



# Towards Full Implementation of WPS Agenda in Viet Nam

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REPORT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE  
POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF VIET NAM'S  
FIRST NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON  
WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY



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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was commissioned by UN Women under the regional project Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Preventing Violence and Promoting Social Cohesion in ASEAN with the generous support of the Governments of Canada, Republic of Korea, Australia and the United Kingdom. The research was conducted by Mr. Mirsad Miki Jacevic, an Independent Expert on Women, Peace and Security. The report aims to provide best practices and recommendations for the development of the first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP on WPS) in Viet Nam. The findings may be referred by other countries for the development of NAP on WPS.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### AUTHOR:

Mirsad Miki Jacevic

### STRATEGIC GUIDANCE AND SUBSTANTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS:

- Ryce Chanchai, ASEAN Governance, Peace and Security Programme Lead **(UN Women)**
- Cristina Fernandez Escorza, Programme Coordination Specialist, ASEAN WPS **(UN Women)**
- Vu Thu Hong, Programme Analyst **(UN Women)**



## ACRONYMS

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>AMAN</b>    | Asian Muslim Action Network (Indonesia)                                    |
| <b>APEC</b>    | Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation  |
| <b>APSC</b>    | Political-Security Community of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| <b>ASEAN</b>   | Association of Southeast Asian Nations                                     |
| <b>CEDAW</b>   | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| <b>CSO</b>     | Civil Society Organizations  |
| <b>DOLISA</b>  | Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Vietnam)                |
| <b>GAC</b>     | Global Affairs Canada  |
| <b>GBV</b>     | Gender-Based Violence  |
| <b>GRB</b>     | Gender-Responsive Budgeting  |
| <b>IRCC</b>    | Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada                               |
| <b>LAP</b>     | Local Action Plans   |
| <b>M&amp;E</b> | Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| <b>MDAs</b>    | Ministries, Departments and Agencies                                       |
| <b>MOFA</b>    | Ministry of Foreign Affairs  |
| <b>MOLISA</b>  | Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs                            |

## ACRONYMS

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>MoU</b>        | Memorandum of Understanding  |
| <b>MPS</b>        | Ministry of Public Security  |
| <b>NAP</b>        | National Action Plan   |
| <b>NGO</b>        | Non-Governmental Organization  |
| <b>RAN P3AKS</b>  | National Action Plan on Women and Children Protection and Empowerment in Social Conflict |
| <b>RBM</b>        | Results-Based Management   |
| <b>SDGs</b>       | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| <b>TOR</b>        | Terms of Reference   |
| <b>UGX</b>        | Uganda Shilling  |
| <b>UN</b>         | United Nations   |
| <b>UNSC</b>       | United Nations Security Council  |
| <b>UNSCR 1325</b> | United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325  |
| <b>VCP</b>        | Vietnamese Communist Party   |
| <b>WPS</b>        | Women, Peace and Security  |

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## FOREWORD

Through the landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) - UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 (UNSCR 1325), and the UNSC's subsequent resolutions, the UNSC has urged Member States to commit to implementing them as responsible duty bearers to address the four WPS pillars to ensure prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery for women and girls in conflict and post-conflict contexts. By actualizing UNSCR 1325 through national action plans (NAPs) on WPS, Member States demonstrate their commitments to localizing UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent resolutions in their national plans and strategies, and ultimately, into action.

Viet Nam played a leading role in proposing and passing UNSCR 1889 in 2009, one of the most critical resolutions concerning WPS. Viet Nam drafted the UN resolution, chaired the debates and championed the WPS agenda in the Security Council during this period. UNSCR 1889 was the first resolution to respond to the needs of women and girls in post-conflict periods.

In December 2020, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, Viet Nam hosted the global WPS Conference, resulting in a 75 UN Member States-endorsed document, the Hanoi Commitment to Action, recommitting to the implementation of the WPS agenda. Two subsequent international workshops in December 2021 and March 2022, organized by UN Women and the Viet Nam Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), shared global best practices of NAPs on WPS. The workshops also resulted in valuable recommendations and a roadmap for the development of Viet Nam's own NAP on WPS, showcasing the Government's commitment to identifying a high-impact framework to further advance the implementation of the WPS agenda in the country.

