

Forum 1325 – Norge
First round of input from Forum members
February 2023

THEMATIC AND OTHER ASSORTED INPUT FROM THE FORUM

STRUCTURE / CONTENT OF NAP

The NAP is comprehensive, in-depth, and covers the broad spectrum of the WPS agenda with a lot of context on what, from Norway's perspective, is known and understood about the roles, rights, responsibilities, needs, etc. of women in all stages of conflict and pre- and post-conflict. The context behind the goals for each of the sections is helpful and informative. The division of the sections with the four focus areas and goals is also a helpful and logical way of breaking down the different goals and responsibilities for the different ministries and types of organizations, including Norwegian civil society. The structure also makes it easier for the different organizations with their different mandates to showcase which focus areas and goals they contribute to. In general, there is a lot to work with that can be kept and used as a basis for the next NAP.

GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The gender perspective takes into account power dynamics and inequalities related to gender, sex characteristics, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. It recognises that gender is a social construct and is not binary, that discrimination is intersectional, and that the same attempts to impose rigid gender roles and binaries cause harm in similar ways to women and to LGBTIQ persons of all genders. (OutRight International)

There are a lot of references to "men" and their rights and their situation, seemingly to ensure a balanced perspective. Certainly, there are crucial areas where men and boys must be included in the perspective of the WPS agenda, namely the rights, needs, and support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. But, the purpose of the WPS agenda is to focus on the rights and needs of women in all their diversities, including LGBTIQ persons, which is not in an effort to displace, replace, compete, or ignore the needs and rights of men and boys, but to give due attention to the extreme and disproportionate inequalities, violence, exclusion, etc. that women, girls, and LGBTIQ persons face. Maintain the focus on women without mentioning that men also have rights and struggle during conflict, with the exception of survivors of SGBV / CRSV / SViC.

INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Overall, the NAP needs to integrate an intersectional perspective more substantially and to use language beyond the binary (women / men and female / male). References to the diversity of identities of and realities for women, girls, and LGBTIQ persons that impact their experience in conflict and pre - and post - conflict settings should be included as constructive acknowledgement throughout - women with disabilities, LGBTIQ / SOGIESC, rural, urban, indigenous, religion,

ethnicity, etc.

Also, the NAP language should remove references like “equal footing with men” and others like it, since the goal of equality is not to achieve the status of men and view equality through the perspective of the rights and privileges men have and enjoy but to achieve equality overall period.

FoRB - Acknowledge the negative (ie, women’s rights in conflicts with religious undertone & misuse of FoRB to justify violence against women in conflict) *and* positive (ie, protecting women’s FoRB & recognizing capacity for humanitarian assistance) role of religious/belief actors in relation to WPS pillars

MEN & MASCULINITIES

Recognizing and addressing the contextual manifestations of masculinity and especially militarized masculinities in conflict and pre - and post - conflict is fundamental to the WPS agenda as a measure to address root causes of GBV. The current NAP already mentions that gender inequality is linked to the risk of violence / conflict, and so addressing and understanding the role of militarized masculinities in conflict is needed.

The work on social / gender norms, masculinities, patriarchal structures, men as allies and the WPS agenda are inextricably linked, but there is a need to keep the focus of such work as it pertains to peace and security within the NAP to stay within the scope of the WPS agenda and to avoid the tendency to use the WPS agenda as a catch-all. Additionally, work and programs on social / gender norms, men as allies, and masculinities are inescapably political and have a tendency to co-opt and displace women’s voices, movements, demands, etc. So, while there is overlap between the WPS agenda and a broader agenda like that of the women’s rights and equality NAP, it is critical that the WPS NAP maintains the centralization of women, girls, and LGBTIQ / SOGIESC.

There are good examples of how to approach this delicate consideration of centralizing women, girls, and LGBTIQ / SOGIESC persons in a WPS NAP while also recognizing the role of militarized masculinities and patriarchal structures as a tool for tackling the barriers and challenges to very disparities and issues the WPS agenda addresses, such as participation for example.

For a balanced perspective on centralising women, girls and LGBTIQ people of all genders, with a focus on harmful masculinities as a root cause of GBV we recommend borrowing from Ireland’s NAP: for this perspective -

“We understand that there are multiple forms of masculinities within every society, some of which are harmful and are a part of these discriminatory gender norms. We believe in the need to challenge the ways in which discriminatory gender norms, in particular harmful masculinities, can be embedded in peace and security discourse and to broaden discussions to ensure a more holistic human security approach” (p. 15 Ireland NAP).

