19 in Asia, 8 in the Americas, and 2 in Oceania. Source: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), 2020. National Level Implementation.

10 The regional breakdown for RAPs based on the information available for 10 of the 11 RAPs identified by the evaluation team (following the UN geoscheme system) is as follows: 5 in Africa, 2 in Asia, 2 in Europe, 1 in the Americas. Source: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), 2020. National Level Implementation.

11 UN Women (2015) Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: a global study on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. UN Women: New York.

12 See: A guide to implementing resolution 1325: Creating National Action Plans. Inclusive Security, 2017; Applying Global Tools to Improve National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Inclusive Security, 2015; Recommendations for Reviewing and Revising National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security. Inclusive Security, 2014; Women and Peace and Security: Guidelines for National Implementation. UN Women, 2012; Globalising women peace and security: Trends in National Action Plans. Aisling Swaine, 2017; OSCE Study on National Action Plans on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. OSCE, 2014.

13 Designing Inclusive Strategies for Sustainable Security Results-Oriented National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security. OSCE, 2016.

**A realistic NAP costing** is an essential step for preparing a NAP budget.<sup>14</sup> A robust costing exercise will help to ensure dedicated resources, prioritize activities, identify gaps, develop fundraising strategies, define a realistic scope and help to support M&E. The budget established for NAP implementation should be adequate, with specific amounts earmarked for short and long-term activities. There should be a budget allocation both for coordination and execution, and for implementing the activities in the NAP. Funding for a NAP needs to be sustainable. National governments and international development partners should provide predictable, long-term and substantial resources for NAP implementation.

NAP implementation should be accompanied by **robust and well-resourced M&E strategies**.<sup>15</sup> These should include specific and measurable indicators, a realistic M&E budget,

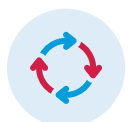
timetable for audits and reviews, and public reporting for accountability purposes. NAPs should have clear time frames for review and assessment to encourage accountability, evaluation and revision of plans. Without a time frame, opportunities are not provided to revisit or rework priorities as contexts shift. Data collected through monitoring should be used both to improve results and to inform stakeholders about the NAP's progress and impact. Monitoring should be used to document successes; identify what has not worked; and provide learning from the NAP process to enhance and improve policies across WPS.

Finally, NAPs **should be evolving documents that can be revised as contexts and priorities change**, needs shift and strategies prove to be more (or less) effective. Therefore, rigorous reviews are essential components of any NAP process, as are mechanisms for timely corrective action.

#### HIGH IMPACT CRITERIA: LESSONS FROM THE NAP LITERATURE



High-level government  
commitment



Robust coordination  
mechanisms for NAP  
implementation



Inclusive and comprehensive  
NAP process



Realistic and adequate  
NAP costing



Robust and well-resourced  
M&E strategies



Revising NAP documents as  
contexts and priorities change

<sup>14</sup> No Money, No NAP: Manual for Costing and Budgeting National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325. Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, 2017. Financing for the Implementation of National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution 1325: Critical for advancing women's human rights, peace and security. Cordaid, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Building accountability for implementation of Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Global review background paper, 2013.



## 2. UN Women's work in Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans

### Focus of UN Women's work on WPS NAPs

UN Women's programming work on WPS is guided by a series of commitments to women's rights. These include UNSCR 1325, and nine resolutions — 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467 and 2493. Other key reference points are the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and CEDAW. Enhancing women's engagement for sustainable peace requires an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses conflict prevention, resolution and recovery, while strengthening national accountability and ensuring women's protection from all forms of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence.

At the global level, UN Women provides leadership on WPS within the UN system and to national governments and civil society through knowledge production and information sharing, as well as dialogue and advocacy to advance WPS objectives across multiple platforms. UN Women is responsible for UN coordination and reporting on WPS, including the annual report of the Secretary-General on WPS. UN Women chairs the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on WPS, which brings together all relevant UN entities, with civil society as observers. UN Women is also the secretariat for the Security Council's Informal Expert Group on WPS, and serves as the secretariat of the WPS Focal Points Network, which brings together Member States and regional organizations represented by NAP focal points and WPS regional focal points.

UN Women supports countries' efforts to implement UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions by assisting with the development, implementation, monitoring and review of NAPs and RAPs. The Entity supports national and regional processes that promote governments' collaboration with civil society, including women's groups, in shaping the development, implementation and

monitoring of comprehensive NAPs. The development and implementation of 1325 NAPs is under the purview of national governments and UN Women provides context-relevant expertise in the technical aspects of NAP development and implementation processes, namely the development of indicators and monitoring frameworks, and costing and budgeting. UN Women also facilitates the production of guidance and training tools; the collection and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices; and encourages connections to stakeholders including regional and international organizations, humanitarian actors and possible development partners.

At the regional level, UN Women supports an enabling environment for regional and subregional organizations to strengthen their efforts to build systems for monitoring progress, evaluating results, and sharing good practices in implementation of NAPs and WPS objectives. At the national level, through its field presence, UN Women works to support national actors to develop, implement and monitor their WPS NAPs through the facilitation of strong leadership and effective coordination; inclusive design processes; costing and allocating budgets for implementation; M&E; and flexibility to adapt to emerging situations.

The majority of UN Women's support at the country level has focused on the development of first generation NAPs.<sup>16</sup> From 2015 to September 2020, 44 WPS NAPs<sup>17</sup> were adopted or finalized with support from UN Women, 26 of which were first generation NAPs. Where UN Women has supported second or third generation NAPs, this tends to be in countries experiencing high levels of conflict or other challenges, meaning that they require continued support with NAP development processes.

<sup>16</sup> First generation NAPs refer to a country's 1st published NAP, second generation their 2nd published NAP, and third generation their 3rd published NAP. Some countries have multiple generations of NAP.

<sup>17</sup> 2015: Afghanistan, Chile (2nd), Kyrgyzstan (2nd), Mali (2nd), Palestine, South Sudan.

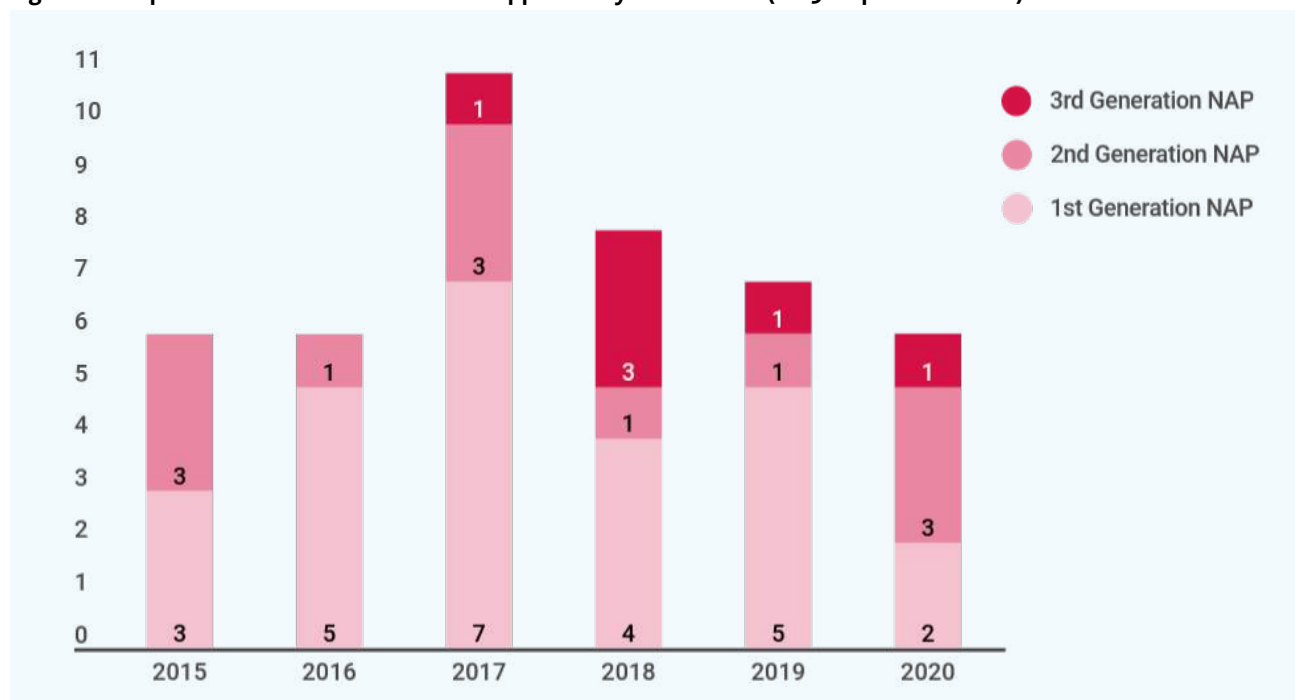
2016: Bougainville (part of Papua New Guinea), Georgia (2nd), Kenya, Niger, Timor-Leste, Ukraine.

2017: Bosnia and Herzegovina (3rd), Brazil, Cameroon, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jordan, Nigeria (2nd), Palestine (2nd), Serbia (2nd), Solomon Islands.

2018: Albania, Democratic Republic of Congo (3rd), Georgia (3rd), Kyrgyzstan (3rd), Moldova, Mozambique, Rwanda (2nd), Tunisia.

2019: Armenia, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Liberia (2nd), Mali (3rd), Namibia, South Africa.

2020: Cyprus (finalized), Iraq (2nd finalized), Kenya (2nd), Nepal (2nd finalized), Sudan, Uganda (3rd finalized).

Figure 1: Adopted and finalized\* WPS NAPs supported by UN Women (2015–September 2020)<sup>18</sup>

\* Finalized NAPs are NAPs which have been completed and are awaiting final government approval/ratification.

### UN Women's financial investments in WPS outcome 4.1

For the period 2015–2019, UN Women's expenditure on WPS commitments and accountability frameworks adopted and implemented in conflict and post-conflict situations (Strategic Plan [SP] Output 4.1/4.1.2) was US\$ 88.45 million, while the amount budgeted was US\$ 114.29 million.<sup>19</sup>

Headquarters had the highest budget and delivery for SP Output 4.1/4.1.2, and Europe and Central Asia the lowest.

**Table 1: Budget, expenditure and delivery, SP Output 4.1/4.1.2 (2015–2019)<sup>20</sup>**

Year	Budget (US\$ mil.)	Expenditure (US\$ mil.)	Delivery (%)
2015	6.78	4.59	68%
2016	10.95	8.33	76%
2017	11.23	12.85	114%
2018	40.4	31.32	78%
2019	44.93	31.36	70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114.29</b>	<b>88.45</b>	<b>77%</b>

<sup>18</sup> This graph was compiled by the Evaluation team using information mined from UN Women Annual Work Plans (AWPs) and a list of supported countries provided by the WPS team at headquarters. Information on published NAPs by year was taken from the LSE NAP website (<https://www.wpsnaps.org/>) and the WILPF website (<https://www.peacewomen.org/member-states>).

<sup>19</sup> Note that expenditure totals do not include amounts encumbered – resources that have been committed with pending payments.

<sup>20</sup> This financial data was extracted by the evaluation team from the UN Women Dashboard at <https://apps-oneapp.unwomen.org/Dashboard>. In mining the data, the evaluation looked at SP Output 4.1/4.1.2 from the years 2015–2019 (extracted in December 2019). It is important to note that SP Output 4.1/4.1.2 does not exclusively focus on support to WPS NAPs. NAP budget allocation will be further explored in this report.

**Figure 2: Budget and delivery by region for SP Output 4.1/4.1.2 (2015-2019)<sup>21</sup>**

The vast majority of funding comes from UN Women's non-core resources (96 per cent), which are donor funded (for top five donors refer to Figure 5 below). UN Women has raised non-core funding at a fast rate between 2018 and 2020 and this can be seen across UN Women interventions.

Through a portfolio review of WPS/NAP-related documents, including a list of NAP supported countries provided by

headquarters, the evaluation team identified 60 countries as having received support from UN Women for the development and/or implementation of WPS NAPs from 2015 to 2019. From this list, 38 countries<sup>22</sup> had NAP-related activities in their Annual Work Plans (AWPs) for at least one year over this period, as well as the East and Southern Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia regional offices (ROs), and the WPSHA section at headquarters level.

**Table 2: Countries with AWP NAP activities and expenditure (2015–2019)<sup>23</sup>**

	Number of countries with NAP activities & budgets in their AWPs	Number of countries reporting NAP activity expenditure <sup>24</sup>
2015 <sup>25</sup>	17, 2 ROs	N/A
2016	22, 2 ROs, headquarters	19, 2 ROs
2017	22, 3 ROs, headquarters	19, 3 ROs, headquarters
2018	29, 2 ROs, headquarters	24, 1 RO, headquarters
2019	29, 1 RO, headquarters	26, 1 RO, headquarters

A portfolio review of UN Women's support to WPS NAP development and implementation identified the main intervention areas at the field level as shown in Figure 3

below. The totals below reflect the budgets for each intervention area found in country office (CO) AWPs.

21 This financial data was extracted by the evaluation team from the UN Women Dashboard at <https://apps-oneapp.unwomen.org/Dashboard>. In mining the data, the evaluation looked at SP Output 4.1/4.1.2 from the years 2015–2019 (extracted in December 2019). It is important to note that SP Output 4.1/4.1.2 does not exclusively focus on support to WPS NAPs. NAP budget allocation will be further explored in this report.

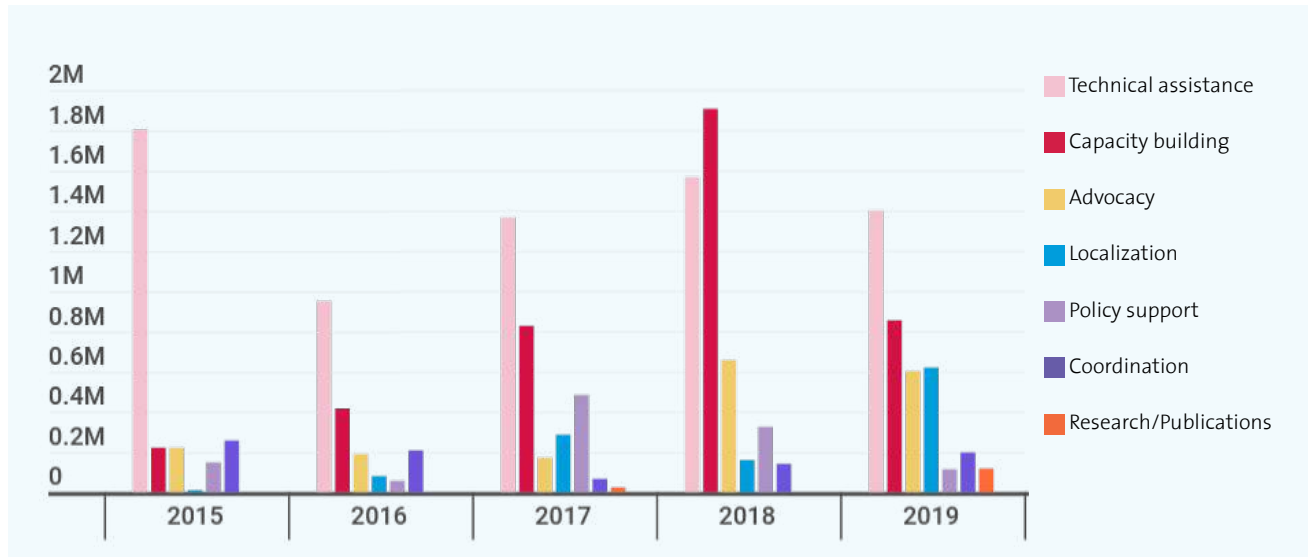
22 From this list of 60, the remaining countries either had no NAP activities in AWPs from 2015 to 2019, or are countries where UN Women does not have a CO or programme presence. For these countries, we can reasonably assume that some type of technical support was provided from the headquarters level.

23 This table was compiled by the evaluation team using Annual Work Plans (AWPs) extracted from RMS, as well as activity level expenditures taken from the 'Results Monitoring' function in the UN Women Dashboard.

24 There are two limitations of the NAP expenditure reporting that must be addressed. First, no expenditure was available for 2015, and second, it was brought to the attention of the evaluation team that there are sometimes gaps in the 'results monitoring' AWP reporting available through the UN Women Dashboard [https://dashboard-oneapp.unwomen.org/Dashboard/Index/ResultsMonitoring\\_AWP](https://dashboard-oneapp.unwomen.org/Dashboard/Index/ResultsMonitoring_AWP). However, while the data may not be complete, it is the most accurate available given current UN Women reporting systems.

25 For some countries, no AWPs were available in RMS for 2015.

Figure 3: NAP budgets (US\$) by intervention area (2015–2019)<sup>26</sup>



NAP budgets were also disaggregated by region (these totals included ROs). West and Central Africa had the highest budget over the period 2015–2019, followed closely by the Arab States Region.

The top five donors who provided funding to UN Women in support of its WPS NAP work were the Government of Finland, the Government of Sweden/SIDA, the Government of Norway, the European Union and the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

Figure 4: NAP budgets (US\$) by region and headquarters (2015–2019)<sup>27</sup>

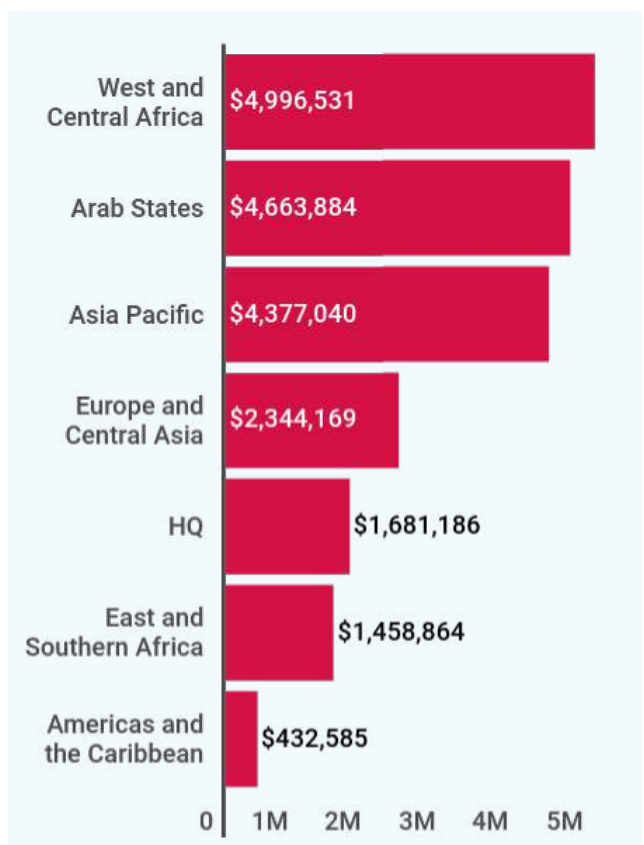
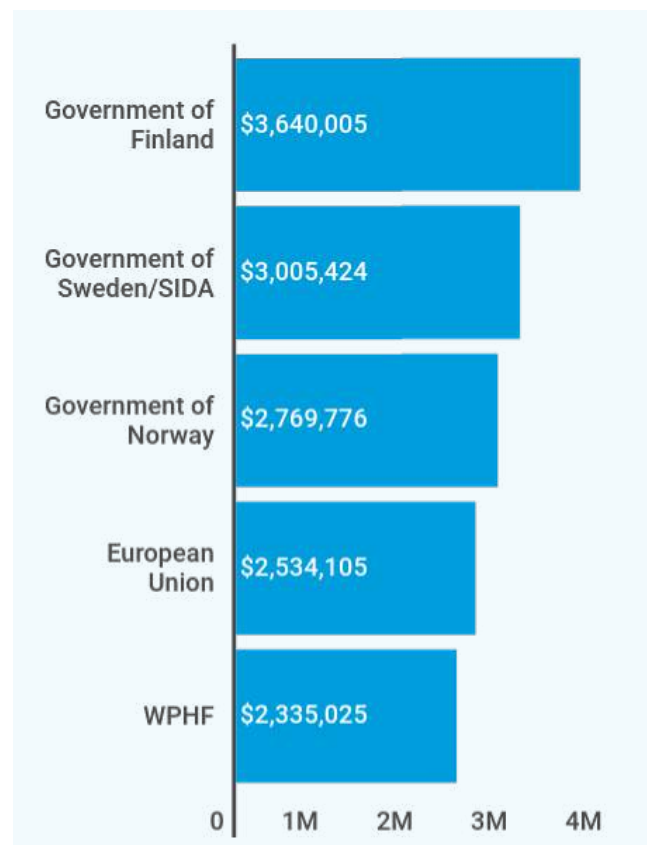


Figure 5: Top five donors in support of UN Women’s WPS NAP work (2015–2019)<sup>28</sup>



26 This figure was compiled by the evaluation team using Annual Work Plans (AWPs) extracted from RMS.

27 Ibid.

28 This donor information was compiled by the evaluation team from available financial documents obtained from DAMS, and in instances where NAP spending could not be identified from a broader WPS project, from self-reporting provided by the WPS team at headquarters. Additionally, donor funds for specific NAP activities at the country level were extracted from AWPs where information was available- if CO’s did not attribute funding for NAP activities to a particular donor in their AWP, it has not been recorded in these totals.

### 3. UN Reform and Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Since 2018, the UN system has undergone significant reform to respond to the paradigm shift brought in by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>29</sup> The reforms aim to reposition the UN system as a stronger partner to countries in achieving the SDGs, and will result in a UN development system that is more integrated and focused on delivery on the ground, with clearer internal and external accountability for contributions to national needs; and with capacities, skillsets and resources better aligned to the 2030 Agenda.<sup>30</sup>

UN reform provides significant opportunities for the UN system to strengthen system-wide coordination and synergies, break silos and deliver integrated support to partner countries to achieve the SDGs. UN Women itself is the product of Member States' commitment to achieve greater UN system coherence. Through its universal mandate integrating normative support, UN system coordination and operational activities, UN Women works to synergize gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) across the UN system while supporting governments to achieve their gender equality commitments.<sup>31</sup> Given the cross-sectoral nature of GEWE work, UN reform

also presents an opportunity for UN Women to strengthen its mandate and achieve transformative results for women and girls.