In this process, UN Women has provided its contribution through a comparative analysis of NAPs on WPS to enable the understanding among the Government and related agencies on WPS and to assist the Government to craft a NAP that is effective and relevant to the country's context and furthers existing efforts to implement the WPS Agenda. The analysis examines six NAPs around the world as high-impact models for Viet Nam's strategic consideration, specifically considering the justification, rationale, and roadmap for a NAP for Viet Nam. With its essential findings and recommendations, the report became a crucial document to feed into ongoing dialogues on NAPs as well as a resource to propose effective and cohesive NAP models for the country.

The author of this report, Mr Mirsad Miki Jacevic, is a peacebuilding practitioner with over 25 years of experience in conflict prevention, the WPS agenda and transitional justice issues. We want to thank Mr Jacevic for preparing this comparative analysis report for UN Women and Viet Nam's MOFA. It provides a careful analysis of the country's context related to the actualization of the WPS agenda, justifications and options for a high-impact NAP and a general roadmap that will help to facilitate preparations for a national action plan. We would also like to thank the governments of Canada, the Republic of Korea, Australia and the United Kingdom for supporting the development of this report.

**Elisa Fernandez Saenz**  
Representative of UN Women Viet Nam

## INTRODUCTION

After waves of successful political and economic reforms under Đổi Mới,<sup>1</sup> first launched in 1986, Viet Nam is now considered one of the most dynamic emerging countries in the East Asia region.<sup>2</sup> With its rapid economic development and long-lasting political stability, the country has taken a growing role on the world stage in furthering peace and security and is expected to play an even bolder and more prominent role in the years to come.

In recent years, Viet Nam's successful hosting of various high-profile international events has demonstrated its stronger commitment to peace and reconciliation and to advancing the women peace and security (WPS) agenda in international and regional forums. Regionally, Viet Nam has been a driving force in advancing the WPS agenda in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Results include a strengthened commitment from ASEAN to the promotion of the WPS agenda, the adoption of a joint statement on the promotion of WPS and the enhanced contribution of troops by ASEAN Member States to UN peacekeeping missions. Viet Nam has also made earnest efforts to implement measures to advance gender equality domestically. Current laws have provided a fundamental framework to promote women's participation in the political arena as well as eliminate violence against women (VAW).

In this context, development of a national action plan (NAP) of the WPS agenda presents a unique opportunity for Viet Nam to deepen engagement and action on delivering transformative change for women and girls in the country and beyond, and to emphasize its position as a lead actor on peace and security at regional and international levels.

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1 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%90%E1%BB%95i\\_M%E1%BB%9Bi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%90%E1%BB%95i_M%E1%BB%9Bi)

2 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/vietnam>

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS REPORT

The main objectives of this report are to: a) review six NAPs to implement global, regional and national normative frameworks on WPS that can inform the NAP path for Viet Nam. More precisely, this report seeks to evaluate how the plans have intersected the pillars of the WPS agenda and how their lessons learned can be applied to the Vietnamese context, and b) to propose a feasible and effective road map for the building of a NAP for the period 2021-2030 drawing from existing Viet Nam priorities.

Ultimately, the report is expected to generate a process to develop the NAP, including responses to these three guiding questions:

- 1 What would be the most effective approach for Viet Nam to develop a feasible and effective WPS NAP?
- 2 What type of resources and collaboration are effective, and which focal ministries/ implementation modalities are best positioned to enhance effective implementation?
- 3 What accountability mechanisms need to be developed to ensure monitoring and reporting on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325)?

## STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 1 **Section 1 – Analysis of NAP models relevant to Viet Nam’s context**  
The purpose of this section is to provide a review and analysis of global lessons learned in designing an NAP in order to support the Viet Nam Government’s development of its first NAP.
- 2 **Section 2 – Existing WPS priorities and rationale for Viet Nam’s NAP**  
This section considers national frameworks relevant to the development of the WPS agenda. The chapter concludes with an assessment of current opportunities and advantages to developing a NAP in Viet Nam.
- 3 **Section 3 – Way forward**  
A number of mechanisms to build collaborative action with a range of strategic partners are proposed for consideration in the concluding section, including a proposed road map for the development of a NAP for Viet Nam.

It should be noted that the purpose of the draft report was not to develop a logical framework but rather to review effective practices and challenges and synthesize helpful recommendations for the possible development of Viet Nam’s first NAP.