When it comes to monitoring, they have specific goals for different ministries for how they can work with this. Examples include that the Department of Foreign Affairs will “commission research on the

effects and drivers of harmful social norms, including masculinities and discriminatory gender norms and support for the engagement of men and boys as advocates and stakeholders in WPS” (p. 30 Ireland NAP)

In line with the above, a recommendation to include the following perspectives in prevention and security programming:

- Highlight that gender norms can play a role in recruitment of violent extremist groups, and how groups use strategies connected to notions of masculinity to recruit men and boys
- In DDR processes, programs that work with men and boys to address traumas they have faced, and work against the militarized masculine ideals which will have been used to recruit them and maintain their support throughout a conflict.

SUPPORT TO LOCAL WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS

Maintain and strengthen the language and focus on support to local women’s organizations, movements, coalitions, etc. This is essential to implementation of the WPS agenda. It also demonstrates recognition of the role of local organizations, and their expertise and understanding of how best to address and implement elements of the WPS agenda, including conflict resolution. To succeed, these organisations often need resources and capacity. As such, a focus in this plan should include support and acknowledgement on the importance of women’s participation and influence in community-based peace processes. Community based civil society peacebuilding performed by community based civil society actors is crucial for change in contexts of widespread communal conflict and violence. Women’s contribution on this level is crucial, but often not adequately acknowledged and supported. We need this focus to be reflected in the result framework as well.

Put less focus on funding and support to INGOs like UN Women and more funding and support directly to local organizations.

Keep specific language on support to women’s organizations like technical assistance, funding, and support after agreements have been signed, etc.

Include language on the need to ensure that women and LGBTIQ persons voices are included and amplified.

PROTECTION & SUPPORT OF WOMEN / WHRDs / WOMEN PROTESTORS

Maintain and strengthen the language and plans on protection and support for women and WHRDs - through an intersectional perspective - including and especially those that participated in the peace agreement process. Include that it is needed at all stages, including the post-agreement implementation stage. This includes consistent, predictable funding, solidarity, access to SRHR,

livelihood support, and other types of support as identified by WHRDs and women and LGBTIQ persons.

Add a separate section on WHRDs, including goals for their protection and support

Include Norway's work from the UNSC on promoting protection and prevention of WHRDs and peacebuilders from reprisals for their work and association with the UN and other entities.

The Evaluation of Norwegian Efforts for Women, Peace and Security points at a "protection and responsive gap in how to handle risks as part of the WPS partnerships". The evacuation of WHRDs from Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover revealed how the protection regime/integration scheme tends to establish barriers for continued participation for women involved in peace negotiations and human rights protection when settling as refugees in Norway. The Ministry of Labour and Inclusion holds the political and administrative responsibility for the integration policy and regulations, and needs to be included in the discussion on how the protection and responsive gap can be dealt with in the new action plan.

Visas - Ensuring participation as well as protection in conflict situations also requires increased use of flexible visas. Women involved in peace negotiations and HRD defenders need protection in crisis situations, but should not be prevented from returning to their home countries if the situation changes. There is a need to look at how travel documents issued by Norway can be more flexible, which can be reflected in the support to WHRDs in the NAP.

Include acknowledgement of digital surveillance and tools used to destabilize, delegitimize, target, threaten, harass, extradite, etc. HRDs and civil society, with a focus on WHRDs and women's rights and civil society organizations and networks, and that Norway will promote accountability for such violations against WHRDs and condemn such acts.

Supporting the WHRDs in timely and effective ways - before, during, and after political crises. Support timely evacuations that follow WHRDs all the way to their host country and continue to support them as needed until a level of stability is achieved.

- In Norway, support WHRDs with a special protection status and consideration of their ability to continue their work in the country and to travel inside and outside of Norway to conduct their work

PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL / NON-NEGOTIABLE

Maintain and strengthen language that focuses on the essentiality of women's and LGBTIQ persons' participation in all stages in the prevention of conflict and peace processes / work, but expand it to other processes as participation is important and essential beyond the peace processes as well. Include language to support, encourage, insist on, etc. women's and LGBTIQ persons participation in peace and decision-making, implementation, and monitoring processes in the political, economic, justice, electoral, and other critical social spheres. Participation in decision-making for reintegration

programs is also essential and all such programs should be gender sensitive.

Include language that specifies that gender balance in peace and political decision making processes is not the end goal but that women and LGBTIQ persons are heard, are informing, and being directly reflected in the processes and outcomes / agreements. Emphasize the need for their meaningful and genuine participation in all stages.