One of the goals of UN reform is to reform the Peace and Security architecture to strengthen UN action before and after a crisis and to ensure more agile and effective capacities to sustain peace. With this goal in mind, a new WPS policy was adopted by the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) in 2019 to identify parameters for the implementation of WPS objectives and to ensure that "gender relevant issues and perspectives are integrated into all the Department's activities to promote inclusive conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding."<sup>32</sup> Additionally, the UN Secretary General's Action for Peacekeeping Initiative called on Member States, the Security Council, national and regional level partners, and donors to renew their collective engagement with UN peacekeeping, centring on eight priority areas, one of which is WPS.<sup>33</sup> UN Women has worked to integrate WPS with its humanitarian action work, promoting consistency and sustainability in addressing GEWE across the humanitarian, peace and security, and development agendas.<sup>34</sup>

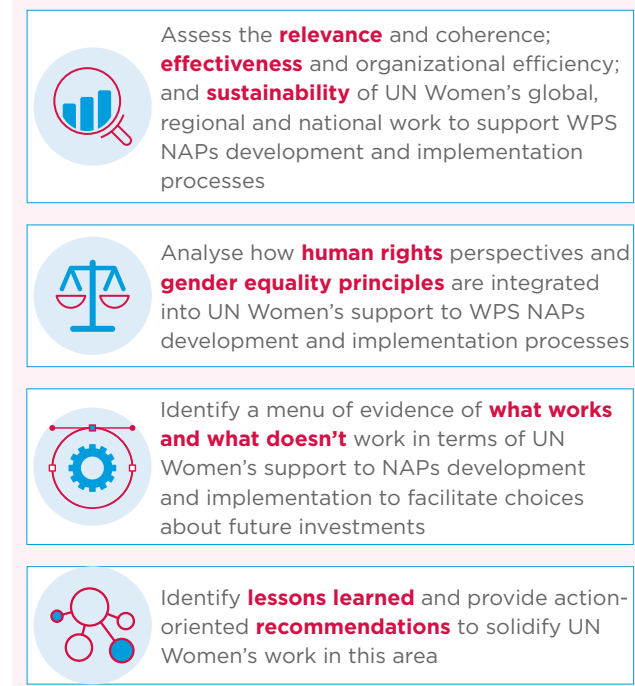
### 4. Evaluation objectives, scope and audience

#### Evaluation purpose and objectives

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability of UN Women's support to the development and implementation processes of WPS NAPs at the global, regional and country levels from 2015 to 2019, as well as to assess the extent to which a human rights perspective and gender equality principles were integrated into this support.

The evaluation findings are intended to inform strategic decision-making, organizational learning and accountability in relation to UN Women's NAP work. The findings will also inform reflections on the direction of UN Women's wider portfolio on WPS, in this 20-year anniversary of UNSCR 1325.

Figure 6: Evaluation objectives



<sup>29</sup> The reform is mandated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Resolution A/RES/72/279 of 31 May 2018, which responded to the vision and proposals of Secretary-General António Guterres to reposition the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations, 2018. UN development system reform 101. <https://reform.un.org/content/un-development-system-reform-101>

<sup>31</sup> UN Women, 2017. "UN-Women's Response to the Implementation of the Resolution on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities of the United Nations System in the Context of the Development of UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021."

<sup>32</sup> DPPA 2019. "UN DPPA Women, Peace and Security Policy."

<sup>33</sup> UN Peacekeeping 2019. "Action for Peacekeeping."

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



## Evaluation focus and scope

The focus of the evaluation was on UN-Women's NAP development and implementation process to meet WPS commitments and adopt accountability frameworks in conflict and post-conflict countries. The evaluation focused on the period 2015–2019, after the completion of the Global Study on implementation of UNSCR 1325. The Global Study was used as a soft benchmark to help understand whether UN Women's support was in line with best practice and was effective in advancing high-quality NAPs that are likely to be implemented. The evaluation covers results from the UN Women SP 2014–2018 and the first two years of the 2018–2021 SP.

Within the UN Women Strategic Framework 2014–2017, WPS falls under Impact 4: "Peace and security and humanitarian action are shaped by women leadership and participation". Within this Impact area, the evaluation specifically looked at Outcome 4.1: "WPS commitments and accountability frameworks adopted and implemented in conflict and post-conflict situations" and Output 4.1.2: "Greater Member State accountability for WPS commitments."

Within the UN Women SP 2018–2021, WPS work falls under Outcome 5: "Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action".

## 5. Evaluation design

### Evaluation object and design

As WPS NAP work is integrated into the wider WPS Impact area, its definition and Theory of Change (ToC) has not been developed as a sub-area. This presented some initial challenges for the evaluation as there is no specific institutional ToC for WPS NAP work. However, the evaluation team was able to reconstruct an implicit ToC (see Figure 7 below) that served as the main conceptual framework for the evaluation.

The evaluation object was refined during the inception phase to focus on the two components of UN Women's support: WPS NAP development and implementation processes. Support to development of WPS NAPs was assessed through UN Women's interventions. The implementation process focused on UN Women's contribution to establishing the enabling environment and processes that allow

It responds to Output 13: "More commitments on WPS are implemented by Member States and the UN system, and more GE advocates influence peace and security processes". This includes catalysing the UN system; supporting Member States to deliver on WPS objectives; and enhancing capacities and opportunities for gender equality advocates to participate in peace processes at all levels.<sup>35</sup>

As the COVID-19 pandemic emerged during the inception phase of the evaluation, it was decided to slightly expand the evaluation's focus to include a real-time, light touch assessment of: (a) the implications of the pandemic for WPS in the case study countries; and (b) how UN Women was adapting its work on WPS NAPs to respond to this changing context.

### Intended audience of the evaluation

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN Women Executive Board, UN Women senior management and programme staff at the global, regional and country levels directly working on, or with an interest in, WPS. The evaluation is also intended to be useful for other actors working on WPS, including partner countries, civil society, UN agencies, International Non-Governmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), national partners, and international and regional development partners.

the WPS NAP to be effectively implemented. Effectiveness was assessed by looking at the extent to which UN Women promotes the five elements identified in the Global Study as critical for a high-impact NAP that is likely to be implemented and generate change.

### Information availability and quality

As part of the inception phase, the availability, quality, completeness and consistency of strategic/planning documents and companion reports, donor and evaluation reports, and financial information were assessed. Each source type had its limitations, which were taken into consideration as the scope and methodology of the evaluation developed. Full analysis of this information availability and quality is included in Annex 5.

<sup>35</sup> Based on the two UN Women SPs and the WPS agenda, this evaluation specifically looked at SP 2018–2021 outcomes as they reflect the continuity of the work on development of WPS NAPs: Outcome 1: Member States and the UN system develop and implement WPS commitments and accountability frameworks; Output 1.1: Member States and UN system have strengthened coordination mechanisms; Output 1.2: Member States adopt WPS strategies (National and Regional Action Plans – NAPs and RAPs); Output 1.3: UN system and Member States have and use improved knowledge, tools and technical resources for implementing WPS.

## Evaluation approach

The evaluation adopted both a summative and formative approach. It summarizes information on strategies currently applied in UN Women's support to NAP development and implementation processes. It also offers forward-looking, action-oriented recommendations for UN Women's future work in this area. The inception phase confirmed the need to support organizational learning and maximum utility for end users and to foster ownership.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the evaluation followed a bottom-up approach aligned with internal and external stakeholders' needs to develop learning and build adaptation into UN Women's programming.

## Evaluation theory of change (ToC)

The evaluation deployed a ToC approach<sup>37</sup> to analyse how UN Women provides support to WPS NAPs development and implementation processes. The ToC took into consideration UN Women's WPS annual workplans, UN Women's SPs 2014–2018 and 2018–2021, and the Flagship Programme Initiatives guidance. Feedback received through a workshop with the WPS team during the inception phase of the evaluation also informed development of the ToC.

## Theory of change (ToC)

The evaluation was guided by the ToC behind UN Women's strategic efforts to support WPS, and integrated contribution analysis as the overarching approach. The evaluation aimed to explain the causal relationships between resources, activities, short and long-term outcomes, and the context of the intervention, including its unintended consequences.

As NAP<sup>38</sup> development and implementation are only a segment of the WPS thematic area, their explicit ToC was not developed. The evaluation team reconstructed the ToC to demonstrate how UN Women's support to WPS NAP development and implementation worked and how it was affected by contextual factors on the path to achieving social change. The ToC also integrates the factors that the evaluation identified as lacking to fully achieve expected results. Therefore, the ToC represents a useful resource for future programming of UN Women's support to WPS NAPs at any level.

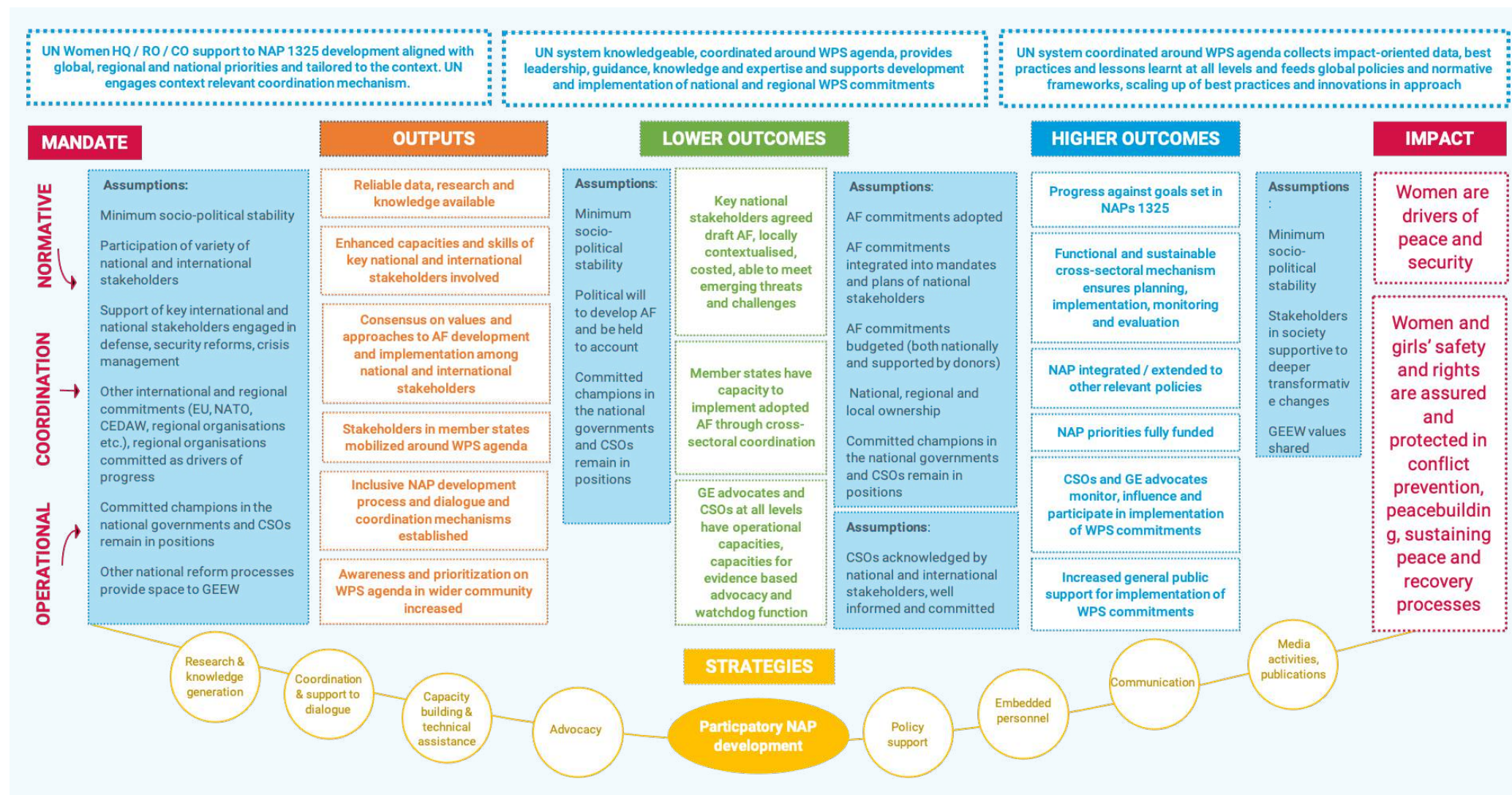
Figure 7 below represents UN Women's strategies, expected result chain and the external factors (assumptions) that usually affect NAP development and implementation processes. For a more detailed explanation of the ToC, refer to Annex 3.

36 Patton MQ, *Utilization-focused Evaluation*, Sage Publications, 2008, available online at: <http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book229324#tabview=toc>.

37 Weiss, Carol H., *Evaluation: methods for studying programs and policies* 1998 and <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/tocbackground/>

38 This is inclusive of other types of accountability frameworks that support implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions (e.g. peace agreements, sectoral policies on security, defence or crisis management, etc.).

Figure 7: Reconstructed Theory of Change\*



\* This ToC was developed by the evaluation team using UN Women SPs 2014–2017 and 2018–2021, WPS AWP, FPI guidance, and feedback from the WPS team during inception.

## Evaluation questions

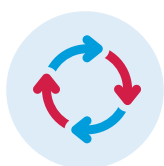
The evaluation team developed the following questions to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency, promotion of gender equality and human rights, and sustainability of UN Women's support to WPS

NAPs. Additionally, as part of a 'light touch' assessment, a question relating to WPS and COVID-19 was included. These questions provided the overarching framework for the evaluation's data collection and analysis.



### RELEVANCE

To what extent does UN Women's support to WPS NAPs development and implementation process align with global, regional and national priorities?



### COHERENCE AND COORDINATION

To what extent does UN Women's support to WPS NAP development and implementation processes fit within UN Women's internal WPS objectives and other thematic areas of work? How is this support coordinated with the UN system and other stakeholders in WPS to contribute to NAP development?



### EFFECTIVENESS

To what extent is UN Women's support to WPS NAP development effective in ensuring a high-impact NAP and in laying the ground for implementation? To what extent is there a demonstrable impact for women and girls as a result of UN Women's support to WPS NAPs at the country level?



### GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

To what extent are gender equality and human rights addressed in UN Women's support to NAP development and implementation?



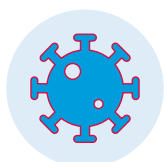
### ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

How well are UN Women's human and financial resources used to support WPS NAP development and implementation processes at global, regional and country levels?



### SUSTAINABILITY

To what extent has UN Women's influence supported national ownership of NAPs? How likely are they to be fully implemented?



### COVID-19

Given the current global crisis arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, what are the implications for WPS?



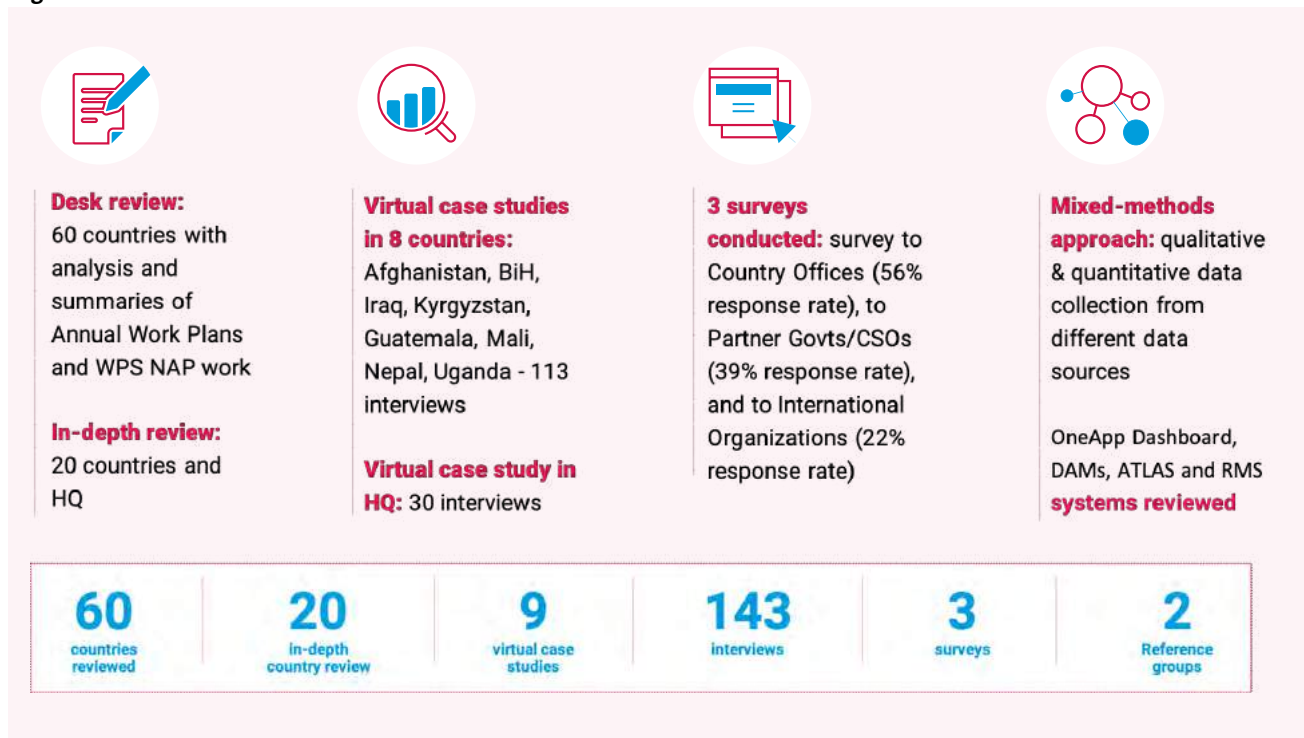
## 6. Evaluation methodology

### Evaluation methods: data collection methods and data analysis

The evaluation established four main components and lines of evidence to produce data to answer the questions and subquestions in the evaluation matrix (see Annex

4), allowing for triangulation of sources and across case comparisons.

Figure 8: Data collection tools



### Data analysis methods: qualitative and quantitative analysis

A combination of established qualitative methodologies was used, including: synthesis of stakeholder interviews and documents using deductive text analysis; organizational assessment and analysis; and contribution analysis of UN Women's support to WPS NAPs outcomes (see Annex 13). Quantitative analysis was used to assess organizational efficiency, in particular for budget and expenditure data, and for analysing survey results. Analysis of the survey results used survey analytics to generate reports across different questions and for different groups of stakeholders (see Annex 16).

The evaluation matrix provided the overarching framework for data analysis across all evaluation components. The ToC was used as the overarching theory to understand how change happens in this area of work. Contribution analysis was used to develop an overall performance story and assess plausible contributions to observed changes.

### Data synthesis and triangulation

In developing findings and conclusions, the extent of convergence between different sources was assessed. Triangulation was assessed through evidence map analysis including qualitative data from country scans, in-depth reviews, primary interview data and primary survey data.

## 7. Country case selection

A central element of the evaluation's enquiry was through a selection of desk-based and virtual country case studies. A number of scoring and non-scoring criteria were established to guide the selection of 20<sup>39</sup> case studies for in-depth review from among 60 countries scanned as part of the country scan review (see Annex 9 and 10 on case study selection criteria and country scoring).

From the 20 countries selected for in-depth desk review, eight countries were selected for virtual case studies (this included document review and interviews with main stakeholders). The focus was on those countries where UN Women has had the greatest engagement in WPS NAP support, as these are where the most useful lessons were likely to be found.

39 The twenty countries selected as case studies were Afghanistan\*, Timor-Leste, Nepal\*, Mali\*, Nigeria, Cameroon, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda\*, Kenya, Bosnia and Herzegovina\*, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Tunisia, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq\*, Guatemala\*, and Chile. The eight countries starred were selected for virtual case studies conducted remotely due to the travel restrictions imposed by Covid-19.



## 1.8 Ethics, gender equality and human rights

### Ethics

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy,<sup>40</sup> UNEG Ethical Guidelines, and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System.<sup>41</sup> The evaluation was also based on gender and human rights principles, as defined in the UN Women Evaluation Policy and adheres to the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation in the UN system.<sup>42</sup>

### Gender equality and human rights

The evaluation was conducted in line with gender equality and human rights principles as set out in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.<sup>43</sup> The evaluation used the UNEG Guidance on Integrating

Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations<sup>44</sup> and the UN Women Handbook “How to manage gender-responsive evaluation”<sup>45</sup>. This involved a gender-responsive stakeholder analysis; a specific gender equality and women’s empowerment criteria with corresponding questions; and analysis of gender equality and human rights considerations across all evaluation questions. Both results and process wise, the evaluation assessed the extent to which interventions were guided by system-wide objectives on gender equality, and have achieved gender equality and women’s empowerment results related to these objectives; and how gender equality and women’s empowerment were mainstreamed in WPS programming, as well as using human rights perspectives and gender equality principles throughout the evaluation process.

## 1.9 Limitations and quality assurance

### Limitations

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions on travel created significant limitations for the evaluation, as field missions were intended to be a central strategy for gathering multiple perspectives on the work and impact of UN Women at the country level. These limitations were mitigated in a number of ways, although could not be entirely eliminated.

Field case studies were replaced by virtual case studies, with five more added to extend the data collection to nine case studies in total (including headquarters) – eight of which were conducted remotely and one in-country (given the availability of the evaluation team member to conduct the case study in situ). These field case studies were carried out through one-to-one interviews with a range of stakeholders.

However, the focus groups with beneficiaries that were intended to assess impact were not possible in a virtual format.

This means that limited evidence was collected on the direct impact of UN Women’s work on right holders. Moreover, in some countries the COVID-19 context meant that stakeholders had limited availability for virtual interviews and it was not possible to interview all identified stakeholders.

The absence of a counterfactual or a comparator meant that the evaluation could estimate UN Women’s contribution to WPS NAPs using contribution analysis, but was not able to assess attribution. However, the application of a theory-based approach allowed the evaluation team to explore complexity and context and to map the causal pathways of change.

There were some apparent gaps in data availability, particularly cross-comparable financial data. These gaps were identified and the portfolio analysis identified discrete data gaps for each country context reviewed.

40 UN Women, Evaluation policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women/2012/12).

41 United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG Ethical Guidelines, accessible at: [http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc\\_id=102](http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=102) and

UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system, accessible at: [http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc\\_id=100](http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=100)

42 United Nations Evaluation Group, Norms and Standards for evaluation in the UN System, accessible at: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>; UNEG guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations accessible at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616>.

43 UNEG (2017) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (United Nations Evaluation Group).

44 UNEG (2014) Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluations <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

45 UN Women (2015) UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation <https://www.UNWomen.org/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>



Photo ©Photo: Photo: UN Women/Christopher Herwig

# FINDINGS

## RELEVANCE

To what extent does UN Women's support to WPS NAP development and implementation processes align with global, regional and national priorities?