# SECTION 1

## ANALYSIS OF NAP MODELS RELEVANT TO VIET NAM'S CONTEXT

### I. Global Context: Status of the Implementation of the WPS Agenda – Progress and Challenges

Twenty-one years ago the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1325 (2000). Promoting women as equal participants in all aspects of international peace and security and highlighting the continued targeting of women for egregious abuses in conflict situations, the resolution marked the shift towards a new security paradigm stressing the need to integrate gendered and inclusive approaches to sustainable peace and development. Since its adoption, nine other Security Council resolutions have been adopted,<sup>3</sup> emphasizing, on the one hand, the importance of women's participation in crisis resolution, stabilization and reconstruction mechanisms and, on the other hand, prevention and the protection of women against sexual violence as a weapon of war.

**FIGURE 1: United Nations Security Council Resolutions about Women, Peace and Security**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>UNSCR 1820 (2008)</b>   | <b>UNSCR 2122 (2013)</b>  |
| Recognizes conflict-related sexual violence is a tactic of war, calls for training of troops on GBV and more women to peace operations | Calls for women's participation in peace talks, increases resources for women in conflict zones, and acknowledges civil society |
| <b>UNSCR 1888 (2009)</b>   | <b>UNSCR 2242 (2015)</b>  |
| Calls for deployment of military and gender experts to conflict areas, and for improved monitoring and reporting                       | Highlights role of women in CVE and role of women in other emerging fields  |

<sup>3</sup> These resolutions are: 1325 (2000); 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019).

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>UNSCR 1889 (2009)</b>   | <b>UNSCR 2467 (2019)</b>  |
| Calls for global indicators on 1325, and improvement of responses to the need of women in conflict and post-conflict | Recognizes GBV in conflict, and the need for survivor-centered approach and prioritization of vulnerable groups           |
| <b>UNSCR 1960 (2010)</b>   | <b>UNSCR 2493 (2019)</b>  |
| Calls for end of sexual violence in a armed conflict, provides measures to end impunity of perpetrators of GBV       | Urges members to recommit to WPS agenda, and calls for equal participation of women in addressing GBV and in peacekeeping |
| <b>UNSCR 2106 (2013)</b>   | <b>UNSCR 2538 (2020)</b>  |
| Provides operation guidance on addressing GBV and calls for Women Protection Advisers                                | Calls for meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women in peacekeeping operations                             |

Adopted in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, SDGs 5 and 16, underscore the inextricable linkages between sustainable development, peace and security, placing gender equality at the core of the SDGs agenda. Since the SDGs came into force on 1 January 2016, countries such as Viet Nam have put forward implementation strategies to achieve the goals by December 2030. The SDGs agenda provides important frameworks for advancing WPS and connecting it to wider development and peace and security commitments and processes.

Viet Nam has developed a legal framework to ensure formal gender equality through the ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1982. General Recommendation 30 of CEDAW, on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, indicates specific obligations of Member States to eliminate discrimination against women in conflict-affected settings.<sup>4</sup> General Recommendation No. 37 on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change is also highly relevant.<sup>5</sup> The CEDAW reporting cycle provides important frameworks for advancing WPS and connecting it to the wider gender equality framework in Viet Nam.

To ensure the realization of the WPS agenda at national level, the focus in recent years has been on the creation and implementation of NAPs. These strategies are a means for States to internalize the WPS agenda and translate their commitments into executable, measurable and accountable actions.

<sup>4</sup> Available at <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=CEDAW%2FC%2FGC%2F30&Language=E&Device-Type=Desktop&LangRequested=False>.

<sup>5</sup> Available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1\\_Global/CEDAW\\_C\\_GC\\_37\\_8642\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_37_8642_E.pdf)



## II. NAP models: Six countries in focus

Translation of the WPS agenda into national policies largely depends on a country's context. NAPs developed by donor countries are characteristically outward-looking and tend to implement WPS provisions through their foreign policy, specifically through their relations with conflict-affected recipient partner countries. Meanwhile, post-conflict and conflict-affected countries are more likely to focus on implementing the WPS agenda in their domestic political context. The focus of an NAP will have implications for the plan itself. For example, for an outward-looking NAP, planning and implementation are typically led by the foreign affairs ministry, while in the case of an inward-looking NAP the plan is typically led by the ministry of gender or social affairs. In some cases, the ministry of security and interior can assume the leading role in designing and implementing the NAP.

Viet Nam, which is not a fragile conflict/crisis-affected country, is at the crossroads of these different models. The WPS is relevant both to the country's national priorities and its aspiration to promote peace and stability at home and abroad.

