

Civil Society Advisory Panel recommendations for the 2018 revision of the NATO Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Policy and Action Plan

The Civil Society Advisory Panel (CSAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was established in 2016 to assist NATO to more systematically draw upon the insights and expertise of civil society, and to benefit from civil society contributions as it moves the agenda on WPS forward. The 28 members of the CSAP collectively offer extensive experience working on WPS in conflict affected countries; in developing, monitoring and evaluating WPS National Action Plans; and in engaging with NATO operations and missions. The CSAP was mandated upon its establishment to issue recommendations to NATO ahead of the proposed revision in 2018 of the *NATO/EAPC Policy for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions of 2014*, and the *NATO/EAPC Action Plan for the Implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy on Women, Peace and Security of 2016* (WPS Policy and Action Plan).

The CSAP welcomes the commitment expressed by NATO's leadership to advancing the WPS agenda within its work; the coordination offered by the Office of the Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security; NATO's willingness to learn from lessons in implementing WPS at the national level; and NATO's recognition of civil society's central role in promoting the WPS agenda. These and other strengths of the current WPS Policy and Action Plan – such as its focus on building internal capacities and structures – should be maintained in their next iteration.

The CSAP has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the current WPS Policy and Action Plan, having the opportunity during its October 2017 Annual Meeting for dialogue with a range of NATO officials, NATO staff and national representatives to NATO. The CSAP also drew upon our collective experience of working on WPS issues in numerous contexts and on multiple WPS action plans. The CSAP's following recommendations are directed to those NATO officials and staff responsible for working on revision of the WPS Policy and Action Plan; and to the NATO Allies and Partners members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

Accountability, political will and resources

The current WPS Policy and Action Plan's implementation is limited by a lack of dedicated budget, linking also to lack of capacity to deliver the Policy and Action Plan commitments. While 55 NATO Allies and Partners have pledged a strong commitment to the WPS agenda, this has not been followed by financial resources. For example, only three out of 55 nations that associated themselves with the WPS Action Plan have contributed to the WPS Trust Fund. The Office of the Secretary General's Special Representative for WPS (WPS Office) is largely staffed through Voluntary National Contributions, and NATO's core budget is not sufficiently directed to WPS work.

While there appears to be good awareness of the WPS Policy and Action Plan in parts of NATO Headquarters, a limited WPS profile at field and country levels has hindered widespread implementation and the building of political support beyond Brussels. This in part was because the current WPS Action Plan did not make sufficiently clear who was responsible for implementation and at what level. To ensure that there is buy-in, activities and implementation at all levels of NATO, the CSAP recommends that NATO:

- 1. Ensure accountability for implementing NATO's WPS commitments amongst all levels of senior management, building recognition that attention to WPS is everyone's responsibility;**

2. **Ensure the WPS Office is properly funded and staffed, including through core budgetary allocations;**
3. **Provide sufficient budget for regular impact assessments of WPS work and for gendered impact assessments of NATO operations and missions, for research on good practices and for collecting WPS-related data during missions;**
4. **Conduct a fresh independent assessment of implementation of WPS commitments in NATO-led operations and missions, as was done in 2012, and update the assessment every five years;**
5. **Ensure all senior NATO civilian and military officials and staff complete training on gender and WPS (see further recommendations in the section below on training).**

NATO's interaction with women's organisation and networks

The current WPS Policy and Action Plan do not adequately recognise the importance and role of civil society in achieving WPS objectives. Consultation with a broad range of civil society groups and representatives in target countries is key, but at present this consultation is erratic. Regular dialogue with civil society is vital to the effective implementation of WPS activities as it allows NATO to better understand local gendered conflict dynamics, the needs of women and girls in communities affected by conflict, and existing programmes of work on WPS. NATO's activities should aim to support the positions and initiatives of local women's organisations and networks for greater local and national impact. The CSAP recommend that the WPS Policy and Action Plan include commitments for NATO to:

6. **Establish or participate in consistent, coordinated systematic and inclusive national and local consultations with a diverse group of women's organisations;**
 - a. NATO should work with women's organisations and networks in particular to sensitise NATO personnel about the local culture.
 - b. Consultation with women's organisations should always be followed up, with reporting back on what steps were taken as a result of the input from women's organisations and further consultation to assess the impacts of such actions.
7. **Include a diverse range of organisations and networks in all evaluations and assessments of NATO-led operations and missions. Ensure that women's organisations are consulted in the annual progress reports and impact assessments for the WPS Policy and Action Plan;**
8. **Ensure that public meetings with local women's organisations, women's rights activists and women's human rights defenders are regularly included in visits by high-ranking NATO officials to conflict-affect countries/regions.**

Results-based design, indicators and reporting, including transparency

The technical design of the WPS Policy and Action Plan should be strengthened to be more measurable and focused on assessing effectiveness and impact of implementation. Together, the WPS Policy and Action Plan should set out a clear theory of change: i.e. clearly articulate the problem being addressed, state what NATO will do, and explain what changes are expected to happen as a result of NATO's actions. The current WPS Action Plan outlines an extensive series of inputs/"actions" and "indicators", but most indicators measure outputs rather than outcomes - meaning that they predominantly capture quantitative data on deliverables but do not capture the changes in attitudes and behaviours that *result* from the actions undertaken (i.e. the desired *outcomes*, and so progress towards the desired *impacts*). Further, in the WPS Action Plan, many of the actions listed do not obviously connect with the

stated outcomes, which complicates understanding the types of changes projected in the near, mid, and long-term. Without an understanding of projected changes, there is no clear vision of how NATO ultimately expects to achieve the WPS Action Plan's goals; nor guidance as to how NATO personnel should go about implementing WPS policy.