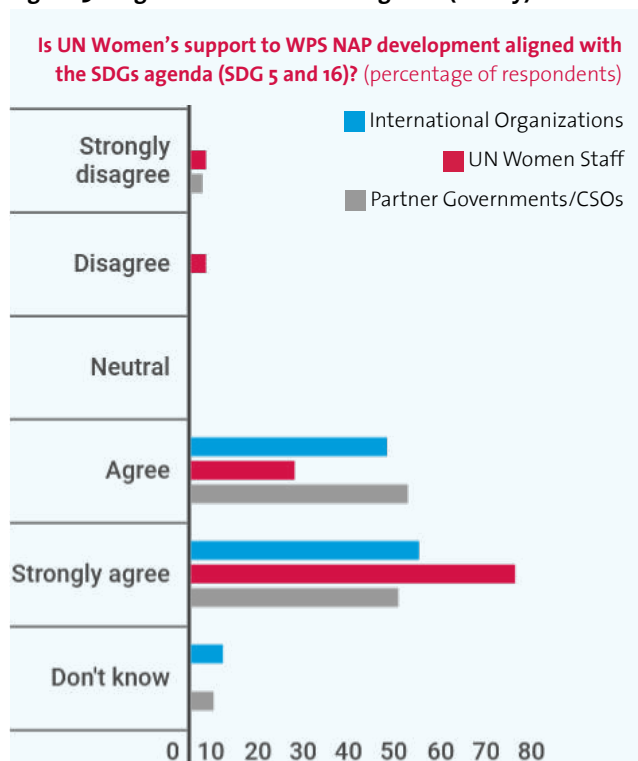
## FINDING 1

**NAP support is well aligned to the most directly relevant global frameworks. However, more could be done to develop alignment with a wider set of global and regional frameworks, in particular by building country-level knowledge and commitment on normative frameworks and their relevance to WPS objectives.**

The evaluation found that UN Women's NAP support was strongly aligned with SDG 5 and 16, which is a core guiding framework that informs this support. The SDGs were the normative framework most commonly referenced throughout the evaluation. Additionally, 71 per cent of UN Women personnel surveyed by the evaluation team strongly agreed that UN Women's work was aligned with the SDGs (see Figure 9 below). The evaluation found more limited alignment between UN Women's NAP support and CEDAW, including in Guatemala, Nepal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Tunisia and Nigeria.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, only in Guatemala and Bosnia and Herzegovina was it explicitly reported through interviews that UN Women's NAP work was aligned to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

The choice of frameworks with which UN Women should explicitly align its NAP work must be based on local political dynamics and the opportunities that alignment can provide in a given context. For example, in Nepal, UN Women and the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) effectively used CEDAW as an overarching framework to advocate for WPS, including to advance NAP processes when these faced challenges. The UN RCO in Nepal emphasized the importance of global frameworks as a motivator for the government, which wanted to be perceived as meeting global commitments. However, in Jordan, local actors promoting the adoption of a NAP deliberately chose not to link the agenda to CEDAW, as there were significant sensitivities around CEDAW which they did not want to become obstacles in advancing WPS objectives.

**Figure 9: Alignment with the SDG agenda (survey)<sup>47</sup>**



Overall, the evaluation found that UN Women's work on NAPs could engage with a wider set of global and regional normative frameworks, and that opportunities are being missed to do this. Specifically, UN Women's NAP work could be an entry point for wider engagement with human rights, peace, development and humanitarian frameworks and processes, but this is currently not happening. Similarly, linkages with a broader set of global frameworks, as well as with regional-level normative frameworks, were mostly not articulated in the desk review documentation, suggesting that in some cases linkages may have been overlooked.<sup>48</sup> It is worth noting that in some cases NAPs have only recently been adopted, which might explain the weak articulation of linkages. In a few countries, documentation of UN Women's NAP support did mention linkages to regional frameworks, for example the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or African Union (AU) frameworks in the case of Nigeria. Nigeria stood out as a particularly strong example where NAP work was explicitly linked to a wide range of normative frameworks at global and AU level and where evaluations have found that NAP

<sup>46</sup> In-depth desk reviews, UN Women IES.

<sup>47</sup> All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

<sup>48</sup> In depth reviews confirmed that alignment with global frameworks was limited.

project objectives, activities and outputs were aligned with overarching normative frameworks and related SDGs.

Building knowledge and commitment on normative frameworks emerged as critical for meaningful alignment between NAP work and these frameworks at national level. In Uganda, the inclusion of training on linkages between WPS and other normative frameworks during the

NAP consultation process was very valuable in facilitating alignment. However, the evaluation found cases where UN Women field personnel did not have sufficient information on normative frameworks to guide the alignment of field work, or where normative frameworks were not fully internalized by government, making alignment more challenging.

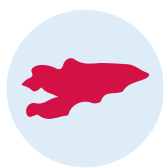
## FINDING 2

**UN Women is widely recognized for its coordination and normative roles at both global and country level. However, there appeared to be limited reflection within UN Women on how it can best leverage its integrated mandate to ensure that normative, coordination and operational roles operate in synergy for maximum impact. The value of UN Women’s mandate to work on NAPs with all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions was also stressed.**

The evaluation learned that UN Women was perceived as having unique and strong coordination and normative roles in the area of NAPs. At country level, UN Women’s inclusive approach, strong convening power and perceived neutrality enabled it to fulfil its coordination mandate effectively. At global level, UN Women’s normative role allowed it to take a clear lead on WPS and advance its objectives within the global policy space, as well as establish standards for national NAP processes. However, the evaluation observed less recognition of UN Women’s operational role and activities in support of NAPs, which was not seen as an area where UN Women clearly leads.

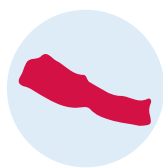
Critically, the evaluation found limited reflection within the organization on how to develop synergies between UN Women’s normative, coordination and operational work on NAPs. Such synergies were not particularly mentioned either in interviews with UN Women personnel or in the desk review documentation. This suggests that opportunities are being missed to ensure that the different elements of UN Women’s NAP work build upon each other for maximum leverage and impact.

### GOOD PRACTICES: integrated approaches to normative, coordination and operational/programming work



#### KYRGYZSTAN

In Kyrgyzstan, UN Women’s normative mandate guides its NAP work, while its operational mandate provides specific programmes and projects. Linkages between WPS and the economic development–peace nexus are starting to be made, with stakeholders viewing this integrated approach as a positive step.



#### NEPAL

A decentralized evaluation (2016) of the UN Women managed project “Strengthening Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Nepal (SIWPSAN)” found that UN Women’s integrated mandate gave the Entity a comparative advantage in WPS because of its ability to work on and integrate normative, operational and coordination dimensions.



#### UGANDA

UN Women in Uganda adopted an integrated approach to coordination, policy support and programme development across organizational thematic areas. For the WPS NAP, each pillar was linked to a different thematic area, e.g. prevention (EVAW), participation (governance), protection (WPS) and recovery (WEE). In terms of accomplishing change at the policy level, there was shared responsibility for the NAP between the CO’s different impact areas.



Based on the principle of universality which the Entity was founded upon,<sup>49</sup> UN Women provided technical support to development partners in the drafting of their WPS NAPs, most of which are outward facing. For countries such as Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom which partner both nationally and globally with UN Women, their WPS NAP priorities are a core element of their development portfolio.

Many of the donors with whom UN Women collaborates on WPS have developed their own NAPs, in some cases with support from UN Women. These national level commitments and strategies provide entry points for UN Women to engage and develop greater synergies with development partners in this area.

Overall, development partners that were interviewed were eager to see impactful implementation of NAPs, as well as the maintenance of WPS as a core value particularly in conflict and post-conflict countries. Areas of interest include the effects of women mediators in the field; mainstreaming gender in the military and security forces; and exploration of the connection between WPS and new

areas such as prevention of violent extremism and radicalism, the environment and natural resources management.

The evaluation found that there is significant value in UN Women's mandate to work with developing and developed countries on NAPs as this gives UN Women traction and influence on WPS with all countries, including donor countries. However, the importance of this mandate was not observed at the national level, suggesting that UN Women's work with development partners on NAPs is perhaps not as visible for national-level actors. While headquarters personnel and global stakeholders welcomed this universal mandate, they stressed that it presents challenges for the organization, as the ways in which UN Women provides support and measures success must inevitably be very different in developed countries compared to more challenging contexts. The evaluation concluded that more discussion is required about how to work in a holistic way with developed countries on both their own NAPs and their support to developing countries' NAPs, aiming for a systematic approach to engagement in these areas. This can be facilitated further through the WPS focal points network.

#### GOOD PRACTICES: integrated approaches to normative, coordination and operational/programming work



In **FINLAND**, the most recent NAP (2018) mentions prioritizing NAP implementation in Afghanistan, Kenya and Nepal, while also focusing on raising awareness of WPS objectives in North Africa and the Middle East. The NAP also highlights the key role of civil society actors in both Finland and conflict-affected countries in the implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the NAP. While outward facing, the NAP also includes some focus at the national and regional (Nordic countries) level.



In **NORWAY**, the most recent NAP (2019) places emphasis on WPS in the initial, non-public phases of peace processes, with a chapter focusing on support for implementation of peace agreements. The NAP also links with humanitarian efforts, with a focus on refugees and internally displaced persons, human trafficking, abuse of boys and men, and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.



Through its most recent NAP (2016), **SWEDEN** strongly focused on implementation of WPS objectives and achieving tangible change in cooperation with partners at the national and global level. To ensure relevance, Sweden has held NAP consultations in five conflict and post-conflict countries. It further engages with UN Women in the Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF), which supports WPS globally, including the development and implementation of NAPs worldwide.



In the **UNITED KINGDOM**, the most recent NAP (2018) was produced in collaboration with UK-based civil society and academic organizations, including the Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) network of NGOs and the London School of Economics Centre for Women, Peace and Security. At the country level, CSOs in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Somalia and Syria were consulted to ensure that the voices of women in fragile and conflict-affected states were included in the NAP. The WPS NAP is the UK's highest level strategy on gender and conflict.



The **G7 WPS PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE** was created to provide targeted support to less developed countries on their WPS objectives, particularly with implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820, as well as to enhance G7 coordination of WPS issues and to share results and lessons learned. For example, the **EUROPEAN UNION (EU)** is supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina, and an EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina action plan was developed with Bosnia and Herzegovina's Agency for Gender Equality. Donor coordination meetings in Bosnia and Herzegovina co-chaired by the Agency for Gender Equality and UN Women were seen as an opportunity for knowledge sharing (providing lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina's experiences for context) and synergetic engagement of development partners for WPS and NAP implementation.



### FINDING 3

## UN Women's NAP support is strongly aligned to national contexts and is widely seen as relevant. UN Women adapts its NAP support to ensure its relevance to different types of contexts and challenges.

Evidence from the evaluation very clearly demonstrated that UN Women's NAP work was well aligned to country contexts. The evaluation determined four key strategies that UN Women uses to develop this alignment with national contexts:

- Working closely with government and civil society stakeholders on NAPs. For example, in Kyrgyzstan it was reported that greater engagement with CSOs increased the local relevance of UN Women's NAP work.
- Supporting national entities to lead NAP development. For example, in Uganda UN Women placed strong focus on building the capacity of the Ministry of Gender to lead the NAP process.
- Connecting NAP work with wider national plans and processes. For example, in Tunisia UN Women support was well aligned to existing government plans, including national gender plans and strategies.
- Taking account of learning from previous NAP processes. For example, in Nepal it was reported that taking into consideration lessons from the first NAP helped to increase the national relevance of UN Women's support to the second NAP.

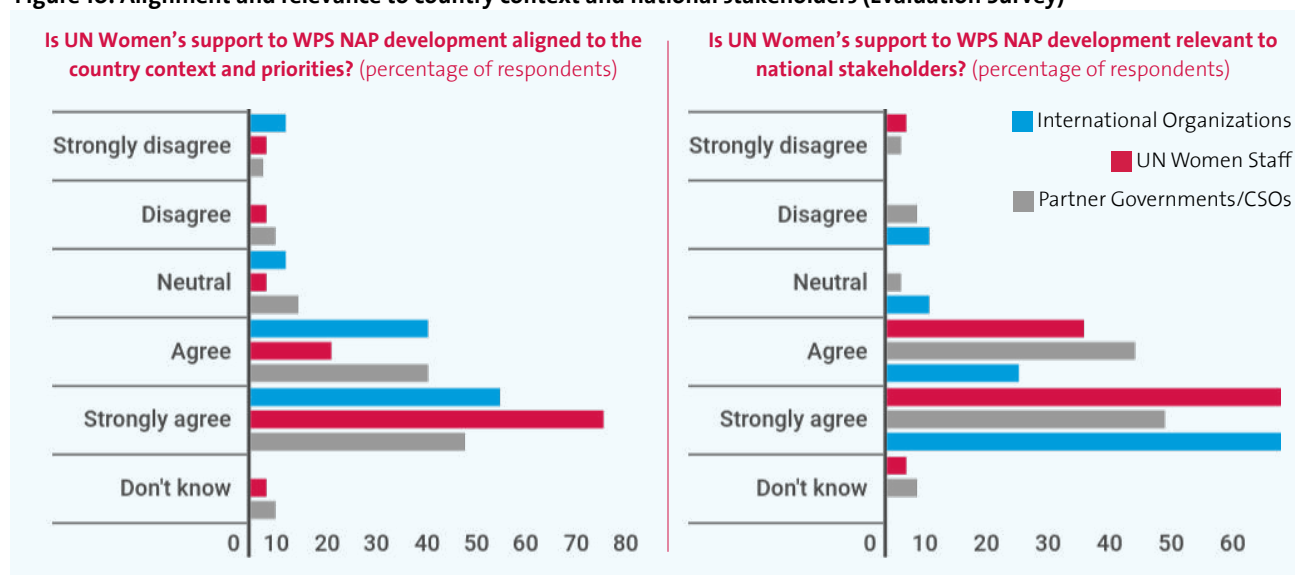
All stakeholder groups surveyed by the evaluation team strongly agreed that UN Women's NAP support was

aligned to their country context and relevant to national stakeholders.

UN Women is able to align its NAP work to very different types of political, conflict and gender equality contexts and challenges. For example, in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region UN Women adapted its NAP work to be relevant to countries in the region that are not obviously conflict affected, but are facing issues such as radicalization, tensions around migration and refugees, or xenophobia. In Kyrgyzstan, support to the NAP addressed a range of context specific challenges including re-traditionalization, patriarchal norms, regression on SDG 5, underlying political and inter-ethnic conflicts, cross-border conflicts and radicalization. Similarly, desk review documentation and interviews demonstrated that UN Women support to NAP processes had been tailored to respond to specific national-level concerns such as Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) in Jordan and Nigeria, Palestine's unique political situation and the issue of indigenous inclusion in Guatemala.

However, the evaluation also uncovered some practices that undermined the ability of UN Women's NAP work to align with the country context. In particular, it was found that in a few cases earlier generation NAP development processes were not always inclusive, which undermined its relevance to national contexts and priorities.

**Figure 10: Alignment and relevance to country context and national stakeholders (Evaluation Survey)<sup>50</sup>**



<sup>50</sup> All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

## FINDING 4

### UN Women's work to develop consistency between RAPs and NAPs is limited and weak, and requires improvement including stronger support from ROs.

The evaluation found that work on the NAP/RAP agenda at regional level was weak and there were insufficient efforts to link regional and national plans and processes. For example, in Uganda, the evaluation noted the lack of strong alignment or linkages between Uganda's NAP and the AU RAP and that the RO could do more to support and facilitate these linkages. Desk review documentation, including an evaluation of WPS in the Arab States regional project<sup>51</sup> indicated that while UN Women had provided support to regional level work, this could have been more effectively built upon and used to promote WPS objectives and galvanize work on NAPs at the national level. The evaluation team's survey to UN Women field personnel indicated that more than 50 per cent of respondents did not think UN Women engages in the development of RAPs (see Figure 11 below). Despite this overall finding, there were some positive examples, such as UN Women's 'Inclusive Security' project that supported the NAP in Liberia, which an evaluation of the project<sup>52</sup> found to be well aligned with the ECOWAS Plan of Action on UNSCR 1325 and 1820.

The evaluation found that an important factor shaping the success of WPS work at regional level, and efforts to

link RAPs and NAPs, is the strength and effectiveness of the regional institutions themselves, including adequate staffing, financing and technical expertise. This suggests that UN Women ROs could be more strategic in assessing when and how engagement with regional bodies and processes could add value and is worth investing in. For example, in the case of the Arab League, member states within the Arab League were highly politically divided; had widely different interests in relation to regional conflict, peace and security; and had very different ideas of what 1325 involves. As a result, the RAP was ineffective and remains largely unimplemented, rendering it difficult to make meaningful linkages with country-level NAPs. However, in South Africa, member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have been guided by regional priorities in WPS. Following the adoption of the SADC Regional Strategy (Action Plan) on WPS in 2018, SADC Ministers of Gender urged all SADC member states to develop NAPs in line with the RAP with a deadline of 2019. UN Women field personnel reported that, although this timeline was not fully met, there had been significant progress.

**Figure 11: UN Women's engagement in RAPs (Evaluation survey of UN Women staff)<sup>53</sup>**



51 UN Women. "Evaluation of UN Women's Peace and Security in the Arab States Regional Project" (2018).

52 UN Women. "Evaluation: Inclusive Security: Nothing For Us Without Us- Liberia." (2019).

53 All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

**COHERENCE AND COORDINATION**

To what extent does UN Women's support to WPS NAP development and implementation processes fit within UN Women's internal WPS objectives and other thematic areas of work? How is this support coordinated with the UN system and other stakeholders in WPS to contribute to NAP development?

**FINDING 5.**

### UN Women is widely seen as a strong coordinator with a clear mandate to support both WPS and WPS NAPs.

The evaluation found that most of UN Women's external coordination work takes place at national level, where the Entity coordinates stakeholders, processes and resource mobilization. This coordination work tends to be most intense during the NAP development phase, although is still present during NAP implementation. At national level, UN Women tends to lead three separate but interconnected coordination processes related to NAPs:

- Coordination of national governments, CSOs and other national stakeholders involved in the NAP process. This usually includes technical assistance to governments; convening consultations with a wide range of stakeholders at different levels; and establishing national mechanisms for NAP coordination. In some contexts, UN Women places embedded personnel or consultants within national institutions tasked with NAP coordination to support them in this role. One positive example of coordination of national stakeholders was in Uganda, where all stakeholders agreed that UN Women's coordination of the NAP III development process was excellent and a significant improvement on the coordination of previous NAPs, which UN Women did not lead on.
- Coordination of development partners supporting the NAP process. This coordination is primarily conducted through established donor coordination groups and tends to focus on fundraising and information exchange on NAP-related programmes and advocacy. In its engagement with these development partners, UN Women acts as a resource, providing analysis to inform their NAP-related diplomatic activities and programmes. This level of coordination was important in creating pooled funding for NAP implementation in contexts such as Nepal, Mali, Jordan and Kosovo.<sup>54</sup> In Mali, UN Women initiated 'Friends of WPS in Mali'

an informal group of like-minded development partners focused on promoting WPS objectives. This group met regularly to share information and develop common strategies and was key in generating external funding for NAP implementation.

- Coordination of UN system engagement on WPS and NAPs. UN Women brings NAP-related issues to the UN Country Team and engages senior UN representatives, including the RCO, in actions to advance the NAP. UN Women also engages bilaterally with other UN agencies involved in WPS to coordinate strategies and activities. Interviewees reported that coordination with other UN agencies strengthened UN Women's NAP work in areas where the Entity lacks outreach or expertise, such as engaging with security actors, or work on issues including disarmament, organized crime, environment or intersectionality related to age and disability.

UN Women also undertakes coordination work at the regional level, largely in support of knowledge generation, standardization of approaches and to some extent resource mobilization. However, the extent and efficacy of this regional coordination work varied considerably between regions. In particular, the extent to which UN Women leads regional coordination on NAPs tends to be heavily dependent on the RO's capacity, especially as it relates to their staff and personnel in general. However, UN Women ROs have coordinated some regional-level interaction on WPS and NAPs among different sets of stakeholders in the Middle East and North Africa, South East Asia and the Western Balkans. In some cases, such as Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Kosovo, COs engaged directly or through their partners in coordinating cross-border initiatives. For example, the regional women's lobby in the Western Balkans was managed by the UN Women field presence in Kosovo.

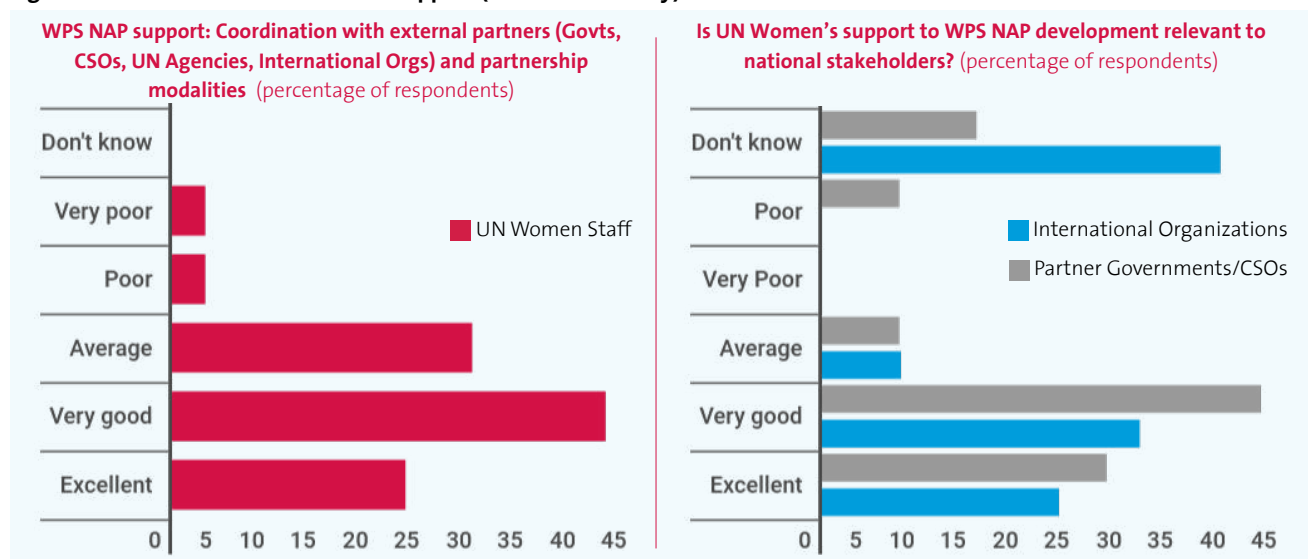
54 References to Kosovo in this report shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Most stakeholders perceived UN Women as having a clear and specific mandate to lead coordination on WPS, including NAP development and implementation, and as being strong in this coordination role. UN Women's global level coordination role was focused on wider WPS objectives, with less reference to NAPs specifically (the exception being the WPS focal points network which focuses on NAPs). UN Women leads and participates in important global level coordination and funding mechanisms related to WPS, including the UN Standing Committee on WPS, Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund, Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and Peacebuilding Fund, WPS national focal point network, and Group of Friends of 1325.

A more specific focus on NAPs appears within some of UN Women's global coordination work on knowledge generation, exchange of practice and to some extent resource mobilization. For example, lessons from Nigeria's national NAP process were widely shared in global forums with UN Women support.

In the evaluation team's survey of UN Women personnel, 42 per cent rated UN Women's coordination with external partners as 'very good,' while 43 per cent of partner governments/CSOs and 31 per cent of international organizations rated UN Women's coordination and support to dialogue as 'very good.'