This section analyses six experiences of developing NAPs representing different models that are aligned to Viet Nam's context. The information presented below is not exhaustive; it is intended to highlight examples of good practices that might be of assistance to the potential development of Viet Nam's first NAP. After presenting the high-impact framework methodology, the section concludes with a list of recommendations relevant to Viet Nam's context and aimed at achieving a high-impact framework.

### A. Outward-facing, donor-focused NAPs

The most common challenge of outward-facing, donor-focused NAPs is monitoring and reporting. It is hard to find the balance between accountability, on the one hand, and ensuring tangible change for people in partner countries, on the other. A common pattern in many donor nations has been that even when monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks were in place, actual monitoring and reporting were limited due to insufficient internal resources and commitments.

The idea that the WPS framework applies differently to conflict-affected and non-conflict States has been increasingly challenged by the growing prevalence of threats such as natural disasters, planetary environmental risks, climate change, a large and growing global population and refugee migrations beyond national borders. These non-traditional security threats and the changing security environment increasingly require States to implement the WPS framework at home.

The most recent NAPs of Norway and Canada are recognized as best practices and have started to recognize the importance of addressing domestic priorities related to gender, peace and security.

## CANADA

In 2011 Canada was among the first 30 countries to develop a NAP on WPS. Launched in 2017, its second plan was developed by Government stakeholders in consultation with civil society and academic experts. In line with the WPS agenda, Canada aims to increase the role of women in peace negotiations, conflict prevention and post-conflict State-building. In addition, it provides for training police and peacekeepers in gender equality.<sup>8</sup>

The Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, launched in 2017, and the appointment of Canada's first Ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security in 2019 are further evidence of the country's determination to continue to improve, innovate and strengthen approaches internationally and domestically.

As will be discussed further below, Canada's second action plan (2017-2022) evidenced a more progressive approach focusing on national responsibilities.

### Emerging Best Practices

#### 1. Increased domestic focus

As part of its NAP on WPS, Canada has committed to deepening implementation of the WPS agenda domestically by addressing the needs of female refugees and asylum seekers as well as the insecurity of Indigenous women and girls. It acknowledges the condition of Indigenous women as targets of WPS implementation, and the historical neglect and erosion of the rights of Indigenous people, especially women. While this represents another significant step forward for Canada in reflecting on its racist colonial past, translation of these commitments into policy strategies has been difficult and imperfect.

#### 2. Implementing partners

While the second Canadian NAP gives Global Affairs Canada (GAC) the responsibility of coordinating implementation, it also identifies "lead" and "supporting" partners. The supporting partners are Public Safety Canada, Women and Gender Equality Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and the Department of Justice. These entities are charged with domestic implementation of the WPS agenda within their mandates. This is one of the most compelling examples of a NAP in a non-conflict-affected country that connects foreign with domestic policy.

#### 3. Champions and focal points

Each lead department created the role of WPS Champion to advance implementation of the action plan. Champions have the responsibility of leading internal advocacy, function as key resources on the agenda and ensure the coherence of the department's strategy. In addition, the NAP has established a WPS focal point system to assist in mainstreaming WPS issues in policies and in reporting on implementation. As evidenced by the midterm evaluation of the NAP conducted in 2021 by GAC, these are two important, effective and strategic institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the action plan.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Action Plan available at: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Canadas-National-Action-Plan-2017-2022.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Gender Associations, Mid-term Review of Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. October 2021.

#### 4. Formalized involvement of civil society

Civil society was involved from the planning phases of Canada's second NAP. Committed to amplifying and formalizing this cooperation, the Government established the Action Plan Advisory Group, co-chaired by civil society, to "improve progress monitoring through a continuous dialogue between civil society experts and Government officials who are responsible for implementing the action plan." The terms of reference (TOR) of the advisory group were developed jointly by the Government and the Women, Peace, and Security Network-Canada. This constitutes a notable example of a formalized relationship between Government and civil society, and has provided an effective means for civil society to meaningfully engage in the reporting of the NAP. The advisory group meets bi-annually to address NAP progress as set out in the annual progress report and holds two additional meetings to discuss specific themes. However, its meetings are not perceived as a learning opportunity for deeper engagement but rather as a service of the reporting function.