Include language on Norway's plans to ensure that all peace agreements must have an integrated gender perspective with provisions that address gender inequality, accountability for CRSV / SViC / SGBV, accountability measures, etc.

NORWEGIAN MILITARY / POLICE / UN PERSONNEL

Maintain focus on but include stronger language on implementation and accountability for Norway's domestic efforts and goals for integrating a gender perspective in the Norwegian military, police, and UN personnel ("... exercises, training, operations, and missions are to have competence in the gender perspective.") and for recruiting women to leading positions nationally and internationally, and to get more women to join military units with an operational capability, as well as deploying units.

Update the section on Operations and Missions accounting for lessons learned during the implementation of the plan that reflect and include goals and recommendations on how to improve implementation in this area. A focus on how to integrate and sustain a mainstreamed gender perspective and approach in operations and missions.

Sufficient budgets for gender programming in the MoD are necessary and should be prioritized for full implementation of the NAP.

Accountability measures overall and specifically for leadership and milestones for implementation should be integrated into this section - internal reviews with recommended actions, for example. Stronger and more effective and sustainable implementation of this section of the NAP should be the goal and the language, provisions, and planning should reflect that.

More engagement with civil society and transparency on the progress of the implementation of this section of the NAP is needed. It is recommended that the MoD plan to meet with civil society at least twice a year for status updates (similar to Sweden's practices for implementing the NAP).

CRSV / SViC / SGBV

Keep the focus on responding to and preventing SGBV / CRSV / SViC as a priority across the entire NAP. Keep the inclusion of all survivors, not only women and girls. Integrate a survivor centered approach that acknowledges survivors' agency and contributions to their protection, support, justice, and recovery.

Maintain the strong prioritization of psychosocial support and include language to support building capacities for all actors involved in the myriad processes and actions related to addressing and preventing SGBV / CRSV / SViC. Psychosocial support should be prioritized in reintegration programs as well.

Immediate / undelayed access to SRHR, including access to safe abortions, which should be stated clearly, should be a stated priority for support to survivors. SRHR should be prioritized in reintegration programs as well. Funding appeals should include SRHR, including access to safe abortions.

Include references to and support for work against SViC with a survivor-centred approach that includes stronger accountability mechanisms, measures, and actions that can make a difference in the realities of women receiving support and in the actions taken to mitigate risks, prevent and respond to GBV.

Given the range of negative consequences of GBV, response/support in the form of economic assistance/reparations, relocation, safety and security, psychosocial support, medical care, legal support, etc. should all be included. Support to strengthen these services should also be prioritized to ensure a holistic approach to GBV, including CRSV.

Through more active promotion of IHL, stress obligations of States to respect the prohibition of sexual violence. For example, through instruction and training programmes in IHL for armed forces. Trainings are done, but especially for armed forces in third countries the IHL entry point often is not used.

Supporting States (Norway and States through Norway) in fulfilling their obligations, including through disseminating the provisions of the IHL and lending technical expertise to support States in integrating the prohibition of sexual violence in armed conflict into their domestic legal frameworks.

Calling for a gender perspective and approach to ceasefires, ensuring that they include SGBV / SViC / CRSV, targeting and violence against women and WHRDs, etc. as violations of ceasefire agreements

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Include references and goals for supporting and ensuring access to SRHR, including direct references to the full bodily autonomy of women and girls and supporting access to safe abortion as part of the full range of SRHR. Bodily autonomy should be integrated throughout the NAP.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Strengthen / broaden capacity building to *all* staff involved on how to safely and ethically respond to a disclosure of SGBV (include survivor-centered approach, psychological first aid (PFA), do's and don'ts, roles and responsibilities for specialized and non-specialized) to promote and ensure a 'do

no harm' and survivor-centered principles in responding and facilitating access to (specialized) services.

DISPLACEMENT / ASYLUM SEEKERS / REFUGEES

Maintain focus on but strengthen language on those who are displaced and refugees and asylum seekers - in Norway and in other countries. Support to and work in this area must be intersectional and must consider the unique needs from the circumstances that force women, girls, and LGBTIQ persons to flee. Those who are displaced, asylum seekers, and refugees are often exposed to violence / SGBV and thus they need to be included in the support to responding to and preventing SGBV / CRSV / SViC.

Maintain but strengthen language on the need to support the rights and needs of asylum seekers in Norway, but broaden this perspective to WHRDs and beyond the subject of SGBV and domestic abuse.