**Figure 12: UN Women's coordination support (Evaluation survey)<sup>55</sup>**



Opportunities for global level coordination and lesson learning between UN Women's NAP work and other related agendas are being taken forward. UNFPA was recently mandated to support global implementation of UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) through development of youth action plans and discussions were taking place between UN Women and UNFPA on lessons learned from WPS NAPs to inform UNFPA's development of YPS action plans.

The evaluation identified some challenges that UN Women faces in its coordination role, related to both limitations in its own capacities and the contexts in which it operates. These included difficulties in coordinating with larger UN agencies due to capacity and power imbalances; weakness in exchanging information and developing synergies with other international actors engaged in the NAP space; inability to reach beyond ministries and agencies directly

involved with NAPs and to coordinate with wider government actors; coordination with CSOs limited to a range of 'traditional' partners; and inability to reach beyond national level to support coordination on NAPs at the local level.

Another challenge for UN Women's coordination role identified by the evaluation team was competition between different actors involved in NAP work. In Afghanistan, competition between government ministries hindered progress on NAP implementation; while in Mali, disagreement among international and national actors over the management of the basket fund for NAP implementation also proved a challenge in the context of the second NAP. Support from the Resident Coordinator on NAP coordination could play an important role in overcoming such competition.

<sup>55</sup> All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

**EFFECTIVENESS**

To what extent is UN Women's support to WPS NAPs development effective in ensuring a high-impact NAP and in laying the ground for implementation? To what extent is there a demonstrable impact for women and girls as a result of UN Women's support to WPS NAPs at the country level?

**FINDING 6**

**UN Women at all levels is highly aware of and strongly promotes the high-impact NAP criteria. More specifically, UN Women actively supports strong national leadership and coordination and inclusivity, but its support is more limited with regard to costing and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and flexibility.**

The Global Study on implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2015) identified five criteria that contribute to a high-impact NAP: strong leadership and effective coordination; an inclusive design process; costing and allocated budgets for implementation; an M&E framework; and flexibility to adapt to emerging situations. The evaluation examined the extent to which UN Women promotes these five elements through its work on NAPs, and thereby lays the ground for a high-quality NAP that is likely to be implemented. The evaluation found that UN Women, at all levels of the organization, is highly aware of and strongly promotes these high-impact criteria. UN Women was seen as making a particularly strong contribution to promoting the high-impact NAP criteria of strong national leadership and coordination, and inclusivity.

The importance of advancing the high-impact criteria was driven from the headquarters level, including through guidelines for NAPs development, such as support for a NAP costing and budgeting manual developed by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders. At the country level, UN Women used multiple strategies to promote these criteria within NAP development processes, as detailed below. However, despite these efforts, the criteria have not necessarily been integrated into final NAP documents at country level and/or for the management of NAP implementation as multiple contextual factors affect this outcome.

**GOOD PRACTICE:****Promoting the high-impact NAP criteria in Uganda****STRONG LEADERSHIP AND EFFECTIVE COORDINATION**

UN Women supported the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) to take the lead on NAP development, helping to establish a three-tiered coordination mechanism to oversee both NAP development and implementation. Stakeholders stated that with UN Women's support, the MoGLSD was enabled to effectively take charge and own the process. As one stakeholder reported, "UN Women has not taken away the role of the ministries, but they support the process and government to carry out its mandate".

**INCLUSIVE DESIGN PROCESS**

The inclusivity of the NAP development process in Uganda was praised across stakeholder categories, with many stating it was the most inclusive process they had ever been part of. UN Women helped to facilitate stakeholder mapping during the initial planning stage to ensure that no groups were left behind. Stakeholders that participated included various government ministries (MoGLSD, MoS, MoD, MoH, MoE, Mol, MoFA, electoral commission), local governments (Kitgum DLG, Bushenyi DLG), religious organizations (Interreligious Council of Uganda, Uganda Joint Christian Council), academics (Makerere University/Refugee Law project), donors (Norwegian embassy) and other UN agencies (UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR).

**COSTING AND BUDGETING**

While pending finalization by the government, Uganda's third NAP has been fully costed. Each implementing partner (government ministry and CSO) will have a separate but linked costing plan for the implementation of their NAP Operational Plan. Donor funds for implementation have already been set aside. To help achieve this, UN Women held costing and budgeting workshops, where according to one stakeholder "Costing was discussed and transparent."

**M&E FRAMEWORKS**

As part of the NAP development process, a subcommittee on M&E was formed, and members of the M&E section who helped develop the SDG indicators in Uganda were brought in to hold workshops and training. With the support of UN Women, Uganda's third NAP has a completed M&E framework with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) indicators.

**COSTING AND BUDGETING**

Even before COVID-19 emerged, UN Women staff reported that Uganda's third NAP was developed to be flexible to respond to emerging issues. Consultations to develop the third NAP identified disease outbreaks (using Ebola as an example) and the increased militarization and security risks that accompany these outbreaks as a critical concern for WPS; and broad measures to enhance women's participation in government responses to potential disease outbreaks were therefore incorporated into the new NAP.

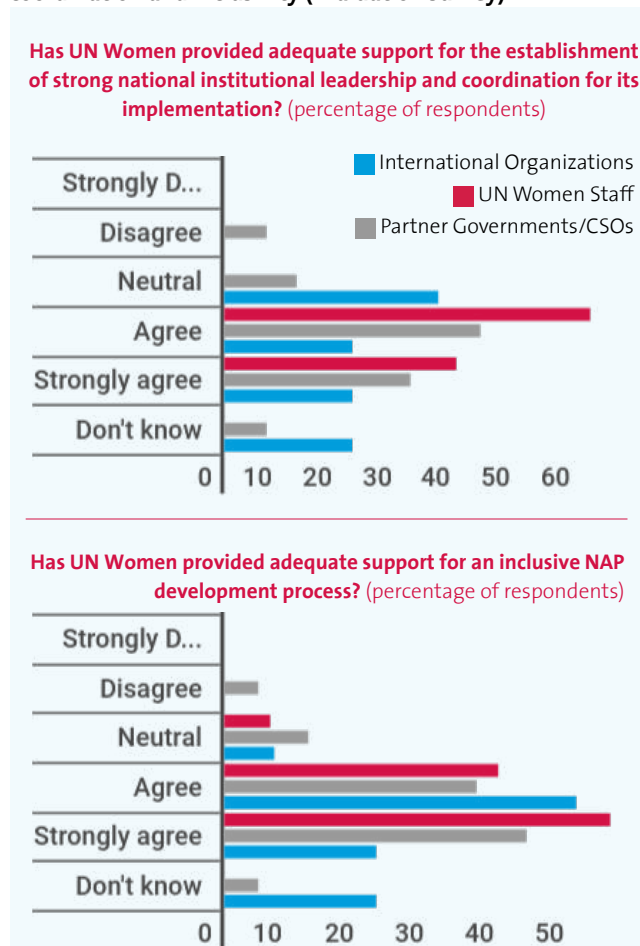


### Strong leadership and coordination

The evaluation found that supporting strong leadership and coordination was a central feature of UN Women's support to NAP development and implementation. There was widespread agreement among stakeholders interviewed that UN Women strongly contributed to establishing coordination structures and NAP management cycles,<sup>56</sup> although the effectiveness of these mechanisms varied between countries depending on the extent to which the line ministries and agencies involved integrated NAPs into their work and operationalized the plan.

All UN Women personnel, 74 per cent of partner governments and CSOs, and 42 per cent of international organizations surveyed by the evaluation team agreed or strongly agreed that UN Women's support for strong leadership and coordination was adequate.

**Figure 13: UN Women's support for strong leadership/coordination and inclusivity (Evaluation survey)<sup>57</sup>**



Strong leadership and coordination is typically facilitated by the establishment and functioning of a national coordination body for NAP development and implementation, a body led by a powerful line ministry, inter-ministerial agency or coordinating agency. UN Women advocates for the establishment of such effective national coordination bodies. Other important strategies for promoting strong leadership and coordination identified by the evaluation team included identification and investment in capacity building of champions within key institutions who can drive NAP processes forward, and support to CSO leadership to play an effective watchdog, advocacy or implementation function in relation to NAPs. Particularly strong examples of UN Women's support for leadership and coordination were found by the evaluation team in Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria and Georgia.

In Georgia, the UN Women project "Women for Equality, Peace and Development in Georgia (WEPD II)"<sup>58</sup> succeeded in establishing a national coordination mechanism to oversee NAP implementation. Located within the Prime Minister's Office in the Executive Branch, the National Coordination Group (NCG) held quarterly meetings, bringing together government representatives from 20 state bodies and civil society to fulfil their NAP implementation commitments and establish accountability and transparency of decision-making related to GEWE. Notably, the mid-term evaluation of Ukraine's NAP cited the Georgia case as a 'best practice' example of government coordination for NAP work.<sup>59</sup>

Although a central feature of UN Women's support, the evaluation team found that UN Women's efforts to develop strong leadership and coordination for NAPs were frequently hindered by the high turnover of government officials involved in the process. It appears that effective leadership and coordination of NAP development and implementation is often highly dependent on individual champions and is lost when these individuals move on. Similarly, leadership and coordination can also be undermined by wider reorganization of government structures or dissolution of ministries responsible for the NAP. To mitigate this risk, UN Women and national institutions encourage the coordination role to be taken either by the gender machinery (as in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Uganda), or by ministries of the interior, defence or foreign affairs (as in Nepal, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan).

<sup>56</sup> NAP management cycles involve planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes.

<sup>57</sup> All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

<sup>58</sup> "Final Evaluation of the 36 Month Period of Implementation of the UN Women CO Georgia Project 'Women for Equality, Peace, and Development in Georgia' (WEPD II)" UN Women, (2016).

<sup>59</sup> "Mid Term Evaluation of the Ukrainian National Action Plan on implementation of UNSCR 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" until 2020" UN Women (2016).

### An inclusive design process

UN Women supports inclusive NAP design processes by ensuring the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including from marginalized groups. This was identified by the evaluation as a defining feature of UN Women's support to NAP processes, reported by all categories of interviewees, in the stakeholder surveys and in the desk review documentation. This inclusive approach was present in all of UN Women's engagements on NAPs, but was a particularly strong focus during the NAP consultation and design process. UN Women supported long and complex NAP consultation processes, in some cases taking up to one year, in order to ensure that all relevant stakeholders could participate. The inclusion of civil society and vulnerable groups was greater where UN Women led or supported NAP consultations (such as in Jordan, where UN Women in partnership with the Jordanian National Commission for Women ensured that Syrian refugees were involved in the NAP consultation process) than where the process was undertaken by other development agencies (Nepal) or independently by national institutions (Bosnia and Herzegovina).<sup>60</sup> Perceptions from UN Women personnel, partner governments and international throughout the survey also confirms this: 94 per cent of UN Women staff, 79 per cent of partner governments and CSOs, and 72 per cent of international organizations surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that UN Women provided adequate support for an inclusive NAP development process (refer to Figure 13 above).

A comparison of different generation NAPs revealed that the most recent generation of NAP processes were more inclusive, and that UN Women's engagement had made a strong contribution in this regard. For example, in Uganda the latest NAP process involved non-traditional stakeholders such as religious leaders and had reached out to grassroots women CSOs through a survey, although it was reported that more could have been done to include youth, tribal leaders, refugees and disabled people. In Nepal, the latest NAP process involved women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and former combatants for the first time. In Guatemala, UN Women supported consultation with relevant sectors and women survivors of CRSV through the adoption and presentation of the 1325 NAP. Comprised of 14 state institutions from the justice, security, peace and women's rights institutions, the Inter-institutional Table on Women, Peace and Security (MIMPAZ) was established in 2012 to promote implementation and follow up on UNSCR 1325 in Guatemala in line with the 28 Peace Accord commitments. The NAP development process in Uganda involved in-depth consultations with civil society and state partners, as well as with women

survivors of sexual and gender-based violence during the internal armed conflict.

The evaluation identified significant benefits from this inclusive approach to NAP consultation. In particular, this approach brought together a range of stakeholders that would not usually interact to discuss peace and security issues, something that rarely happens through other processes such as security sector reform. This interaction builds relationships between different types of stakeholders that are important for NAP implementation, or can be used to advance other agendas outside the NAP such as strengthening responses to domestic violence. Inclusive consultation processes also provided a forum for facilitating and mediating disputed issues such as transitional justice, vulnerable groups' rights, and strengthening the awareness of a wide variety of stakeholders on WPS issues.

The evaluation found that there is still space to further improve inclusivity and identified some of the major challenges, including poor security situations that hinder consultations outside the capital or in remote regions (e.g. Afghanistan, and to some extent in Mali). A lack of funding, human capacities and institutional infrastructure within UN Women or national partners also prevented greater regional and local outreach, particularly in rural areas (e.g. Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan). Youth, internally displaced persons, indigenous people and women with disabilities were found to be the groups most likely to remain excluded by NAP consultation processes. In Afghanistan, stakeholders interviewed recommended that advancing inclusivity requires UN Women to engage more at the provincial and local level, and to involve local activists and organizations in NAP localization, recognizing that they can do a lot to reach out to grassroots communities with just a small amount of funding.

### Costing and allocated budgets for implementation

The evaluation found that UN Women supports costing and budgeting of NAPs in some contexts and that this support was more prominent in the latest generation of NAPs. This was revealed in interviews, desk review documentation and through the survey of UN Women personnel, where 55 per cent reported that their CO strongly supported development of a realistic budget/costing for the NAP. However, other stakeholders surveyed had low levels of awareness of UN Women's work in this area (21 per cent of national governments and CSOs and 34 per cent of international organizations surveyed were not aware of this aspect of UN Women's support to NAPs).

<sup>60</sup> In-depth desk reviews, UN Women IES.

UN Women's support to costing and budgeting tends to involve organizing costing exercises and discussions, and supporting preparation of draft costing plans. However, such support rarely results in a costing plan that is adopted by governments as an integral part of the NAP, or translates into annual operational budgets of implementing institutions. An example of successful work in this area was in Uganda, where UN Women supported the costing of the NAP and development of operational plans and budgets for each ministry/agency involved in implementing the NAP.

Several broad findings emerged from the evaluation in relation to costing and budgeting. The first is that NAP activities were more likely to be funded if they were included in the operational plans and budgets of implementing ministries and agencies. Another is that, although government funding for NAPs was present in all the cases studied, this funding was not systematically tracked or captured across different sectors or levels, making it impossible to assess

the scope of government financing for NAP implementation. It also emerged that there is scope for UN Women to play a stronger role in supporting technical teams within ministries to cost and budget NAPs, including sharing expertise on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) as a potential mechanism to generate NAP funding. Notably, all of the government representatives interviewed stressed that their national funding alone was not sufficient for NAP implementation, and that funding was needed from external donor sources.

In some countries, development partners supported WPS NAP implementation through the use of pooled/basket funds. Pooled funding mechanisms have been identified as a good practice which enhances coherence and synergy for implementation and helps to avoid duplication of efforts. UN Women manages some of these pooled funds.

#### GOOD PRACTICES: integrated approaches to normative, coordination and operational/programming work



##### BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Financial Instrument for Gender Action Plan (GAP) Implementation has been managed by the Agency for Gender Equality since 2009. As an integral part of GAP implementation, this fund supports government and civil society work for WPS NAP implementation (through supporting programmes that contribute to NAP priorities). Since 2018, Sweden was the sole remaining donor to this fund.



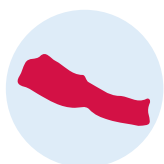
##### JORDAN

The Pooled Funding Mechanism for Implementation of NAP 1325 has been managed by UN Women since 2018. An evaluation of the Arab States regional project highlighted the effectiveness of UN Women's approach to securing donor support for the pooled fund as a key result. Contributing donors to date include the governments of Canada, the United Kingdom, Spain and Norway. This fund supports the implementation activities of both government and civil society, and is considered the 'best practice' example of a successful pooled fund.



##### MALI

There was strong interest from donors to establish a pooled funding mechanism for WPS NAP implementation, but disagreements over management of the fund hindered development and discussions are on hold.



##### NEPAL

The former Nepal Peace Trust Fund was managed by the Government of Nepal from 2007 to 2017. The Trust Fund supported NAP implementation in addition to government projects relating to broader GEWE and peacebuilding work, such as support to the country's Comprehensive Peace Accords. It was discontinued in 2017.

### A monitoring and evaluation framework

Through stakeholder interviews and desk reviews, the evaluation team found that UN Women supported the development of M&E frameworks in most NAP processes, although with differing levels of success. This evidence was triangulated with findings from the survey, which indicated that 64 per cent of UN Women personnel, 55 per cent of partner governments and CSOs, and 57 per cent of international organizations strongly agreed or agreed that UN Women provided support for the development of M&E frameworks for the NAP.

The most common strategies applied by UN Women to advance M&E were providing technical and financial support for the development of M&E guidelines and frameworks, and capacity building for implementation of M&E frameworks. However, a common pattern appears to be that, although M&E frameworks were established, actual monitoring processes were weak due to limited capacity or commitment. In some countries, UN Women was specifically addressing this by building monitoring capacity or by supporting national structures to conduct NAP evaluations, e.g. providing evaluation specialists in Guatemala, Iraq and Ukraine, and supporting governments to evaluate their NAPs such as in Ukraine and Timor Leste.

While NAP M&E frameworks were not assessed by this evaluation, stakeholders reported that activity oriented NAPs and output level indicators, as well as a lack of objectivity and evidence-based reporting, were significant limitations to effectively monitoring and evaluating NAPs. Lack of available data was also an obstacle, both for informing NAPs and monitoring their impact.<sup>61</sup> It is worth noting that in some countries, such as Uganda and Nigeria,

earlier generation NAPs did not have M&E frameworks, but this has been addressed in the latest NAP development processes.

### Flexibility to adapt to emerging situations

When asked whether UN Women supports revision and adjustment of NAPs to address emerging crises and security issues, 61 per cent of UN Women personnel, 67 per cent of development partner governments and CSOs, and 50 per cent of international organizations agreed or strongly agreed that it does. However, beyond this survey result there was limited evidence of UN Women's support for the development of flexible NAPs or for adapting NAPs to respond to changing contexts. The evaluation observed that there is little shared understanding among stakeholders of what a flexible NAP would involve.

The evaluation noted the importance of integrating gender-responsive approaches into responses to emerging security threats and challenges, crises and emergency situations and found evidence that UN Women addresses this issue within its support to NAP processes. For example, stakeholders in Afghanistan and Iraq reported that the NAP in these countries was adjusted to reflect the changing security situation. However, many stakeholders from UN Women, international organizations and CSOs stressed that a NAP should not be adjusted to respond to each crisis, but that other policies applied in crisis and emergency situations should reflect the principles of the NAP. There was little evidence that this is happening and the evaluation observed that existing emergency plans tended to be rigid and gender blind, did not reflect the principles contained in a country's NAP, and were difficult for gender equality advocates to influence.

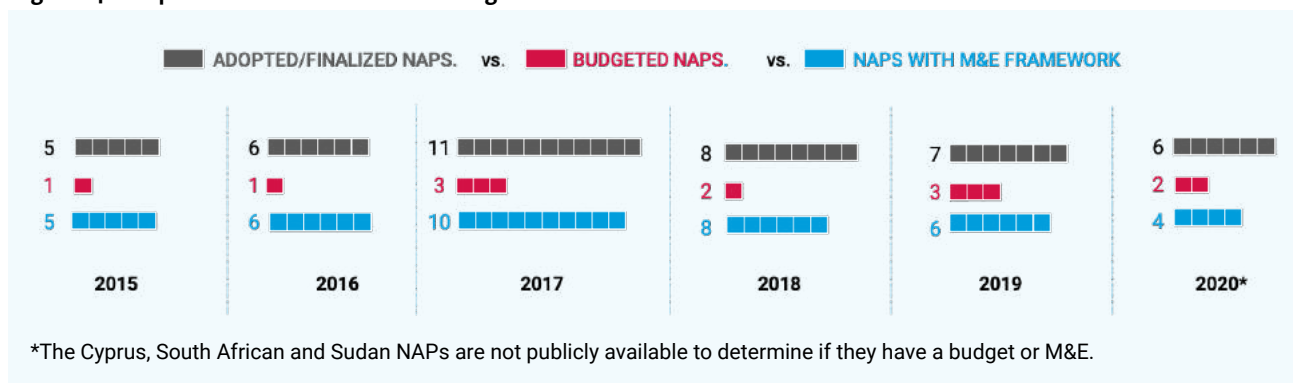
## FINDING 7

### UN Women's action to support the high-impact criteria does not necessarily translate into adopted 1325 NAPs and their implementation.

The evaluation found that while UN Women actively promoted high-impact criteria in its support to NAP development in all countries where it worked, the extent to which such criteria were included in the final NAP was mediated by the complexity of context, the actors involved and interests at play, and the final decisions of governments. This

particularly relates to costing and budgeting (as is evident in Figure 14 below, the majority of adopted NAPs have not been budgeted) and to a lesser extent M&E; other criteria (such as inclusivity) were reflected to a far greater extent in the final NAPs.

<sup>61</sup> UN Women recognizes that weak gender data is a global challenge and is addressing this through its strategy Women Count, which promotes more and better gender data.

**Figure 14: Adopted/finalized NAPs versus budgeted NAPs and NAPs with M&E<sup>62</sup>**

The evaluation noted that key barriers to the adoption of NAPs that meet high-impact criteria were: lack of financial resources; lack of political commitment; political turbulence; insufficient capacities of national stakeholders to manage the process; and violent conflict. Other barriers mentioned included weak coordination among ministries; difficulties in including stakeholders outside the capital and major cities; turnover in the government; and lack of institutional infrastructure to support localization.

Guatemala and Iraq provide examples where limited political will and instability within government has stalled promising NAP processes. In Guatemala, UN Women played a fundamental role in the NAP development process, providing expert guidance to the creation and functioning of the MIMPAZ and securing the leadership of the national gender equality machinery SEPREM. The process was highly inclusive, as most organizations related to the national peace process were part of the MIMPAZ and were able to reach groups such as youth and indigenous women. Despite this, MIMPAZ has been put on hold due to the political context and reorganization of government peace and security and women's machineries. In Iraq, implementation of the first NAP was hindered by high turnover and significant changes in the federal government of Iraq, including the abolition of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Baghdad in 2016. With women's affairs currently managed through the Prime Minister's Council office, UN Women has worked with civil society to lobby for the establishment of a strong women's machinery to take the NAP agenda forward. Currently, UN Women is part of the NAP Steering Committee with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the High Council of Women's Affairs (HCWA) of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Several countries, including Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Ukraine, provide examples where lack of adequate budgets have hindered effective NAP implementation. In Afghanistan, UN Women supported efforts to produce a costed and budgeted NAP in 2016, including holding capacity-building workshops and producing a draft plan for a pooled funding mechanism. However, the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Foreign Affairs were unable to reach an agreement on a budget for the NAP until mid-2020. In Ukraine, an external mid-term evaluation<sup>63</sup> of UN Women's project "Enhancing Accountability for GEWE in National Reforms, Peace and Security in Ukraine" showed that, even with a costed NAP and some funding provided by different levels of government, there were challenges in tracking the financial support for NAP implementation from national, regional and local resources. In Kyrgyzstan, while budgets and an M&E framework were discussed within the NAP development processes supported by UN Women, in the end financing issues were left out of the document and the M&E framework was activity focused.