While the current WPS Action Plan includes a brief section on monitoring and reporting, it lacks a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan. As a result, it is unclear when and how the WPS Action Plan will be monitored and whether independent mid-term and final impact evaluations will be carried out.

To ensure the next WPS Policy and Action Plan are comprehensive, transparent and measurable, the CSAP recommend that NATO:

9. Articulate intended impact:

- a. Tier desired results in short, mid, and long-term outcomes for each of the outcome areas included in the WPS Action Plan. Define clear outcomes by making them SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) and focus on the intended impact of the WPS Action Plan on conflict-affected women.
- b. Specify outcome-level indicators that can be used to approximate impact for each of the short, mid, and long-term outcomes, noting that qualitative assessment is essential to WPS monitoring and evaluation.
- c. Conduct a baseline assessment to inform and set targets for each indicator.
- d. Provide sufficient and consistent budget for robust monitoring and evaluation across the life of the WPS Policy and Action Plan.

10. Specify reporting requirements:

- a. Clarify a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan that includes intervals for regular reporting from NATO components, the scope of those reports, and processes for conducting independent mid-term and final impact evaluations (including annual reporting on the indicators).
- b. Make all annual progress reports on WPS, including that of the Secretary General's Special Representative for WPS, available to the CSAP and other civil society stakeholders.

11. Enhance common understanding of monitoring & evaluation terms:

- a. Define key monitoring and evaluation terms such as "outcome," "output", and "outcome indicator," coupled with WPS-specific examples of each.
- b. Offer training for NATO WPS staff and Gender Advisors on developing monitoring and evaluation plans for WPS.
- c. Develop templates for the annual reporting on the indicators and offer training to respondents on data collection and analysis and the use of outcome-level indicators.

NATO's understanding of WPS/gender terminology

The current WPS Policy and Action Plan lack clear articulation of terms such as 'Women, Peace and Security', 'gender' and 'gender perspectives'. It is important that there is a common and consistent understanding of such terms within NATO, including across civilian and military sides; that terms are not used interchangeably, recognising that each has connected but different goals and requires different skills and activities. If WPS is not meaningfully understood, its application in NATO's work risks becoming merely superficial and failing to address the root causes of conflict and gender inequality. For instance, the Women, Peace and Security policy agenda is firmly centred upon the prevention of conflict. Yet, this emphasis is missing from NATO's WPS Policy and Action Plan, and

references to the importance of women's participation in these documents are not clearly linked to conflict prevention.

To ensure that the terminology used in the updated WPS Policy and Action Plan is clear, and effectively understood by all (inside and outside of NATO), the CSAP recommends that NATO:

12. Review and clarify key terms relating to WPS/gender so that they are consistent with global good practice on WPS.

13. Ensure the integration of WPS/gender perspectives and key terms into analysis and policy development around emerging security challenges such as: human trafficking, displacement/migration and preventing/countering violent extremism, in line with global good practice on WPS (see further recommendations in the section below on training).

NATO's progress on WPS training and capacity building

The WPS Action Plan regards education, training and exercises as "cross-cutting enablers"; and "essential tools in raising awareness" and to "foster change in mindset and behaviour". Currently, there are challenges, notably to 'mainstreaming' gender analysis and perspectives in specific functions, as well as in the take-up of WPS priorities at senior leadership level. Furthermore, the military side is more advanced than the civilian in the development and implementation of gender courses and guidelines.

The WPS Action Plan also has ambitions to "connect to/involve civil society in education, training and exercises", but it does not specify how or in relation to which topics. It is generally accepted that there are certain thematic priorities in the WPS agenda where the involvement of civil society in training not only has an added value but may be necessary to meet WPS commitments. Thematic priorities which coincide with civil society expertise most obviously include: protection of civilians, prevention of gender and sexual based violence, prevention of violent extremism from a human security perspective, community engagement, context awareness and gender sensitive analysis, and the relevance of human security to the WPS agenda.

Civil society can also contribute in strengthening the methodology of training and its evaluation. This can include bringing the understanding that training on gender is more than just technical knowledge, as it aims to change attitudes and behaviour. Civil society can be well placed to introduce ideas that challenge attitudes and support reflection; for example, considering masculinities, and power dynamics in the classroom. The CSAP recommends that NATO:

14. Clearly identify and acknowledge the added value of involving civil society in specific areas of gender training and education, and develop operational guidance for strategic collaboration with civil society on training and education:

- a. Draw from civil society input, as well as existing guidance on engagement with civil society from other intergovernmental agencies, such as UN DPKO.
- b. Spell out a clear understanding of the added value of civil society, in particular women's organisations, in relation to gender training, and integrate guidance on understanding/awareness of civil society in training curricula wherever relevant.
- c. Make clear and transparent criteria for identifying and selecting civil society partners as Subject Matter Experts and training partners.
- d. Adopt a 'Do No Harm' approach and build awareness of why civil society might be hesitant to engage with militaries.
- e. Involve civil society in the full training and education cycle: from needs assessment, to planning through to evaluation.

- f. Revise the resourcing rules: for Subject Matter Experts to play a full role they need to be compensated for their time beyond expenses.

15. Integrate a feminist approach to training methodologies, recognising dynamics such as masculinities and power dynamics both in and beyond the 'classroom'.

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