



CORPORATE EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT TO

NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY



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The evaluation was conducted by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES). The IES team included an evaluation specialist, Florencia Tateossian as Evaluation Team Leader; Genevieve Quinn as Research Assistant; Clare Castillejo, Independent Consultant and WPS Expert; and Aleksandar Zivanovich, Independent Consultant and Evaluation Expert. We would like to also thank the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Team at HQ, especially Harriette Williams Bright, Policy Specialist, and Paivi Kannisto, Chief Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, for their invaluable inputs and strong engagement throughout the evaluation.

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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

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

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



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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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

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.¹ The evaluation used the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations² and the UN Women Handbook "How to manage gender-responsive evaluation."³

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