Such challenges to the creation of high-impact NAPs were widespread and found in a variety of countries, including where UN Women has not been involved in NAP development. For example, in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) region, 86 per cent of NAPs had minimal or no information on budget or financing mechanisms; around 20 per cent of NAPs had poorly specified M&E frameworks; and around 50 per cent had moderately well-defined frameworks.<sup>64</sup> It is worth noting that in some cases NAPs do not include a budget at adoption, but may go on to develop budgets and financing mechanisms post-adoption.

62 This graph created by the Evaluation team depicts the number of UN Women supported NAPs adopted for each year (in gray), compared to the number of those NAPs with a budget (red) and an M&E framework (blue). The graph demonstrates that for all the NAPs adopted, while most have some kind of M&E framework, the number of budgeted NAPs is very low. NAP ratings from the LSE website (<https://www.wpsnaps.org/>) were used to determine which NAPs had a budget or M&E framework (while there are different degrees of strength, NAPs with a rating of 3 (budget or M&E broadly defined) or higher were counted as having a budget or M&E in the above graph).

63 Gheorghe Caraseni and Aleksandar Zivanovic, (2019) "Enhancing accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment in national reforms, peace and security" mid-term Evaluation Report.

64 Myrntinen Henry, Shepher Laura J, Wright Hannah, "Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region" (2020), OSCE, Vienna.



## FINDING 8

### Technical assistance, capacity building and advocacy are widely recognized as UN Women's primary NAP intervention strategies at national level and are viewed as the most effective.

The evaluation team identified technical assistance, capacity building and advocacy as the top intervention areas that UN Women engages in to support NAP work. These three areas received the highest levels of investment for UN Women's NAP work and were also those most recognized by partner governments, CSOs and international organizations as key areas where UN Women provided effective support (refer to the comparative rankings in Figure 15 below). Intervention strategies related to coordination and support to dialogue were also found to be effective in a number of countries.

Depending on the context, other intervention strategies UN Women used to support NAPs included: policy development support; research and knowledge generation; use of embedded personnel in NAP coordination/implementing institutions; and media activities and publications. UN Women also provided support for localization and fundraising and has undertaken diplomatic meetings, lobbying and mediation of politically disputed issues related to NAPs. UN Women supported evaluations of previous NAPs to inform revision or development of new NAPs.

Figure 15: Intervention areas and survey responses<sup>65</sup>

INTERVENTION AREA	Ranking by AWP budget	Survey UNW Staff ranking	Survey partner Govts/CSOs ranking	Survey IO's ranking	Survey UNW Staff (greatest % responding)	Survey partner Govts/CSOs (greatest % responding)	Survey IO's (greatest % responding)
Technical assistance	1 (\$7 M)	1	1	2	58% highly effective	45% very good	62% very good
Capacity building	2 (\$4.2 M)	2	2	1	42% highly effective	51% very good	46% very good
Advocacy	3 (\$1.8M)	3	3	3	40% highly effective	45% very good	55% very good
Localization	4 (\$1.15 M)	9	8	T 6	39% effective	40% very good	36% don't know
Policy support (strategies, plans, laws development)	5 (\$1.12 M)	5	4	5	42% highly effective	41% very good	50% very good
Coordination and support to dialogue	6 (\$865k)	4	5	T 4	48% highly effective	43% very good	38% don't know
Research & knowledge generation (\$ combined with media and publications in AWP budget totals)	7 (\$140k)	6	7	T 4	37% effective	45% very good	46% very good
Media activities and publications (combined with research & knowledge generation in AWP budget totals)	7 (\$140k)	8	6	5	T-29% mostly effective/ effective	37% very good	31% very good
Use of embedded personnel	(not mentioned in AWP)	7	9	T 6	48% effective	30% very good	45% very good

65 This table was created by the Evaluation team, comparing NAP intervention area budgets extracted from AWP (taken from RMS) with data collected from the three surveys (of UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International orgs). Overall, the table shows that the top 3 intervention areas with the highest budgets (technical assistance, capacity building, and advocacy) were also the top three most recognized intervention areas by all groups of stakeholders, who rated UN Women's support in these top areas as "highly effective" (UN Women staff) and "very good" (partner govts/CSOs and IOs).

An example of strong technical assistance and capacity building was seen in Mali, as detailed in the box below.

The evaluation confirmed the effectiveness of advocacy and capacity building intervention strategies in Palestine and Kenya. Evidence was triangulated through surveys and in-depth reviews, as well as through the original country scans.

Palestine provided an example of UN Women's advocacy work on NAPs, as a major component of the UN Women project "UNSCR 1325 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." This project, jointly implemented with the General Union for Palestinian Women (GUPW) and the Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA), held multiple events, meetings and consultations to raise awareness of and advocate for implementation of UNSCR 1325. For example, in Gaza, sessions were organized with political leaders, the media and policewomen on the importance of developing an accountability framework for NAP implementation, while public events were also held on the question of women's

political participation which were covered by television and radio. An evaluation of the project<sup>66</sup> found that greater awareness of WPS and the NAP was achieved, with numerous stakeholders reporting that they first learned about UNSCR 1325 and the NAP through the project.

UN Women's NAP work in Kenya provided an example of promoting local ownership. UN Women, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs (MoPSYGA), the State Department of Gender Affairs, and the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, organized one-day WPS NAP information sessions in four counties across the country to enhance ownership of the NAP at the county level. The objective of these sessions was to launch Kenya's NAP, but also to raise stakeholder awareness of the history, objectives and provisions of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions. Over 800 stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society, and grassroots women and youth, participated in the events.



#### **INTERVENTION STRATEGY: use of embedded personnel in Mali**

**UN Women seconded a dedicated team to the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Families in Mali to provide technical support and facilitate coordination and implementation of Mali's WPS NAP**, as well as to support the development of a new NAP for the period of 2019–2023. Prior to this engagement, Mali had no existing coordination mechanism to oversee NAP implementation. Mali was then one of the few countries with a dedicated NAP coordination team located within government.

- This technical team included a national coordinator, communications officer, 1325 policy specialist (P4 position, seconded by Folke Bernadotte Academy), administrative assistant and a driver. A UN Volunteer M&E specialist was also seconded from Switzerland to support the team.
- The technical team travelled to local provinces to help develop localized plans, leading to gender cells in the different provinces that could be activated to support NAP implementation.
- In the NAP monitoring committee, stakeholders are trained in strategic planning and are supported to develop action plans on integrating NAP 1325 into their institutions and sectors. Learning exchange visits to Liberia and Nigeria were organized.
- UN Women personnel highlighted the success of this embedded technical team approach in providing sustained support and momentum for implementing WPS objectives in Mali, and recommended the use of similar approaches for volatile political contexts.
- There were limitations to the embedded technical team approach related to national ownership, which raised questions about the sustainability of NAP implementation in the long term.

66 UN Women. Evaluation of UN Women Project "Advancing the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the oPt" (2019).

## FINDING 9

### **UN Women adds value through its convening role on NAPs bringing together multiple actors; providing neutral spaces for dialogue; raising awareness and facilitating the development of a shared NAP agenda. UN Women also adds value by building knowledge and technical capacity on NAPs.**

In most contexts, UN Women played a valuable role in bringing together multiple actors and providing neutral convening spaces for dialogue over WPS and NAPs, including facilitating discussion on sensitive and contested issues. UN Women's coordinating and convening power and ability to bring together a wide range of stakeholders was observed as a critical added value. The evaluation found that this was possible because UN Women was perceived as having a neutral, apolitical role.

For example, in Guatemala the NAP process facilitated by UN Women opened up new spaces for dialogue; created more awareness of WPS; and stimulated significant institutional changes (notably the creation of MIMPAZ, although this has since been dissolved). Similarly, in Nepal, NAP processes brought together various elements of government, the army, the police, CSOs and CRSV survivors. It enabled discussion and consensus building, including on sensitive issues in the NAP such as the participation of women in the security forces and recognition of CRSV survivors' support as a NAP priority; accepting their associations as counterparts in discussions; and better understanding of their needs and priorities by the government.

Case studies in all countries confirmed that, through its convening role within NAP processes, UN Women raised awareness on WPS objectives and on context-specific WPS issues. For this reason, the NAP development process can be seen as an outcome in itself, regardless of how NAP implementation was taken forward.

Numerous examples emerged where UN Women's support for NAP development processes raised awareness of specific WPS issues among decision makers involved in these processes. For example, issues related to CRSV survivors in Nepal and Guatemala; women's participation in the management of water resources; gendered implications of Prevention of Violent Extremism among youth in Kyrgyzstan; or the role of women mediators and the value of community conflict resolution in numerous countries.

UN Women's convening work on NAPs, and its inclusion of multiple stakeholders, results in the development of important relationships among different stakeholders, e.g. among different government ministries, between governments and CSOs, or among different elements of civil society. These relationships can be used to advance wider WPS objectives and respond to emerging or challenging WPS issues. In Guatemala, the NAP process convened by UN Women provided a basis for civil society actors to engage with government actors outside this process and to advocate for issues beyond the NAP, notably reparations for women victims and survivors of CRSV.

UN Women's strong relationship with civil society, women's machineries and the wider gender sector is recognized as adding value to WPS NAP development and implementation. CSOs from several countries reported that UN Women had an inclusive approach to civil society and provided support to build up women's CSO coalitions, as well as ensured their inclusion within NAP dialogue processes. This relationship with CSOs was inherited from the time of UNIFEM. However, it is important to note that while UN Women field presences generally had a good relationship with actors in the gender sector, they did not always have strong relationships with wider elements of state and society that are also important for advancing NAPs.

UN Women's expertise and technical support was another area where the Entity was seen as adding significant value to NAP development and implementation. UN Women's contribution in this area was widely recognized and was the area of added value most commonly cited by UN Women personnel, government and civil society respondents in the survey. In particular, stakeholders stressed the value of UN Women's capacity building for key national actors involved in NAPs and for NAP management structures; UN Women's support in technical areas such as costing and indicators; and UN Women's knowledge sharing role, including disseminating global trends and best practices.

**FINDING 10**

**There is sufficient evidence and demand for UN Women to go beyond the development of WPS NAPs and also systematically support their implementation.**

The evaluation found that UN Women engages in NAP implementation across multiple countries. This was revealed in interviews, desk reviews and the survey, where 63 per cent of UN Women personnel and international organizations reported that UN Women supports NAP implementation to the same extent that it supports NAP development, while 39 per cent of partner governments/CSOs reported that UN Women supports implementation to a greater extent than development. However, this engagement was not always systematic; there was no standard approach; and support was adjusted to the context and priorities in programming.

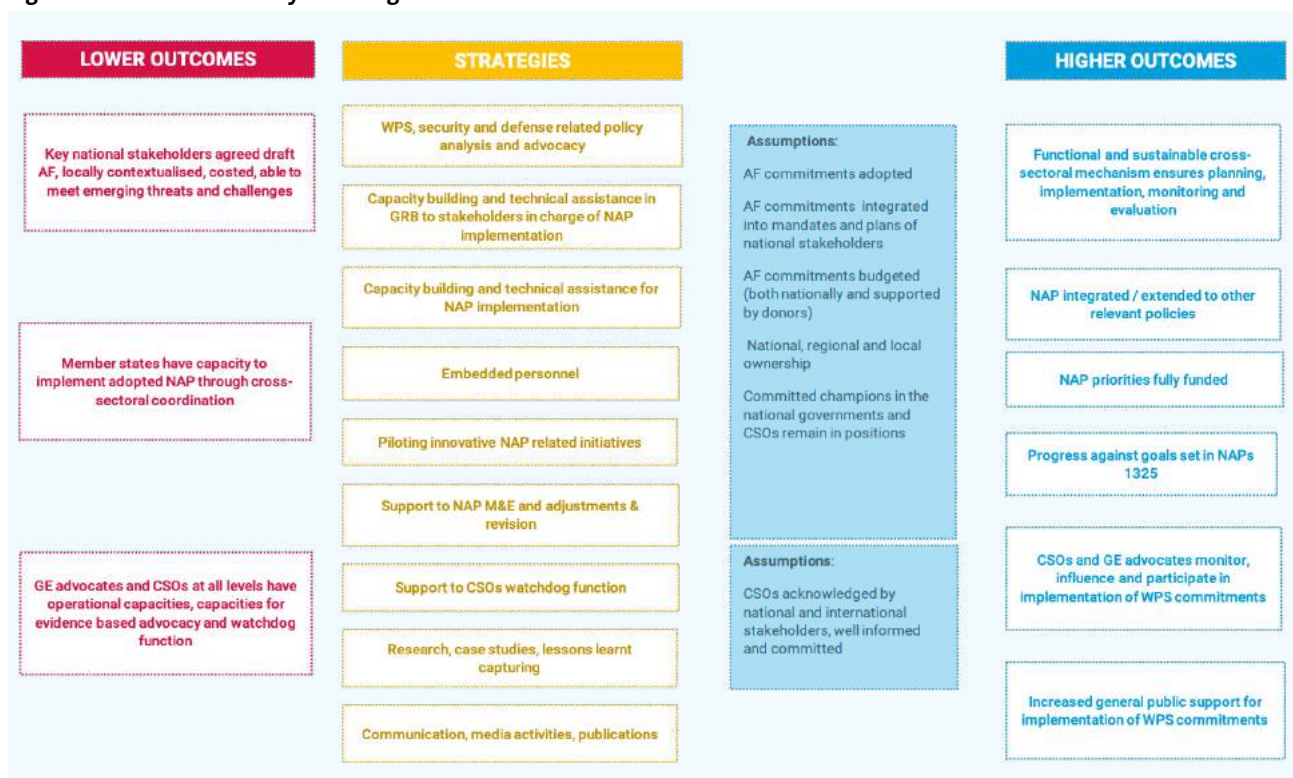
The most consistent component of UN Women’s support to implementation has been the Entity’s support to coordination bodies or other mechanisms responsible for NAPs to monitor, regularly report and/or evaluate progress (e.g. Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mali, Timor Leste, Afghanistan, Uganda, Georgia, and many others).

In some instances, COs supported the implementation of specific NAP activities. This included harmonization of

policy frameworks in the defence and security sectors; capacity building for NAP implementation (such as providing embedded personnel within the government); supporting CSOs and women mediators in communities; activities with direct links to the humanitarian portfolio; and piloting new innovative approaches.

Taking into account lessons from UN Women’s activities to support NAP implementation, and also the activities of other agencies and national stakeholders, the evaluation team developed an embedded ToC to identify potentially effective methods for supporting NAP implementation and to inform UN Women’s future work in this area (see Figure 16 below). In deciding on the operationalization of the embedded ToC, issues related to UN Women’s limited financial capacities and field presence in some countries should also be considered, and the level of the Entity’s involvement in implementation should be adjusted accordingly. It is presumed that national governments and other stakeholders involved should be the primary actor responsible for implementation and that UN Women’s involvement is to support their implementation processes.

**Figure 16: Embedded Theory of Change<sup>67</sup>**



67 This ToC was developed by the evaluation team using UN Women SPs 2014-2017 and 2018-2021, WPS Annual Work Plans, FPI guidance, and feedback from the WPS team during inception.



The embedded ToC starts at the lower outcome level reached at the moment when the NAP document is agreed upon, when government and non-governmental stakeholders capacities are enhanced and gender equality advocates and CSOs at all levels have operational capacities, and capacities for evidence-based advocacy and watchdog functions are acknowledged as part of the NAP process.

Some of the specific support strategies recognized as beneficial at this stage are (these are inclusive of both UN Women and other stakeholders' strategies identified during the evaluation):

- WPS, security and defence-related policy analysis and advocacy (Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- Capacity building and technical assistance in gender-responsive budgeting to stakeholders responsible for NAP implementation (Afghanistan, Jordan, Liberia, Nepal).
- Capacity building and technical assistance for NAP implementation and localization (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal).
- Embedded personnel in national mechanisms for NAP development and/or implementation (Mali, Ukraine).
- Piloting innovative NAP-related initiatives (Georgia, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan women and natural resources management and climate change, women community mediators, preventing radicalism and violent extremism, engagement of youth through formal/informal curricula on gender equality).

- Support to NAP M&E, adjustments and revision.
- Support to CSOs' watchdog function.
- Research, knowledge products, capturing and dissemination of lessons learned.
- Communications (Mali's third NAP included a communication plan), media activities and publications.

If the NAP is adopted by the government, the assumption is that NAP commitments should be integrated into stakeholders' mandates and plans at different administrative levels in the country; that NAP commitments are budgeted (nationally, regionally and locally and supported by donors); and that national, regional and local ownership is achieved and committed champions in stakeholder institutions and organizations remain in their positions. If these assumptions are met, the following higher outcomes can be achieved:

- A functional and sustainable cross-sectoral mechanism guarantees planning, implementation and M&E.
- NAP commitments are integrated/extended to other relevant policies.
- NAP priorities become fully funded.
- Progress against goals is achieved.
- CSOs and gender equality advocates continuously monitor, influence and participate in implementation of WPS commitments.
- General public support for implementation of commitments is increased.

## GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

To what extent are gender equality and women's empowerment addressed in UN Women's support to NAP development and implementation?

### FINDING 11

**UN Women's support has laid the foundations for transformative change to address gender equality through WPS NAPs. However, it is too early to observe actual changes in the lives of women and girls.**

UN Women's support to NAP development and implementation contributed to laying the foundations for transformative change in gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women achieved this by promoting inclusive processes; raising awareness of gender equality and women's empowerment; promoting the inclusion of these issues in NAP documents; supporting women's empowerment and leadership; and by building the capacity of partners on gender equality.

Promoting an inclusive process between duty bearers and rights holders is a key component for advancing human rights and gender equality. In all countries UN Women has made an effort to reach a wide range of marginalized rights holders, including some of the most left behind groups, with conflict-affected women and survivors of CRSV being the most commonly cited group.



The evaluation found that UN Women's support to the NAP development process in Uganda was a good practice in this regard, as it brought together a wide variety of duty bearers and rights holders in nine regional consultations. This inclusivity was made possible by a stakeholder mapping exercise conducted prior to the consultation process to identify all relevant duty bearers and rights holders. However, in other cases, the evaluation found that UN Women could improve its support for inclusivity and provide more space for the most marginalized voices within NAP consultation processes. In particular, in high-conflict, insecure contexts such as Afghanistan and Iraq, UN Women could do more to include rural populations, religious leaders, youth, and a wider range of CSOs and interest groups.

In Iraq, Nepal, Afghanistan, Mali, Uganda, Guatemala, Tunisia and Jordan, the evaluation found that UN Women shared knowledge and raised awareness about gender equality within NAP processes, and promoted open dialogue among government, civil society and other national stakeholders on these issues. UN Women also supported the integration of these issues into NAP documents, although in the earlier NAP processes this was frequently resisted by governments. For example, in Iraq, issues related to human rights were brought into the most recent NAP development process, raising awareness among stakeholders, and resulting in a stronger focus on human rights in the second NAP than in the first. However, civil society stakeholders stressed that for a meaningful improvement in gender equality, legislation must be enacted and, without this, commitments contained in NAPs have limited value.

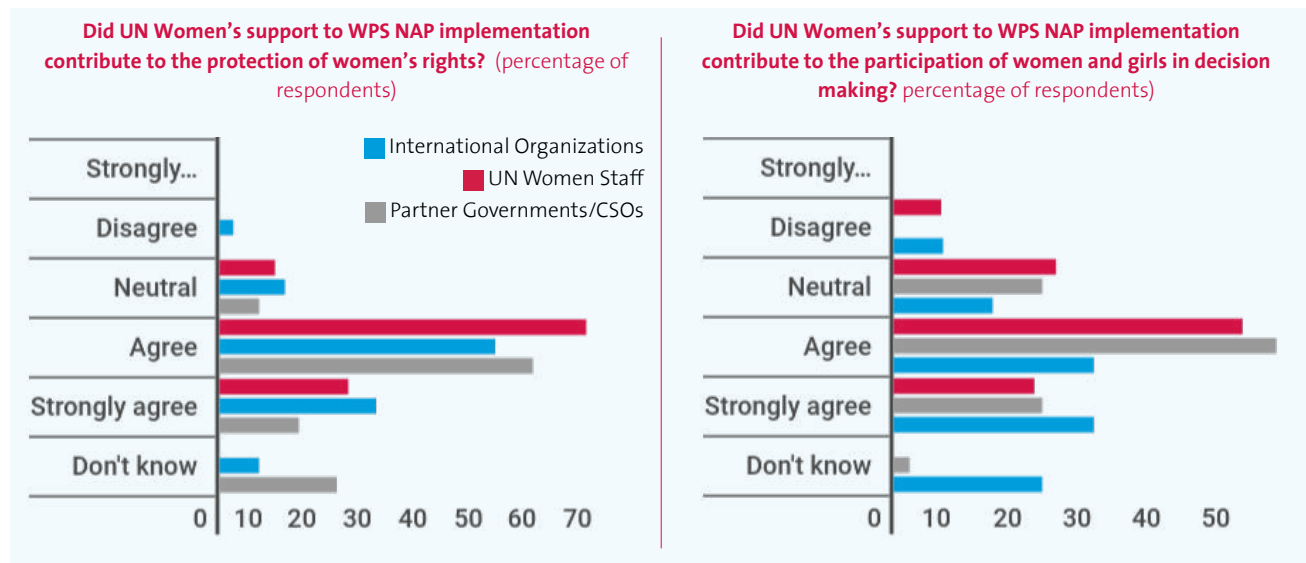
In Nepal, Guatemala and Mali, UN Women-coordinated NAP processes contributed to increasing women's confidence; informing them about their rights; and empowering them to raise their voices and make demands of duty bearers. In Nepal, the NAP process supported by UN Women helped marginalized groups such as indigenous and Dalit women, CRSV survivors, female-headed households and female former combatants articulate their needs with government stakeholders. In particular, the strong engagement of UN Women and CSOs on the rights of conflict-affected women and CRSV survivors contributed to strengthening

the self-esteem and agency of these women. In Iraq, UN Women supported the Women Leadership Institute to provide psychological, social, legal and economic support to displaced, abused and marginalized women and to inform these women about their legal rights.