ECONOMIC EQUALITY & LIVELIHOODS

Include a strong focus on economic opportunities, needs, sustainability, and resilience for women and LGBTIQ persons, including those in local / rural communities. That women and LGBTIQ persons must be included in the processes and active agents in the decision-making in this area. Job creation is often prioritized as a stabilizing measure, but women are often overlooked. The focus tends to be on economic opportunities for men.

WPS FUNDING

Increase focus/funding on networks for women peace facilitators/mediators (including putting pressure on African Union (AU), OSCE and other mediation bodies appointed women to lead peace processes)

It is important to ensure that flexibility with funding in humanitarian situations / crises is maintained.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

Reference to SEA but with more context and accounting for the critical and urgent need for a stronger focus on this with more defined goals and accountability measures for both Norway's military and police and Norway's support to the UN. Transparency on *confidential* case management and accountability should be prioritized in the NAPm guided by a survivor-centered approach.

Focus on improving SEA survivors' access to services, including medical, psychosocial, protection/shelter, legal, economic. SEA survivors have the right to access the same services as survivors of any other form of GBV and efforts should focus on prioritizing strengthening these services and facilitate access.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Discussions and action on the human security implications of climate change and how to directly address and support women, girls, and WHRDs, including by recognizing Norway's own contributions to climate change need to be prioritized and integrated throughout the NAP to reflect the necessary urgency. Recognition of and support to climate WHRDs / activists should also be included (see section above on WHRDs).

At this stage, the Forum plans to take this issue under further discussion and consideration to develop more informed, practical, and actionable input. Initially, though, the Forum finds it important that plans for research and support to WPS climate change initiatives already underway should be included in the NAP.

SMALL ARMS & LIGHT WEAPONS

Include references to SALW and the destabilizing effect they have in situations at risk for or experiencing conflict and crisis, and recognize the obligations arms producers, such as Norway, have in stemming the flow of SALW and meeting their commitments under relevant international laws and instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the Firearms Protocol, and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA)

PRIORITY COUNTRIES

Based on the findings from the evaluation of the implementation of the current NAP and experience from members of the Forum, it is recommended to phase out the WPS priority country list concept and focus on countries where Norway has real leverage for change.

ROLES & ACCOUNTABILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The current NAP doesn't indicate which ministry or other actors are responsible for what areas. This makes accountability and following up on specific areas challenging for civil society and others invested in ensuring the full implementation of the NAP.

The scopes of responsibility for the signatory ministries should be clearly stated in the forthcoming NAP.

Accountability measures and a detailed and time-bound implementation plan are essential to ensuring stronger, measurable, and meaningful implementation of the NAP. Regular ministry level and / or inter-ministry coordinated review processes with recommended actions throughout the implementation period should be integrated into the NAP.

It is important for the signatory ministries to designate time for meeting with civil society to have a space for questions and follow-up on the implementation of the NAP and on specific processes that come up (e.g. Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ukraine, gender/PSEA training in armed forces, WHRDs in exile etc.). The Forum recommends that the implementation plan includes details on how the ministries will coordinate and follow-up with civil society. The Forum recommends **two meetings** per year with the signatory ministries. The meetings will be planned for regular periods that are predictable / scheduled in advance - beginning and middle of the year, for example. It's important that the efforts are mutual and that civil society isn't solely responsible for initiating coordination.

ADDITIONAL INPUT

- In focus area four “ humanitarian efforts” clear goals and achievable targets are missing.
- Focus on accountability for implementation of the NAP. Include transparent measures to ensure accountability for direct actions Norway can take for its implementation
- A focus on the overall need for and support of demilitarization and for promoting political solutions
- A focus on supporting and promoting the rights of gender diverse people - using the experience of transwomen seeking to flee Ukraine as an example and lesson learned for how we can better support LGBTIQ persons
- Research opportunities for other organizations and Norwegian and other civil society organizations
- A clearer focus on leadership and accountability with clear methods for holding those allocated tasks responsible for carrying out their duties.
- Religious actors and religion unfortunately often play a part in conflicts. In NCA we focus on leveraging faith for positive change and believe that religious actors also can play a very positive role in peace processes and in sustaining peace. Moral norms can be strengthened and religious leaders can be mobilised to end impunity. Religious literacy is needed to interact with religious actors who play negative roles, and also to mobilise as allies religious actors who seek to play positive roles.

We would like to see a small side point on this included in the new NAP.