UN Women's NAP work has included strengthening the capacity of partners to advance human rights and gender equality. UN Women's support to civil society to implement parallel accountability mechanisms to ensure human rights were embedded in NAP processes has been very valuable, especially as UN Women's relationship with governments can make it difficult to engage directly on this. The evaluation also identified numerous examples of UN Women building the capacity of both civil society and government partners to integrate these issues more effectively into their work.<sup>68</sup> For example, UN Women supported the Bangladesh police to improve protection mechanisms for women and girls from both refugee Rohingya and host communities affected by crisis. In Brazil, UN Women partnered with the Igarape Institute to provide human rights and gender equality training to the Brazilian military, including during the humanitarian operation Acolhida that receives Venezuelan refugees. In Iraq, UN Women built the capacity of the women and children's committee of the Iraqi parliament to follow up on implementation of the committee's commitments, especially regarding legislation against domestic violence.

UN Women's support for gender equality through advancing the protection of women's rights and the participation of women and girls in decision-making was also triangulated through the surveys conducted by the evaluation team. Ninety-one per cent of UN Women personnel, 79 per cent of partner governments and CSOs, and 71 per cent of international organizations agreed or strongly agreed that UN Women's support for NAP implementation contributed to the protection of women's rights, while 70 per cent of UN Women staff, 76 per cent of partner governments and CSOs, and 58 per cent of international organizations agreed or strongly agreed that UN Women's support for NAP implementation contributed to the participation of women and girls in decision-making.

68 These examples were obtained through open ended responses to the evaluation team surveys of UN Women staff, partner governments and CSOs, and International organizations.

**Figure 17: UN Women's support for the protection of women's rights and participation in decision-making (Survey)<sup>69</sup>**

While the evaluation found evidence of UN Women advancing gender equality and women's empowerment throughout its work, it was not possible to assess whether this was contributing to actual transformative change in the lives of women and girls. This is partly because COVID-19 related travel restrictions meant that the evaluation team was not able to visit countries where UN Women is supporting NAPs, or speak to beneficiaries. However, it is also important to note that real transformation in gender equality is a slow process and is driven by local actors, processes and contestations.

The evaluation found that for UN Women's NAP work to contribute more effectively to transformative change it must be better linked to wider policies, initiatives and movements, and should engage at multiple levels to address the various drivers of gender inequality. The current initiative to decentralize UN Women's presence at country level could present an opportunity to work in a more holistic and contextually grounded way to address these drivers and promote long-term transformative change.

### ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

How well are UN Women's human and financial resources used to support WPS NAP development and implementation processes at global, regional and country levels?

## FINDING 12

**The extent to which UN Women's resources were adequately used to support NAPs was mixed. Despite this, there seems to be agreement that the level of investment has led to the desired results.**

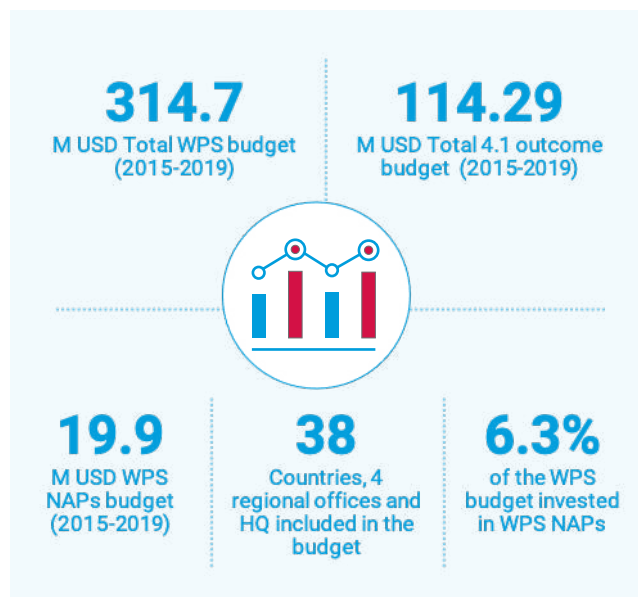
The extent to which UN Women's human and financial resources are adequate to support the development and implementation processes of WPS NAPs was mixed. Evidence collected by the evaluation team indicated some dissatisfaction with the adequacy of financial (both UN Women personnel and partner governments/CSOs reporting this) and human resources (UN Women personnel

reporting this) for WPS NAPs development and implementation. The evaluation team conducted a comprehensive efficiency analysis highlighting these challenges (see Annex 17).

Overall, UN Women's spending on NAP activities (not including staffing costs) comprised just 6.3 per cent of the WPS budget over 2015–2019.

69 All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

**Figure 18: NAP activity budgets versus Outcome 4.1 versus WPS budget<sup>70</sup>**



For most countries, UN Women's investment in WPS NAPs at country level was low in comparison with spending on overall WPS objectives. However, there were some notable exceptions in this regard. During 2015–2019, in Ukraine, 41 per cent of UN Women's WPS budget was spent on NAPs; in Afghanistan 40 per cent; in Tunisia 36.6 per cent; and in Nepal 36 per cent. The investment in NAPs was generally low when compared with UN Women field presence budgets, ranging from 0.87 per cent of the field presence budget in Liberia to 10 per cent in Ukraine.<sup>71</sup>

Over the same period (2015–2019), the Arab States region had the highest budget allocated for NAP work and the highest reported expenditure. It was also the region with the highest percentage of its budget delivered.<sup>72</sup> A number of UN Women field presences had NAPs that were particularly well resourced. For example, the UN Women Uganda CO had 10 staff within its WPS team and received US\$ 3 million in funding from Norway. Therefore, this CO already had funds set aside to support implementation once the NAP is finalized, as well as strong human resources to provide support. Similarly, desk review and interviews with stakeholders in Afghanistan confirmed there was sufficient financial support for NAP work in the Afghanistan CO due to funding from Norway, Sweden and Finland.

In the survey, 47 per cent of UN Women personnel agreed that human resources were very adequate to successfully support NAP development; while 37 per cent indicated that they were moderately adequate. However, the evaluation found that in active conflict contexts, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, high personnel turnover limited the ability of field offices to ensure adequate human resources to support effective NAP development. Some stakeholders also indicated that it is critical to have staff with national expertise, including knowledge of context and language, to lead NAP work but in some cases this proved to be difficult to obtain. In Guatemala, where donor interest in funding the NAP was low, the CO faced challenges in ensuring adequate personnel to address the political complexities in the country and to ensure sustainable progress. In contrast, in Mali, UN Women had particularly strong human resources to support the NAP, with 12 WPS personnel in the CO and other WPS staff at the subnational level in Gao and Mopti.

There seems to be agreement that the level of UN Women investment in NAP support has largely led to the desired results (47 per cent of personnel respondents highly agreed with this statement, while 27 per cent indicated this was moderately the case). UN Women's NAP work was mostly reliant on non-core funds and tied to specific projects. While such work can be catalytic, maximize UN Women's impact and be cost efficient, this type of funding can compromise the stability of the work. In order to better understand how the money spent on NAPs translates into results, UN Women needs to invest in better systems for reporting results and collecting information with the right indicators.

<sup>70</sup> This financial information was collected by the evaluation team using AWPAs obtained from RMS, and through the Dashboard function in OneApp.

<sup>71</sup> These percentages are based on project activity expenditures and do not include salaries and other costs. This is also over 2015-2019.

<sup>72</sup> As expenditure was not available for 2015, for comparative purposes budgets and expenditure were only compared for the period 2016–2019. In this time frame, the Arab States had the highest budget and reported expenditure, while for the period 2015–2019 West and Central Africa had the highest budget.

Figure 19: HR and US\$ resources and challenges (Evaluation survey)<sup>73</sup>



73 All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

**FINDING 13****There are various spaces where knowledge on WPS NAPs is shared across the organization. However, there is a need for better packaged and systematized sharing of lessons learned.**

It was widely recognized that research and evidence generation and sharing are an essential part of UN Women's role and its value added in relation to NAP development and implementation. However, the evaluation found mixed results in terms of UN Women's standardization of learning and knowledge products to inform global normative processes. The evaluation identified demand for better packaged and systematized knowledge to inform country-level actors, in particular: best practices and lessons learned on NAPs; guidance on how to address NAP implementation gaps; and lessons on how to assess and capture the impact of NAP implementation and present concrete evidence.

The evaluation identified the need to strengthen coordination with governments and national civil society platforms to support sharing of national and regional experiences. Desk reviews and interviews confirmed that learning related to NAPS took place primarily through spaces for sharing, such as regional-level events and south-south exchanges, and through the sharing of 'best practice' examples. Stakeholders noted that it would be particularly useful to identify new ways to give voices to rights holders and to share stories of change.

Overall, the evaluation assessed that collection, systemization and sharing of best practices in NAP development and implementation within the organization was an institutional weakness, i.e. it is mostly conducted through informal channels, rather than official organizational

channels and is an area where UN Women could significantly strengthen its systems and practice.

However, the evaluation did identify some interesting initiatives for sharing knowledge and best practice. The Arab States project stands out as the strongest and most interesting example of UN Women support for such regional-level learning, including various regional events and 'twinning' between Jordan and Tunisia NAP processes. However, the evaluation suggests this did not go beyond individual initiatives to constitute a consolidated regional exchange. Another good practice could be seen in Afghanistan, where UN Women supported the development of a CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 training manual in local languages to raise awareness among university students, local leaders and youth groups from civil society. 'The Story Kitchen' in Nepal was another innovative initiative to share experiences and lessons in the work of a non-profit organization that works to support survivors of conflict, including CRSV, to digitalize their own stories of survival from violence. The UN Women project "Advancing Resilience and Empowerment (ARE)" worked with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to promote the empowerment of CRSV survivors by supporting truth-telling initiatives like The Story Kitchen; and through the Conflict Victims Common Platform (CVCP), CRSV survivors were consulted to provide inputs on the NAP II document.


**FINDING 14****There is not always thematic and organizational internal coherence in how UN Women supports WPS NAPs.**

The evaluation identified that UN Women's NAP work was sometimes programmed under thematic areas other than WPS. The survey among UN Women staff confirmed that the majority of support to NAP development and implementation was programmed within WPS. However, in some COs, NAP work was not programmed within WPS, but within other areas such as End Violence Against Women (EVAW) or Women's Leadership and Political Participation (WLPP), and therefore reported under these areas. This significantly limits the Entity's ability to accurately assess the contribution of this work to Strategic Plan outcomes, or to have effective oversight of the work being undertaken in this area.

The evaluation team observed that there was thematic coherence of NAP development work within WPS, although there was potential for NAPs to be more effectively utilized as a framework for all UN Women's WPS work within a given country. Similarly, UN Women's NAP work contributed to other areas of UN Women's work including EVAW, WLPP, Humanitarian Action, GRB and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE). This was confirmed by the survey where 52 per cent of UN Women personnel rated the synergy between NAP work and other areas as very good and 39 per cent as average.



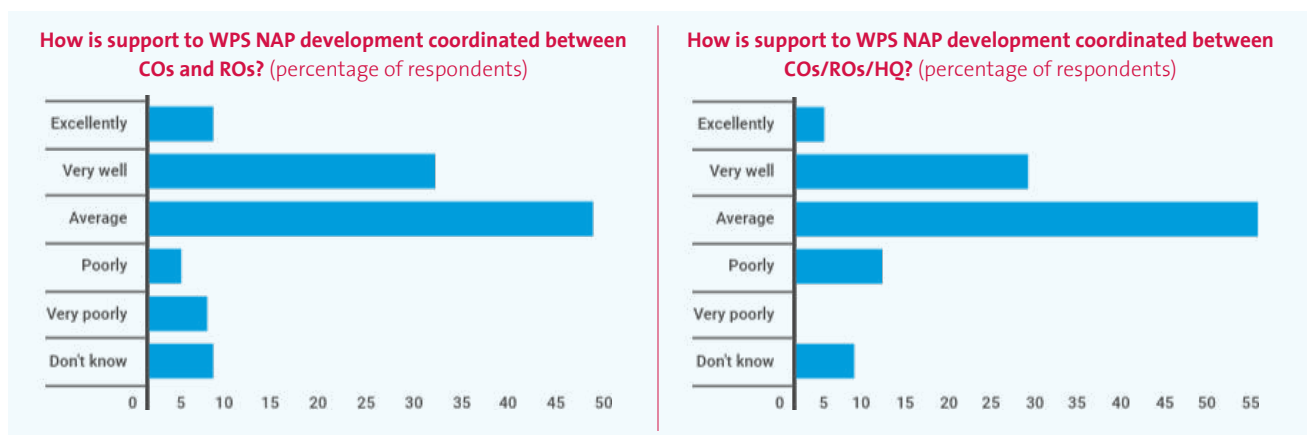
**How Humanitarian Action contributes to WPS NAP work**

 <p><b>GUATEMALA</b></p> <p>UN Women in Guatemala identified the nexus between WPS and Humanitarian Action as an emerging theme in the country, as well as linkages between ERAW and WPS.</p>	 <p><b>IRAQ</b></p> <p>In Iraq, NAP implementation work often cut across several thematic areas and, in particular, Humanitarian Action as part of the LEAP (Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access &amp; Protection in Crisis Response) project activities.</p>	 <p><b>PALESTINE</b></p> <p>UN Women in Palestine adopted the humanitarian–development–peace nexus in its WPS programming, i.e. all WPS programmes have at least one Humanitarian outcome, and focus on addressing vulnerabilities and strengthening women’s participation in Humanitarian Action and post-conflict recovery.</p>
 <p><b>NIGERIA</b></p> <p>Both state and non-state actors involved in humanitarian response at the federal and state levels were actively engaged in the development of the second WPS NAP in Nigeria, and contributed to the NAP having a dedicated pillar on Prevention and Disaster Preparedness.</p>	 <p><b>PHILLIPINES</b></p> <p>Coordination work under Humanitarian Action (especially through the Gender in Humanitarian Action meeting held in Mindanao) helped to inform WPS NAP implementation by identifying priorities for the relief and recovery pillar, such as geographic areas dealing with displacement and disaster/conflict..</p>	

The evaluation identified positive examples of interconnections between UN Women’s work on NAPs and its work in other areas. In Uganda, UN Women personnel reported that they were using an integrated approach to coordination, policy support and programming across thematic areas. This is a new way of working that has been made possible by the CO’s larger budget. In terms of its work on the NAP, the CO explicitly linked each NAP pillar to its other thematic areas to create synergy (i.e. prevention was linked to ERAW work; participation to governance work; and recovery to WEE work, etc.) This means that there were shared goals for NAP implementation and shared responsibilities for advancing policy-level changes among UN Women’s different thematic areas.

Through its analysis, the evaluation observed that workflows on WPS NAPs between headquarters, ROs and COs were not always clear, undermining coherent work across these different levels and subsequently the potential for impact. This was triangulated in interviews, desk reviews and through the survey. The evaluation determined there is significant room for improvement in the coordination between COs, ROs and headquarters on NAP development work, as this was rated as average by 53 per cent of UN Women personnel surveyed. Similarly, coordination on NAP development work between ROs and COs was rated as average by 47 per cent of UN Women personnel surveyed.

**Figure 20: UN Women’s internal coordination (Evaluation survey)<sup>74</sup>**



74 All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

The evaluation also found that there was no systematic approach to coherence and coordination between headquarters, ROs and COs on NAP development, and that this is needed to create coherent programming and deliver best results. While the role of headquarters in

providing NAP guidance was praised by internal and external stakeholders, headquarters could do more to ensure internal coherence and provide technical leadership. Lack of linked-up reporting lines was identified by the evaluation as a barrier to enacting this technical leadership.

## SUSTAINABILITY

To what extent has UN Women's influence supported national ownership of NAPs? How likely are they to be fully implemented?

### FINDING 15

#### Advancing national ownership is an important feature of UN Women's NAP work.

Advancing national ownership was a central element of UN Women's work on NAPs. The evaluation identified five main strategies that UN Women uses:

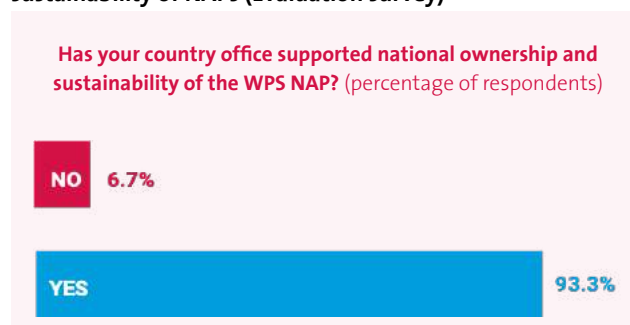
- **Facilitating an inclusive NAP development process.** This was the most commonly found strategy for promoting ownership, mentioned by stakeholders in Afghanistan, Iraq, Uganda, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan and Mali. Iraq and Uganda provide particularly positive examples of this. In Iraq, the inclusive drafting process for the second NAP helped to facilitate strong national ownership of the NAP and ensure that these processes were led by the government and CSOs and that the NAP was not seen as a UN Women document. National ownership was facilitated through this inclusive process, which took into account regional and ethnic diversity in the country. Similarly, in Uganda the priority was to make the NAP development process as inclusive as possible, including a range of government ministries, CSOs, religious organizations, academics and others to ensure broad ownership of the NAP. Both CSOs and government stakeholders in Uganda agreed that this strategy was successful.
- **Building capacity of national actors for implementation.** Capacity building and technical support among duty bearers at both central and local level were other common strategies for advancing ownership. UN Women's work to strengthen gender ministries was critical for ownership and sustainability. In Uganda, the focus was on building the capacity of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development so that eventually UN Women could 'hand over' the NAP process. In Mali, a capacity building programme was developed to support ownership within key ministries, engaging CSOs and focal points of peace mechanisms in
- the process. While most capacity building focused on central government, in Nepal UN Women built the capacity of institutions tasked with NAP implementation at both central and local level, creating a basis for ownership and sustainability at both levels, which is important given that many NAP activities are implemented locally.
- **Establishing strong coordination mechanisms for NAP implementation.** A central strategy of UN Women to build ownership in a number of countries was in supporting the development of strong coordination mechanisms among national actors responsible for NAP implementation. For example, UN Women supported the establishment of a cross-sectoral task force for NAP implementation in Iraq. A related strategy ensured that a powerful government entity was responsible for leading implementation and coordination. In Georgia, UN Women encouraged a shift from the NAP being located in the legislative to being located in the executive, which increased government ownership. Promoting good coordination among international actors supporting NAP implementation also emerged as important for sustainable support to implementation. For example, in Nepal, UN Women's strong coordination with other UN agencies allows them to support the NAP from different perspectives.
- **Engaging with a wider set of actors.** Engaging with actors beyond those directly responsible for NAPs or working on WPS emerged as critical for building ownership. This was a strategy that UN Women employed successfully in some countries, but where more could still be done. For example, in Nepal, while for the first NAP UN Women focused most of its engagement on one ministry, for the second NAP the CO engaged much more widely

across government. The evaluation observed that UN Women was increasingly engaging with government actors beyond just coordinating ministries, and that for stronger ownership UN Women must also expand the type of CSOs it cooperates with. Similarly, in Iraq while the NAP process had been inclusive, for real sustainability more participation from wider groups such as youth, the private sector and academia is required. In Guatemala, aside from the MIMPAZ, many institutions were still not familiar with the NAP and more actors need to be involved to ensure ownership and accountability.

- Making the case for the NAP's relevance to wider policy goals.** The evaluation observed that where UN Women was able to successfully make the case that NAPs can contribute to wider policy goals, such as peace, security or development this makes them more attractive for governments and therefore more likely to be genuinely implemented. Similarly, where UN Women supported the integration of NAPs into wider policy frameworks or plans they were more likely to become a sustainable, permanent feature of the national policy domain. For example, in Kyrgyzstan the NAP is currently seen as an isolated “women’s document” and needs to be integrated into other policies to gain traction. Such integration has value at both and central and local level, for example UN Women Nepal supported the integration of the NAP into district development plans.

According to the survey of UN Women personnel conducted by the evaluation team, 93 per cent reported that their CO supported national ownership and sustainability of the NAP.

**Figure 21: UN Women's support to national ownership and sustainability of NAPs (Evaluation survey)<sup>75</sup>**



However, interviews also identified some UN Women approaches that did not support sustainability and ownership effectively. In Afghanistan, existing patriarchal norms and attitudes undermined NAP ownership, with the NAP frequently perceived as contrary to Islamic values, and that the NAP had little local-level awareness or ownership. UN Women could provide more support for work to address the norms and attitudes that prevent the NAP (and wider WPS objectives) from being accepted, and to work at local level to foster stronger local ownership. In Mali, while government ownership proved to be stronger for the third NAP than the previous NAPs, issues of ownership remained.

## FINDING 16

**Sustainability: Funding, localization, commitment and capacity emerged as the most critical factors that support or hinder ownership and sustainability. These were also identified as areas where UN Women should strengthen its support.**

Factors related to funding were those with greatest potential to support or hinder NAP sustainability. Lack of costing and budgeting and insufficient funding for NAP implementation were cited by multiple categories of stakeholders in Nepal, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan and Uganda. The evaluation found that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Afghanistan it was critical that governments provided funding for NAP implementation and that existing dependence on short-term donor funding undermined NAP sustainability, but that governments were not always willing to provide sufficient funds.

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) was identified as a way to generate sustainable funding for NAPs. For example, in Liberia UN Women was launching a project that aimed to enhance allocation of financial resources for implementation of the second NAP through innovative financing and GRB. GRB could potentially be a mechanism through which involved ministries contribute to the NAP budget, thereby increasing ownership. UN Women has been working with several countries to incorporate GRB into their NAP work, either during the development stage or when supporting government ministries to budget their NAP for implementation. However, it is important to note that

<sup>75</sup> All figures in this report representing survey data were developed from the results of three surveys conducted by the evaluation team to UN Women staff, partner governments/CSOs, and International organizations. This survey data can be found in Annex 16.

GRB alone does not always translate into the expenditure levels required for allocations intended to benefit the goal of gender equality. For example, the evaluation found that in Nepal, while the government was supportive of GRB and planned to make 31 per cent of the budget gender responsive, this did not translate into sufficient funding to make a change.<sup>76</sup>

Pooled funding was also cited as a valuable way to generate sustainable financing, for example, in Jordan UN Women and the Jordanian National Commission for Women were jointly implementing a programme for NAP implementation, supported by pooled funding from five donors. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Women supported analysis of the NAP budget in the Ministry of Defence; meanwhile, the government was prioritizing donor support and provided smaller co-financing to fill gaps.

### How GRB contributes to WPS NAPs



**AFGHANISTAN:** GRB specialists worked with the MoF and MoFA to develop a costed budget for the Afghanistan NAP which was close to being finalized.



**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:** Gender analysis of the budgets in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Security was supported and awareness of officials raised. Follow up is being considered to support translation of the recommendations into budget allocations. Through the engagement of a CSO, a local CRSV association was empowered and supported. This was followed up by advocacy actions, resulting in allocations and disbursement for CRSV survivors in one municipal budget.



**JORDAN:** UN Women partnered with the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and the Ministry of Finance to support national implementation of GRB as a tool to increase gender equality and support the WPS agenda. Activities included conducting a gender analysis of sectoral programmes; creating gender analysis tools and checklists for state budget institutions; revising the Programme Budget Circular for 2021–2023; and raising awareness and improving skills and knowledge in GRB application for public officials.



**LIBERIA:** In early 2020, the UN Women Liberia CO launched a project to enhance allocation of financial resources for implementation of the second NAP through innovative financing and GRB. This project will build on lessons learned and will further leverage UN Women's national and global expertise on GRB.



**NAMIBIA:** GRB expertise was brought in to help with costing the WPS NAP in Namibia.



**NORTH MACEDONIA:** GRB principles and evidence of their utility was a focus of discussions during the drafting process of the second WPS NAP in North Macedonia.

Factors related to how NAPs are taken forward at local level were found to be critical for sustainable implementation and ownership. In particular, meaningful and robust localization processes that link to the national level and ensure that local governments and grassroots women are engaged and included. The evaluation identified different modalities that UN Women and its local partners applied in different contexts to support localization. These included: development of municipal NAPs; advocacy for integrating NAP priorities into municipal development/workplans; establishment of conflict resolution structures in villages and local communities; and engagement of women mediators and cross-border dialogue activities in conflict-affected areas. In Afghanistan, a major factor hindering sustainable implementation was the lack of access to the provinces. In Nepal, meaningful local engagement and implementation was key for sustainability, with some stakeholders raising concerns about the capacity and commitment of local government to implement and monitor

the NAP. International partners in Nepal suggested there had been insufficient outreach to local communities for localization by both UN Women and the government.

The evaluation also determined that factors related to commitment and capacity of key national actors are critical enabling/hindering factors for sustainability. For example, in Mali and Afghanistan high levels of government personnel turnover constituted an obstacle to fostering strong national ownership and institutional memory and accountability. Meanwhile, in Iraq, political instability fuelled government turnover, which undermined and delayed the NAP implementation process; and the lack of a women's ministry and frequent changes of leadership meant there was no clear government champion for the NAP. In some countries, UN Women is explicitly working to build capacity for sustainable NAP implementation. For example, in Uganda, the main focus of UN Women's work was to build the capacity of the MoGLSD so that it can take full leadership of NAP work in the longer term.

<sup>76</sup> This was highlighted in both interviews with stakeholders and in desk review documentation.

The commitment and capacity of civil society was also analysed as important for ownership and sustainability. Some global-level donors stressed the importance of ensuring that there is genuine interest and demand from national-level CSOs and women peacebuilders before supporting a NAP process, as this is a key ingredient to drive the NAP forward and ensure sustainability. Reflecting this point, in Kyrgyzstan the evaluation found that the main enabling factor for NAP sustainability was the strong and influential civil society involved in WPS.

The evaluation found that UN Women should support broad awareness raising on NAPs through a variety of channels to create the wide understanding and commitment required for sustainable implementation. Work to build ownership should continue during the NAP implementation phase, i.e. just because a NAP has been adopted does not mean there is sufficient ownership to ensure meaningful implementation.

### WPS NAP localization efforts



**AFGHANISTAN:** NAP localization has been a priority in Afghanistan in recent years, as UN Women recognizes the need to ensure that rural women are not left behind. However, due to security constraints, accessing remote areas proved difficult. Civil society stakeholders suggested that UN Women focus on funding and supporting rural CSOs to do this localization work instead of trying to do the work itself given the access issues.



**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:** In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Women partnered with a CSO to develop three local actions plans on 1325. After socio-economic analysis and limited consultations, the plans were developed to include: general safety in public spaces; WEE; and EAW. In recent years, new methodologies have been adopted by the government on local development planning calling for only one integrated development plan instead of sectoral plans, which would imply NAP priorities ideally become part of integrated local development planning. Neither of the supported municipalities had developed a new action plan after the initial plan had expired. The Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina financed development of a few more local action plans in other municipalities.



**GEORGIA:** UN Women in Georgia piloted a project on NAP localization in 10 municipalities along the Administrative Boundary Lines, mainly focusing on capacity building; fostering involvement and ownership of regional and local administrations; and enhancing the dialogue and participation of internally displaced and conflict-affected women in local decision-making, policy planning and budgeting. Consequently, several priority issues identified by women were effectively addressed. In 8 of the 10 municipalities, amendments were issued to the local action plans on gender equality, and small budgets were allocated to resolve issues raised during the localization process. However, challenges remained, such as local governments' lack of awareness of WPS and NAP obligations in general; limited funding; lack of a needs-based approach in programming and budgeting; and lack of coordination between central, regional and local governments.



**MALI:** In Mali, three NAP localization exercises were carried out in the Ségou, Sikasso and Mopti regions to build ownership and commitment for WPS objectives among governors, gender focal points, mayors and councilors, security actors, community and religious leaders, male support groups, NGOs and other key actors. Mali's localization plan included a regional planning workshop with government partners to introduce the NAP, a training workshop with women's CSOs to build capacities for NAP dissemination at the local level, and a community workshop with elected municipal officials to align NAP priorities with development plans of municipalities. Other key aspects of the localization plan included capacity building of peace ambassadors to support NAP implementation, participation in a WPS community of practice, partnering with national NGOs to strengthen local accountability and scale up activities with women in areas affected by conflict, and the development (in progress) of a training manual on NAP localization/decentralization. NAP localization exercises in the other seven regions will follow.



**NEPAL:** In Nepal, inclusion of WPS priorities in local budgeting was achieved by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) through consultations with local bodies to develop a 'Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) Localization Strategy'. The adoption of this plan was achieved with technical and programming support from UN Women, in partnership with the 1325 Action Group and NAP Implementation Committee.



**UGANDA:** In Uganda, including local government (such as Kitgum DLG and Bushenyi DLG) and grassroots women in the development process for the NAP III was a key strategy for UN Women from the outset. Stakeholders reported that having grassroots-level engagement fed back to the national level and set the stage for implementation and a sustainable process.



**COVID-19**

Given the current global crisis arising from the COVID-19, what will be the implications for the WPS agenda? What can UN Women do to respond to this challenge?

**FINDING 17**

### COVID-19: Globally the WPS agenda has stalled and is not being integrated into national COVID-19 responses.

Despite the significant impact of COVID-19 on women in conflict-affected contexts and the belief expressed by many of the stakeholders interviewed that WPS could be a useful gender-sensitive framework for addressing both the immediate effects and long-term recovery processes, globally the WPS agenda has stalled and was not being integrated into COVID-19 responses. National processes to adopt or implement NAPs have been delayed or put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic in Iraq, Nepal, Uganda, Afghanistan and Mali.

The most critical immediate impact of the pandemic for women in conflict-affected contexts was increased gender-based violence, which was the top concern cited by all categories of stakeholders and in all three surveys. Other concerns cited related to the economic impacts on vulnerable women and their communities, including job losses and increased unpaid domestic work; disruption in essential service delivery, including healthcare and psychosocial support; and widening of the digital divide, particularly for rural women lacking access to virtual services were left behind.

UN Women adapted its WPS work to be relevant to this changing context by joining the UN integrated COVID-19 response and by refocusing its WPS work to directly

address the challenges posed by COVID-19. This has included advocacy work such as social media campaigns, online information sessions and radio broadcasts raising awareness of the linkages between WPS and COVID-19. It also included knowledge generation and dissemination activities such as policy briefs, guidance notes and pocket guides on gender-sensitive responses to COVID-19. UN Women also provided support to CSOs and women peace-builders, including a funding scheme established with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) through the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) to fund its COVID-19 responses; as well as practical initiatives such as the distribution of hygiene kits.

Beyond the immediate impacts discussed above, the evaluation documented widespread concern among stakeholders that WPS could be negatively impacted by COVID-19 in the long term. In particular, that a backlash against gender equality achievements may marginalize WPS, with the potential for important gains made (such as women's increasing participation in peace processes and gender-responsive security sector reform) to be reversed. Related to this, there was concern that funding for WPS will evaporate, as funds are diverted to deal with the effects of COVID-19.

#### Addressing COVID-19 through the NAP framework



UN Women in **BANGLADESH** was working to address the gendered elements of the COVID-19 crisis through the framework of the country's NAP. Many of its COVID-19 response activities are directly linked to the Protection, Relief and Recovery pillar of the Bangladesh NAP, and therefore simultaneously advance the objectives of the NAP while responding to COVID-19 related challenges. Specifically, UN Women Bangladesh's COVID-19 work related to output 1 of the NAP, which addresses the capacity of the security sector, law enforcement and local government to be more gender-responsive during disasters, emergencies and humanitarian crises. It also related to output 3 of the NAP which addresses the knowledge required by government and civil society stakeholders, including first responders in disaster and emergency situations, to protect women's safety and well-being in peace and security settings.

**FINDING 18****COVID-19: The present COVID-19 crisis demonstrates that, in most cases, even flexible NAPs are not being utilized or integrated into national emergency response plans.**

The majority of UN Women personnel and national and international stakeholders interviewed recognized the importance of having flexible NAPs that can respond to emerging challenges and crises. Such a flexible NAP could provide a blueprint for actors to coordinate a sustainable gender-responsive emergency action plan, and would allow them to adjust activities to fit a particular crisis. In the survey, 70 per cent of UN Women CO personnel reported that the NAP supported by their CO was flexible enough to respond to emerging challenges such as COVID-19. For example, in Nigeria, it was reported that Pillar One of the current NAP focused on Prevention and Disaster Preparedness, with provisions broad enough to incorporate women's economic/health security in the face of a global pandemic crisis. In Uganda, consultations to develop the third NAP identified disease outbreaks and the increased militarization and security risks that accompany them as a critical concern for WPS, and commitments to enhancing women's participation in government responses to disease outbreaks were integrated into the most recent NAP which was awaiting finalization.

However, despite the fact that such NAPs were clearly well suited to inform national COVID-19 responses, there was little evidence that they were being used to do so. Moreover, the interviews and survey confirmed that in most cases NAPs had not been used as frameworks to inform national responses to previous emergencies, and that broader WPS principles were rarely integrated into national emergency response plans. The evaluation did find some exceptions to this trend. For example, in Bosnia

and Herzegovina, the Agency for Gender Equality and the Coordination Board of the Council of Ministers (responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the NAP 1325) issued recommendations for a gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 which were explicitly framed within both the Gender Equality Law and UNSCR 1325. In Lebanon, UN Women and the National Commission for Lebanese Women published a joint policy brief outlining actions to implement the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security during the COVID-19 lockdown. The brief reported that the 1325 NAP had already been a useful framework for national institutions to mainstream gender equality issues into COVID-19 response and recovery policies. Key results reportedly linked to the NAP included the following: the Council of Ministers and Ministry of Social Affairs worked to ensure that applications for household assistance were gender responsive; new policies were adopted to improve prosecution procedures for gender-based violence in the context of lockdowns; and draft legislation on sexual harassment had been fast tracked.

Where UN Women CO personnel reported that NAPs were not sufficiently flexible to respond to emerging challenges such as COVID-19, the main reasons for this were lack of funding for NAP activities, or that NAPs had very specific outputs/indicators that were not easily adapted (e.g. security sector reform). UN Women should focus on developing broad, overarching, flexible NAPs within which strategies and activities can be adapted to respond to emerging challenges, although stakeholders recognized that this inevitably makes monitoring results more difficult.

**Adapting a NAP to respond to emerging challenges**

In 2014, **IRAQ** became the first country in the Arab States region to launch and publish a 1325 NAP. Less than a year later, ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) surged out of eastern Syria to seize key cities and towns in Iraq. In May 2015, with support from UN Women, an Emergency NAP to implement 1325 was passed by the government. This Emergency NAP focused primarily on including women in all peacebuilding efforts and providing legal, psychological and health support for affected women and girls, responding directly to the context created by the conflict with ISIL.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**A number of lessons can be derived from the evaluation findings, analysis and conclusions.**

**A selection of the most relevant is included below:**



UN Women has a unique competitive advantage in facilitating inclusive NAP development processes. The perceived neutrality of UN Women is a critical factor in enabling it to play this facilitation role. UN Women's history of strong engagement with women's civil society organizations helps bring a wide range of women's voices – including some of the most marginalized – into NAP processes.



Meaningful and sustainable implementation of WPS NAPs requires key elements of these plans to be integrated into wider policy and planning processes. Where WPS NAP priorities are integrated into policies and plans of other sectors (e.g. national gender policies, security policies, emergency and humanitarian planning) this broadens ownership and enhances implementation of these priorities. UN Women can support this by integrating its NAP work with its work in other thematic areas, such as its engagement on GRB, governance or humanitarian issues.



Meaningful localization of WPS NAPs requires much more than the development of a local action plan. It requires building ownership of the agenda among local stakeholders; integrating WPS priorities into local development planning and budgets; empowering women to lead on these issues at local level; and supporting women CSOs to engage with the most vulnerable at grassroots level.



Support for NAP implementation will be most effective if it is based on a robust, evidence-based theory of change and a clear and consistent organizational strategy. Developing these requires understanding how transformational change on gender equality happens in different conflict-affected contexts, and ways in which NAP processes can both promote and build upon such change. It also requires assessing UN Women's value added and potential opportunities and costs for the Entity of supporting NAP implementation.



Gender equality and WPS champions within government and civil society at both national and local level play a key role in driving forward successful WPS NAP processes. UN Women can play an important role in identifying, fostering and supporting such champions



Knowledge sharing initiatives and communities of practices on WPS NAPs play a valuable role. Such initiatives increase the sharing of lessons and experiences on WPS NAP development and implementation within the community of actors working in this area, as well as enable UN Women's own COs to learn from the experiences of others.



Support from the UN Resident Coordinator and other UN Agencies in WPS NAP processes is important. Such support can help ensure strategically developed coordination and the assignment of roles and responsibilities, particularly in light of other relevant UN Resolutions and processes.



Results-oriented reporting and granular financial information is critical to understand whether levels of investment in WPS NAPs lead to impactful results. Internal reporting mechanisms are therefore needed that monitor financial investments and link these with programmatic results.



Committed UN Women personnel play a crucial role in advancing the WPS NAPs agenda. The commitment of UN Women personnel has been key in advancing this agenda at global and national level, including leading successful WPS NAP processes at country level. This commitment, which comes from the Entity's historical engagement with WPS, is a core strength of UN Women.



Photo ©Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



**CONCLUSION 1**

**UN Women's WPS NAP support is strongly grounded in SDGs 5 & 16 and in an understanding of local WPS priorities and contexts, allowing the Entity to advance these global goals in a contextually relevant way.**

UN Women used multiple strategies to understand the priorities of local stakeholders and to align its support to the country context. These strategies were effective and ensured that UN Women's WPS NAP work was relevant in a variety of contexts and was able to address different types of WPS challenges. They included working closely with government and civil society stakeholders on WPS NAPs, for example, in Kyrgyzstan strong engagement with CSOs increased the local relevance of UN Women's WPS NAP work. In addition, supporting national entities to lead WPS NAP development, as in Uganda where UN Women emphasized strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Gender to lead the WPS NAP process. Connecting WPS NAP work with wider national plans and processes was another strategy for alignment with local context, for example, in Tunisia UN Women's support was well aligned to existing government plans. Similarly, learning from previous NAP processes, as in Nepal where taking account of lessons from the first WPS NAP helped to increase the national relevance of UN Women's support to the second WPS NAP.

UN Women's WPS NAP support was closely aligned with the SDG framework across all countries. In addition, the evaluation found alignment between UN Women's NAP

support and CEDAW in a number of countries, including examples where CEDAW or the Beijing Platform for Action were effectively used as an overarching framework to advocate for WPS.

The evaluation found that UN Women's WPS NAP work could be better aligned to a broader set of normative frameworks at both global and regional level, and that achieving such alignment requires building knowledge and commitment about these frameworks and their relevance to WPS. For example, in Uganda, the training on linkages between WPS and other normative frameworks provided during the WPS NAP consultation process was a key factor in facilitating alignment. The evaluation found that work on the NAP/RAP agenda at regional level was particularly weak and there were insufficient efforts to link national and regional plans and processes. An important factor that could help to make WPS at the regional level potentially successful was the strength and effectiveness of the regional institutions themselves, including adequate staffing, financing and technical expertise. This suggests that UN Women's work at the regional level could be more strategic in assessing when and how engagement with regional bodies and processes could add value and is worth investing in.

**CONCLUSION 2**

**UN Women's normative and coordination activities in support of WPS NAPs are the most visible and valued by all stakeholders.**

UN Women was widely recognized as playing a unique role in relation to normative and coordination aspects of WPS NAPs and as adding significant value in these areas. However, there appears to be limited reflection, either at organization-wide level or at field level, on how the different roles that UN Women plays in relation to WPS NAPs can operate in synergy to generate greater impact.

At country level, UN Women's inclusive approach, strong convening power and perceived neutrality enabled it to fulfil its coordination mandate in the area of WPS NAPs effectively. At global level, UN Women's normative role allowed it to lead on WPS within the global policy space, as well as establish standards for national NAP processes.

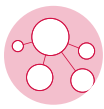
However, there was less recognition among stakeholders of UN Women's operational role and activities in support of NAPs.

The evaluation found that there is significant value in UN Women's mandate to support all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions on WPS, as this gives the Entity traction and influence on WPS with all countries, including development partner countries. However, the importance of this mandate was only recognized by global level actors, suggesting it is less visible to actors at the national level.



## CONCLUSIONS: COHERENCE AND COORDINATION |

## CONCLUSION 3



**UN Women engages in external coordination on multiple levels. There is space for strengthening coherence between these levels so that they better support each other.**

UN Women was perceived as having a clear mandate to lead coordination on WPS and as being strong in this coordination role. The Entity engages in coordination at national, regional and global level, with the strongest focus on national-level coordination. This national coordination work included the mobilization of stakeholders and resources, as well as the establishment of NAP development processes and national coordination mechanisms. It generally involved leading three separate but interconnected coordination processes: coordination of national government, CSOs and other national stakeholders; coordination of UN system engagement; and coordination of development partners. An example of successful national level coordination can be seen in the establishment of the 'Friends of WPS in Mali' and informal group of like-minded development partners, which is used to share information, develop common strategies and has been key to generating external funding for Mali's WPS NAP implementation.

At the regional and global level, UN Women coordinated knowledge generation and exchange; standardization of approaches; and, to a lesser extent, resource mobilization and funding. The extent and efficacy of UN Women's

regional coordination work was found to vary considerably between regions and appeared to be heavily dependent on the RO's capacity. UN Women ROs have coordinated some regional level interaction on WPS and NAPs among different sets of stakeholders in the Middle East and North Africa, South East Asia and the Western Balkans. Meanwhile, UN Women's global level coordination role was primarily focused on wider WPS objectives, with less reference to WPS NAPs specifically, and included participation in important global level coordination and funding mechanisms related to WPS.

The evaluation concluded that more could be done to strengthen, extend and connect the different elements of UN Women's external coordination on NAPs. It also identified some challenges that UN Women faces in its coordination role including difficulties in coordinating with larger UN agencies; weakness in developing synergies with other international actors; challenges in engaging with a wider set of government actors beyond those directly involved with the NAP; and limited ability to reach beyond the national level to support local level NAP coordination.

## CONCLUSIONS: EFFECTIVENESS |

## CONCLUSION 4



**UN Women is effective in facilitating national NAP processes that build awareness and consensus and strongly contribute to the adoption of NAPs.**

In most contexts, UN Women plays a unique and effective role in bringing together multiple actors and providing neutral convening spaces for dialogue over WPS and NAPs. The Entity's inclusive approach and perceived neutrality have enabled it to play this role. These processes generate commitment and awareness of WPS issues among a wide range of stakeholders; allow discussion on sensitive issues; and build consensus for the WPS NAP. For example, in Guatemala the NAP process facilitated by UN Women opened up new spaces for dialogue, created more awareness of WPS and stimulated significant institutional changes. Meanwhile in Nepal, NAP processes supported by UN Women brought together various elements of government, the army, the police, CSOs and CRSV survivors and

enabled discussion and consensus building, including on how to address sensitive issues within the NAP.

UN Women's convening role enabled the Entity to increase awareness of WPS objectives and of context-specific WPS issues. These included issues related to the pursuit of recognition and justice for victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Nepal and Guatemala and gendered implications of Prevention of Violent Extremism among youth in Kyrgyzstan, as well as women's participation in the management of water resources, the role of women mediators and the value of community conflict resolution in a number of countries.

UN Women's convening work on NAPs also supported the development of important relationships among different stakeholders, which could then be used to advance wider WPS objectives. For example, in Guatemala, the WPS NAP process convened by UN Women provided a basis for civil society actors to then engage with government actors outside this process and advocate for issues such as reparations for victims and survivors of CRSV.

UN Women's strong relationship with civil society, women's machineries and the other sectors involved in contributing to gender equality is recognized as adding value to WPS NAP development and implementation. However, while UN Women field presence generally had a good relationship with actors in sectors involved in advancing gender equality, they did not always have strong relationships with wider elements of state and society that are also important for advancing NAPs.

## CONCLUSION 5



### UN Women supports high-impact criteria for NAPs, but this support does not always translate into effective NAPs due to external challenges.

The evaluation assessed the extent to which UN Women promotes the high-impact NAP criteria identified in the Global Study: strong leadership and effective coordination; an inclusive design process; costing and allocated budgets for implementation; a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework; and flexibility to adapt to emerging situations. It found that UN Women focused most strongly on promoting the high-impact criteria of strong leadership and coordination and of inclusive NAP design processes, and that the Entity has been largely effective in doing so.

UN Women supports strong leadership and coordination for WPS through a range of strategies including advocating for the establishment of effective national coordination bodies; identifying and building the capacity of champions within key institutions who can drive NAP processes forward; and supporting CSO leadership to play a watchdog, advocacy or implementation function in relation to NAPs. Particularly strong examples of UN Women's support for leadership and coordination were found in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nepal and Nigeria, as well as in Georgia, where a UN Women project succeeded in supporting the establishment of a national coordination mechanism located in the Prime Minister's Office to oversee WPS NAP implementation. However, UN Women's efforts to develop strong leadership and coordination for NAPs were frequently hindered by high turnover of government officials and by reorganization of government structures.

UN Women supports inclusive NAP design processes, including by supporting long and complex NAP consultation processes to ensure that all relevant stakeholders can participate and by promoting the participation of a wide range of actors. For example, the WPS NAP development process in Uganda involved in-depth consultations with civil society and state partners, as well as with women survivors of CRSV, and engaged non-traditional stakeholders such as religious leaders. However, the evaluation found that there is space to further improve support

for inclusivity, including by engaging a wider range of groups such as youth, internally displaced persons, indigenous people and women with disabilities. It identified that major challenges to inclusive NAP design processes include poor security situations and weak regional level capacity and infrastructure, both of which prevent outreach beyond capital cities.

The evaluation found that UN Women's support for the other elements of a high-impact WPS NAP was more mixed. UN Women supports costing and budgeting of NAPs in some contexts, primarily through organizing costing exercises and discussions, and supporting preparation of draft costing plans. However, such support rarely results in a costing plan that is adopted by governments as an integral part of the WPS NAP, or translates into annual operational budgets of implementing institutions. This type of support has become more prominent in the latest generation of WPS NAPs. An example of successful work in this area was in Uganda, where UN Women supported the costing of the WPS NAP and development of operational plans and budgets for each ministry/agency involved in implementation.

UN Women supports the development of M&E frameworks within most WPS NAP processes. However, a common pattern appears to be that, although an M&E framework is established, actual monitoring processes are weak due to limited capacity or commitment. The most widely used strategies by UN Women to advance M&E were providing technical and financial support for the development of M&E guidelines and frameworks, and capacity building for implementation of M&E frameworks. There was limited evidence of UN Women's support for the development of flexible WPS NAPs or for adapting NAPs to respond to changing contexts, although in Afghanistan and Iraq stakeholders reported that the NAP in these countries was adjusted to reflect the changing security situation.

While UN Women mostly supports the high-impact WPS NAP criteria, the extent to which such criteria were included in the final WPS NAP is mediated by the complexity of context, the actors involved and interests at play, and the final decisions of governments. In particular, the inclusion of these criteria in the final WPS NAP is often hindered by lack of financial resources; lack of political commitment;

political turbulence; limited capacities of national stakeholders to manage the process; and violent conflict. Other barriers that were mentioned included weak coordination among ministries; difficulties in including stakeholders outside the capital and major cities; turnover in the government; and lack of institutional infrastructure to support localization.

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## CONCLUSIONS: GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS |

### CONCLUSION 6



**UN Women's WPS NAP work contributes to laying the foundations for transformational change. However, the Entity would benefit from a clear Theory of Change (ToC) in this area.**

While UN Women's support to WPS NAPs helped to lay the foundations for transformational change, the Entity did not have a well-developed understanding of how such change comes about. Nor did it have a range of standardized intervention strategies that could be adapted to local contexts to support WPS implementation that would lead to transformational change. It would therefore be useful for UN Women to elaborate a ToC that demonstrates how its WPS NAP work can move from lower to higher outcomes reflected in progress towards WPS NAP goals. This understanding would facilitate the development of more effective strategies for supporting transformation of gender inequalities and women's empowerment.

The evaluation found that UN Women's WPS NAP support advances gender equality and women's empowerment by promoting inclusive processes; raising awareness of gender equality and women's empowerment; promoting the inclusion of these issues in WPS NAP documents; supporting women's empowerment and leadership; and building the capacity of partners on gender equality. However, the evaluation was unable to assess whether these strategies contributed to actual transformative change in the lives of women and girls, because such transformation tends to be a slow and non-linear process driven by local actors.

In all countries, UN Women promoted an inclusive WPS NAP process and sought to engage a wide range of marginalized rights holders, including some of the most left behind groups, notably conflict-affected women and survivors of CRSV. The evaluation found that UN Women's support to the WPS NAP development process in Uganda

was a good practice in this regard, as it brought together a wide variety of duty bearers and rights holders in nine regional consultations. However, in other cases the evaluation found that UN Women could improve its support for inclusivity and provide more space for the most marginalized voices within WPS NAP consultation processes.

In Nepal, Guatemala and Mali, UN Women-coordinated WPS NAP processes contributed to increasing women's confidence; informing them about their rights; and empowering them to raise their voices and make demands of duty bearers. In Nepal, the WPS NAP process supported by UN Women helped marginalized groups such as indigenous and Dalit women, CRSV survivors, female-headed households and female former combatants articulate their needs with government stakeholders. In Iraq, UN Women supported the Women Leadership Institute to provide psychological, social, legal and economic support to displaced, abused and marginalized women and to inform these women about their legal rights.

UN Women's WPS NAP work has included strengthening the capacity of partners to advance gender equality. UN Women's support to civil society to implement parallel accountability mechanisms to ensure gender equality was embedded in WPS NAP processes has been very valuable. The evaluation also identified numerous examples of UN Women building the capacity of both civil society and government partners to integrate these issues more effectively into their work.

**CONCLUSION 7**

**Given the human and financial resources available for NAP development and implementation, the activities implemented produced satisfactory results.**

While results were satisfactory given the resources invested, these investments were mostly a small fraction of UN Women's overall spending on WPS at the country level. Overall, UN Women's spending on WPS NAP activities (not including staffing costs) comprised just 6.3 per cent of the WPS budget in the period under evaluation (2015–2019). However, there were some notable exceptions in this regard, with investments on WPS NAPs in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Nepal and Tunisia comprising more than 35 per cent of the WPS budget in this period.

The extent to which UN Women's human and financial resources were adequate to support WPS NAP development and implementation processes was mixed and there was some dissatisfaction among stakeholders in this regard. The evaluation team conducted a comprehensive

efficiency analysis highlighting these challenges. The evaluation found that in active conflict contexts, high staff turnover limited the ability of field offices to ensure adequate human resources to support effective NAP development, while in other contexts COs faced challenges in ensuring adequate personnel to address political complexities and ensure sustainable progress.

The evaluation notes that additional financial resources could have leveraged additional results, in particular in relation to NAP implementation. However, it also identified that to better understand how the money spent on WPS NAPs translates into results, UN Women needs to invest in better systems for tracking and reporting results with the right indicators.

**CONCLUSION 8**

**Limited internal thematic and organizational coherence in UN Women's support to WPS NAPs has implications for how the Entity reports results and manages knowledge and guidance.**

There is not always thematic and organizational internal coherence in how UN Women supports WPS NAPs. While the majority of support to NAP development and implementation was programmed within the WPS agenda, in some field presences it was programmed within other areas such as End Violence Against Women (EVAW) or Women's Leadership and Political Participation (WLPP), and therefore reported under these areas. These weaknesses in internal coherence and coordination limited UN Women's ability to have effective oversight of its work on NAPs, or to comprehensively understand and assess how this work contributes to wider outcomes within its Strategic Plan.

The evaluation found that there was thematic coherence of NAP development work within WPS, although there was potential for NAPs to be more effectively utilized as a framework for all UN Women's WPS work within a given country. It also found that UN Women's NAP work contributed to other areas of UN Women's work including EVAW, WLPP, Humanitarian Action, GRB and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE). In an example of best practice, the UN Women CO in Uganda adopted an integrated approach to coordination, policy support and programming across thematic areas, in which it explicitly linked each NAP pillar to its other thematic areas to create synergy (i.e.

prevention was linked to EVAW work; participation to governance work; and recovery to WEE work, etc.) This means that there were shared goals for NAP implementation and shared responsibilities for advancing policy-level changes across UN Women's different thematic areas.

The evaluation found mixed results in terms of UN Women's standardization of learning and knowledge products to inform global normative processes. The evaluation identified demand for better packaged and systematized knowledge to inform country-level actors, in particular: best practices and lessons learned on NAPs; guidance on how to address NAP implementation gaps; and lessons on how to assess and capture the impact of NAP implementation and present concrete evidence. Overall, the evaluation assessed that collection, systemization and sharing of best practices in NAP development and implementation within the organization was an institutional weakness and an area where UN Women could significantly strengthen its systems and practice. Despite this, the evaluation did identify some interesting initiatives for sharing knowledge and best practice, including UN Women support for regional-level learning in the Arab States region and 'twinning' between Jordan and Tunisia NAP processes.

**CONCLUSION 9**

**UN Women recognizes the importance of national ownership of WPS NAPs for their long-term sustainability, and building this ownership is a central element of UN Women’s engagement on WPS NAPs.**

Advancing national ownership was a central element of UN Women’s work on WPS NAPs, primarily through facilitating inclusive processes; promoting strong coordination; and building national actors’ capacity for sustainable implementation. Support for inclusive WPS NAP development processes was the most common strategy for promoting ownership. For example, in Iraq, the inclusive drafting process for the second WPS NAP helped to facilitate its strong national ownership; ensure that the process was led by the government and CSOs; that the NAP was not seen as a UN Women document; and took account of regional and ethnic diversity in the country.

Capacity building and technical support among duty bearers was also frequently used to advance national ownership. For example, in Uganda UN Women focused on strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to lead the NAP process; while in Nepal, UN Women built the capacity of institutions tasked with NAP implementation at both central and local level. A central strategy of UN Women to build ownership in a number of countries was in supporting the development of strong coordination mechanisms among national actors responsible for WPS NAP implementation. For example, UN Women supported the establishment of a cross-sectoral task force for NAP implementation in Iraq. A related strategy was to ensure that a powerful government entity was responsible for leading implementation and coordination. In Georgia, UN Women encouraged a shift from the WPS NAP being located in the legislative to being located in the executive branch, which increased government ownership.

The evaluation found that UN Women largely focused on promoting ownership among a relatively limited group of actors directly involved in NAP processes. In most countries, there was limited emphasis on building broader ownership among wider actors and institutions, such as other government ministries. For example, in Iraq, while the WPS NAP process had been inclusive, it was reported that for real sustainability more participation from wider groups such as youth, the private sector and academia was required. Similarly, in Guatemala, aside from the MIMPAZ, it was reported that many institutions were still not familiar with the NAP and more actors need to be involved to ensure ownership and accountability.

The evaluation also identified that UN Women could do more to link NAPs to broader policy and planning processes and make the case for their relevance to wider policy goals. The evaluation observed that where UN Women did successfully support the integration of NAPs into wider policy frameworks or plans they were more likely to be sustainable. For example, UN Women Nepal supported the integration of the WPS NAP into local district development plans, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainable implementation; while it was identified that in Kyrgyzstan the NAP is currently seen as an isolated “women’s document” and that UN Women could support its integration into other policies to gain traction. The evaluation also identified that UN Women could provide more support for work to address the norms and attitudes that prevent WPS NAPs and broader WPS objectives from being accepted and owned by wider society and at local level.

**CONCLUSION 10**

**Sustainable implementation of WPS NAPs requires meaningful translation to the local level and ensuring adequate funding. UN Women needs a clearer strategy for how it can support such sustainable implementation.**

The evaluation found that UN Women engages in NAP implementation across multiple countries, although this engagement was not always systematic and there was no standard approach. The most consistent component of UN Women’s support to implementation has been the Entity’s support to coordination bodies or other mechanisms responsible for WPS NAPs to monitor, regularly report and/

or evaluate progress. In some instances, field presences have also supported the implementation of specific NAP activities such as harmonization of policy frameworks in the defence and security sectors; provision of embedded personnel within government; support for civil society organizations and women mediators in communities; and activities with direct links to the humanitarian portfolio.



Taking into account lessons from UN Women's activities to support WPS NAP implementation, and also the activities of other agencies and national stakeholders, the evaluation team developed an embedded ToC to identify potentially effective methods for supporting NAP implementation and to inform UN Women's future work in this area.

Effective WPS NAP localization was identified as critical for meaningful ownership and sustainable implementation, especially building ownership among local actors and integrating WPS NAP priorities into local plans. UN Women provided support for localization in some contexts, including through development of municipal WPS NAPs; advocacy for integrating WPS NAP priorities into municipal development/workplans; establishment of conflict resolution structures in villages and local communities; and engagement of women mediators and cross-border dialogue activities in conflict-affected areas. However, this support could be more widespread and stronger. In some contexts, there have been significant challenges with localization due to insufficient outreach to local communities and lack of access to provinces in contexts with high conflict and insecurity.

Factors related to funding were the greatest barriers to sustainable WPS NAP implementation. Lack of costing and budgeting and insufficient funding for NAP implementation were cited by multiple categories of stakeholders in Nepal, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan and Uganda. GRB was identified as way to generate some sustainable funding for NAPs, although it was noted that GRB alone is unlikely to raise sufficient revenue. UN Women has been working with several countries to incorporate GRB into their WPS NAP work, either during the development stage or when supporting government ministries to budget their NAP for implementation. For example, in Liberia UN Women was launching a project that aimed to enhance allocation of financial resources for implementation of the second NAP through innovative financing and GRB. Pooled funding was also cited as a valuable way to generate sustainable financing, for example, in Jordan UN Women and the Jordanian National Commission for Women were jointly implementing a programme for WPS NAP implementation, supported by pooled funding from five donors.

CONCLUSIONS: COVID-19 |

## CONCLUSION 11



**UN Women has supported COVID-19 responses that take account of WPS issues. There is strong potential for WPS NAP principles and priorities to inform national responses to COVID-19, but so far this is mostly not happening.**

UN Women supported a gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 and adapted its WPS work to be relevant to this changing context, both by joining the UN integrated COVID-19 response and by refocusing its WPS work to directly address the challenges posed by COVID-19. The Entity has undertaken advocacy work such as social media campaigns, online information sessions and radio broadcasts raising awareness of the linkages between WPS and COVID-19. It has also produced a range of knowledge generation and dissemination activities on gender-sensitive responses to COVID-19. In addition, UN Women provided support to CSOs and women peacebuilders, including a funding scheme set up with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) through the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) to fund its COVID-19 responses.

It appears that, globally, WPS has largely stalled due to the pandemic. National processes to adopt or implement WPS NAPs have been delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic in certain countries, while stakeholders reported significant concern that funding for WPS will evaporate,

as funds are diverted to respond to COVID-19. This stalling of WPS is despite the significant impact of COVID-19 on women in conflict-affected contexts and the recognition by many stakeholders interviewed that WPS could be a useful gender-sensitive framework for responding to the pandemic.

Although WPS NAPs are well suited to inform national COVID-19 responses, there was little evidence that they were being used to do so. This was despite 70 per cent of UN Women field personnel reporting that the NAP supported by their CO was flexible enough to respond to emerging challenges such as COVID-19. For example, in Nigeria, Pillar One of the current NAP focused on Prevention and Disaster Preparedness and contained provisions broad enough to incorporate women's economic/health security in the face of a global pandemic crisis; while in Uganda commitments to enhance women's participation in government responses to disease outbreaks were integrated into the most recent WPS NAP. However, the evaluation did find some exceptions where NAPs were being used to inform COVID-19 responses.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agency for Gender Equality and the Coordination Board of the Council of Ministers issued recommendations for a gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 which were explicitly framed within both the Gender Equality Law and UNSCR 1325. Similarly, in Lebanon, UN Women and the National Commission for Lebanese Women published a joint policy brief outlining actions to implement the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security during the COVID-19 lockdown.

More broadly, the evaluation found that, while key WPS principles and priorities contained in WPS NAPs could be useful in informing national emergency responses

– including responses to COVID-19 – they were rarely used in this way. This was in large part because institutions leading emergency responses typically had limited awareness or ownership of the NAP. Most stakeholders interviewed recognized the importance of having flexible WPS NAPs that can respond to emerging challenges and crises and can provide a blueprint for actors to coordinate a sustainable gender-responsive emergency action plan. UN Women should focus on developing broad, overarching, flexible NAPs within which strategies and activities can be adapted to respond to emerging challenges, although this could inevitably make monitoring results more difficult.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS: RELEVANCE |

### RECOMMENDATION 1

#### UN Women's WPS NAP support should connect with and scale up a wider range of global normative frameworks, as well as regional frameworks and processes to increase traction.

Priority

LOW

Timeframe

Long term

UN Women should examine how it can connect its work on WPS with a wide range of normative frameworks and review processes (beyond those strictly related to UNSCR 1325 or conflict) at global, regional and national levels, which can provide traction for NAP work and where there are entry points for UN Women's deeper engagement. This could provide an opportunity for advancing WPS at the normative level. Developing such a strategic approach to alignment would require strengthening knowledge on wider normative frameworks and their relevance to WPS among UN Women personnel, especially at the country level.

**ACTION:**

- UN Women WPSHA section and ROs to map global and regional opportunities for engagement on WPS and NAPs and assess the potential of different global or regional frameworks, structures and processes for advancing RAPs and NAPs.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

#### UN Women should strengthen the synergy between its normative, coordination and operational roles in support of WPS NAPs to enhance its impact.

Priority

LOW

Timeframe

Medium term

UN Women should strengthen its understanding of how the different roles and intervention strategies it adopts to support NAPs can connect to and build upon each other. In particular, UN Women should identify, and clearly articulate to personnel, what such an integrated approach to NAP work would look like at country level and how it can be achieved.

**ACTION:**

- WPSHA Section to identify and document good practice examples of an integrated approach to NAP support and develop and disseminate guidance on what an integrated approach looks like and how it can be achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS: **COHERENCE AND COORDINATION** |**RECOMMENDATION 3**

**UN Women should devise a strategy to harmonize its external coordination efforts, with a focus on strengthening and linking global, regional and national-level coordination processes.**

Priority

MEDIUM

Timeframe

Long term

**UN Women should strengthen its coordination role in relation to knowledge generation and sharing, in particular ensuring that evidence, lessons and best practices are shared between multiple levels.**

**ACTIONS:**

- WPSHA Section to identify and share effective approaches to NAPs in different contexts as part of its role as coordinator of global and regional communities of practice
- UN Women to channel knowledge and evidence generated from its national-level coordination work to the regional and global level. Such knowledge sharing could be funded from mechanisms such as PBF, WPHF and others.

**There is a need to strengthen and expand UN Women's coordination with external actors, such as UN agencies and international organizations at all levels.**

**ACTIONS:**

- WPSHA section and national focal points to engage a wider range of national stakeholders in NAP processes to deepen participation and ownership, and to use the Entity's external coordination with development partners to mobilize funding for NAP implementation.
- WPSHA section at the global level to strengthen links and synergies with other actors and processes whose work has relevance for WPS and NAPs. For example, further strengthening partnership with PBSO and UNHCR, as well as with UNFPA on UNSCR YPS Resolution 2250.

**A strategic approach is required to coordination in the area of NAPs that builds upon the unique coordination role that UN Women plays on WPS at multiple levels.**

**ACTION:**

- WPSHA section to expand global-level networks and spearhead more dialogues at regional level to strategically feed into global-level recommendations, and to draw in national-level actors and facilitate multi-level dialogue on NAPs, for example by including national CSOs in the Global Network of Focal Points for 1325.

RECOMMENDATIONS: **EFFECTIVENESS** |**RECOMMENDATION 4**

**UN Women should continue to expand its current strategies to support WPS NAP development. It should also define a clear and consistent strategy for support to WPS NAP implementation.**

Priority

HIGH

Timeframe

Short term

UN Women should continue its existing strategies to support inclusive and well-coordinated NAP UN Women should continue its existing strategies to support inclusive and well-coordinated NAP development processes, in line with high-impact criteria and using standardized methodologies. The Entity should ensure wide cross-sectoral participation of all relevant actors from government (security, gender equality etc.), civil society and other stakeholders, in particular those outside the capital or major cities.

**ACTIONS:**

- UN Women needs to decide what role the Entity should play in supporting NAP implementation, as part of its broader support to implementation of WPS objectives, as this is currently unclear. It is recommended that UN Women build upon the embedded ToC outlined in this evaluation and develop a related strategy to inform its support for NAP implementation and that it engages in specific support to implementation actions, based on this ToC and strategy and on an assessment of where the Entity best adds value.

RECOMMENDATIONS: **GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS** |**RECOMMENDATION 5**

**UN Women should strengthen its understanding of how to support transformational shifts in gender equality and women's empowerment, and should use this to inform its work on WPS and NAPs.**

Priority

**HIGH**

Timeframe

**Medium term**

**ACTIONS:**

- UN Women to build upon the embedded ToC outlined in this evaluation to develop a framework for understanding how transformational change in gender equality and women's empowerment happens in conflict-affected settings, and how UN Women can support such change as part of its work on NAPs.
- UN Women to generate more learning from its own interventions regarding which approaches best advance gender equality and women's empowerment in different types of conflict contexts.
- UN Women to develop strategies and tools that could be used to assess what types of transformational change are most critical for delivering on WPS objectives at the country level.
- UN Women to identify partners to implement work in this area, as well as ways to capture the results and impact of such work.

RECOMMENDATIONS: **EFFICIENCY** |**RECOMMENDATION 6**

**WPS management should enhance its internal reporting systems related to tracking financial resources and results towards WPS NAPs to better demonstrate and enhance results. It should also strengthen technical leadership to ensure a harmonized approach to WPS NAP support.**

Priority

**HIGH**

Timeframe

**Short term**

**ACTIONS:**

- UN Women to undertake an assessment of the financial resources required to provide meaningful support to NAP implementation. Based on this assessment, the Entity could make an informed decision about the strategy it should adopt and the investments it should make to support NAP implementation.
- WPS management, COs and ROs to enhance their internal reporting systems to include stronger impact indicators, as well as strengthen the Entity's understanding of how financial resources are linked to results. They should also develop effective systems to store and manage knowledge and invest in building institutional memory so that knowledge and experience on NAPs are captured, retained and can be drawn on in the future.
- UN Women to consider maintaining a pool of WPS NAP experts with specific Terms of Reference and technical support from headquarters, from which expertise could be deployed to support national NAP development and implementation.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

**UN Women should expand the range of actors and processes that it engages with on WPS NAPs to broaden and deepen national level ownership and integrate its engagement on WPS NAPs with its other areas of work at the national level to support sustainable NAP implementation.**

*Priority***MEDIUM***Timeframe***Medium term**

Broad national ownership of NAPs across multiple sectors and at multiple levels is critical for sustainable implementation.

**ACTIONS**

- UN Women to expand the range of actors and processes that it engages with to build broader based ownership of the NAP. In particular, the Entity should reach out beyond the most directly involved actors to engage with those working in other sectors and demonstrate the relevance of NAPs to their work. Similarly, UN Women should strengthen its engagement with local-level actors and processes, and should use this as an entry point to support localization efforts.
- If UN Women wants to support sustainable NAP implementation, the Entity should integrate its NAP support with its other areas of work such as GRB or humanitarian work at the national level, thereby leveraging this wider work in support of NAP implementation in a consistent manner.

**ACTION**

- UN Women to promote the integration of NAPs into other strategies and plans at the country level that UN Women supports (e.g. national gender strategies or development plans). UN Women should also connect its NAP work with its other areas of work at country level, including linking UN Women's GRB programming and NAP work to support the use of GRB to finance NAP implementation; harnessing UN Women's existing work with civil society on norms and attitudes to address the attitudinal barriers to meaningful NAP implementation; and using UN Women's work on themes such as gender-based violence to help meet NAP goals in these areas.

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

**UN Women should address the immediate need to integrate WPS principles into COVID-19 responses, as well as the longer-term challenge of ensuring that NAPs are used to inform emergency planning.**

*Priority***HIGH***Timeframe***Medium term****ACTIONS:**

- UN Women needs to make urgent, strong and consistent efforts to advocate with national, regional and global actors for the consideration of WPS principles in COVID-19 responses.
- The Entity should also develop longer-term strategies to link NAPs to emergency policy and legal frameworks and planning processes at national level, so order that actors working on emergencies understand the relevance of NAPs and that emergency plans and processes integrate key NAP priorities and principles.



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The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service is co-located with the Internal Audit Service under the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational, and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments, and civil society organizations.

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**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION  
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY  
AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A  
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND  
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED  
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON  
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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