### NORWAY

Norway is recognized globally as a WPS champion, both normatively and financially. It was one of the first UN Member States to adopt a NAP on WPS in 2006 and has played an active role in promoting this agenda internationally. More recently, WPS has been highlighted as a thematic priority of Norway's membership in the Security Council for the period 2021-2022.

Norway adopted its fourth NAP in 2019. It is preceded by three other NAPs, adopted in 2006, 2011 and 2015.<sup>10</sup> The NAP was developed by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group, which comprised the ministries of Foreign Affairs; Defence; International Development; Justice, Security and Immigration; and Children and Equality.

#### Emerging best practices & lessons learned

##### 1. Clear objectives and increased domestic focus

A weakness of early NAPs was that they often sought to cover the breadth of the WPS agenda while approaching each issue superficially. Norway's fourth NAP chose to emphasize only four overarching objectives of WPS:

- a. Peace and reconciliation processes;
- b. Implementation of peace agreements;
- c. Operations and missions;
- d. Humanitarian efforts.

Similar to that of Canada, Norway's plan features implementation of the WPS agenda both internationally and domestically. It includes substantive emphasis on implementing the WPS agenda domestically, through a focus on women asylum seekers, radicalization and VAW in Norway. Additionally, an entire section of the NAP is devoted specifically to women, gender and violent extremism.

<sup>10</sup> Action plan available at [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/historical-archive/solbergs-government/andre-dokumenter/ud/2019/plan\\_wps/id2625029/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/historical-archive/solbergs-government/andre-dokumenter/ud/2019/plan_wps/id2625029/).

## 2. Focus on selected countries

Both in its third and fourth NAPs, Norway selected a small number of priority countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, Mali, Mozambique (added in late 2019), Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, South Sudan and Syria. This approach aims to maximize the impact of WPS efforts by focusing resources and activities on a small number of selected countries.

A potential downfall, however, is that WPS principles may not be applied outside of the NAP's priority countries – it has been a challenge for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to keep track of many other WPS efforts that are not focused on the key countries. On the other hand, the chosen countries, Afghanistan and Syria for example, remain the most difficult contexts in which it is often impractical – and now in the case of Afghanistan even impossible – to run WPS programming, so there are significant drawbacks to this system.

## 3. Inclusive and participatory design

The design of the fourth action plan was the outcome of dialogue with key partners and internal consultation processes. The NAP was drawn up in a collaboration between all ministries responsible for its implementation: Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice and Public Security, and Children and Equality. In addition, research institutes, such as the Norwegian Police University College, the Norwegian Defence University College and the Peace Research Institute Oslo, contributed to its development. Four meetings were held with civil society.

## 4. Annual reporting focused on learning

The annual reporting exercise is the opportunity for the Government to analyse the results of the NAP. The annual report presents Norway's successes and shortcomings in implementing the action plan by reviewing each indicator in the results framework. Country narratives are included to complement quantitative data and illustrate impact at the country level in each of the 10 selected countries, plus the African Union. Reporting also includes a section on special grants for civil society organizations (CSOs) working on ensuring women's participation and rights in peace and reconciliation efforts. It is worth noting, however, that only ministries are listed as parties reporting on implementation. Civil society is not mentioned in the NAP's monitoring and reporting section.

## B. Inward-looking NAP in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries

A NAP not only takes forward the WPS agenda. As evidence suggests, NAPs are critical in reducing a country's gender gap, which in turn generates increased stability and fosters long-term peace. UNSCR 1325 is pertinent both in terms of maintaining the internal stability of states and contributing to the establishment of a non-violent culture and multi-ethnic dialogue.

Conflict and post-conflict countries are confronted with a unique set of challenges when developing and implementing their NAPs. First, the Government's ability to fully finance its commitments under the action plan is likely to be limited. Also, implementation of NAPs in post-conflict states is hampered by a variety of other factors, such as lack of capacity and absence of political will.

Earlier NAPs in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries typically focused on addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and increasing women's participation in politics without recognizing the key role played by women in the peacebuilding process in many of the affected regions. Recent NAPs, such as Sudan's first NAP and Uganda's third action plan, have however made a conscious effort to involve women peacebuilders and ensure that the NAP effectively responds to the needs of all stakeholders to ensure sustainable peace.

### UGANDA

After decades of colonial rule by the British Empire, Uganda gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1962. The country experienced a military dictatorship from 1971 until 1979, followed by a civil war that lasted until 1986, as well as a protracted conflict between the Government and the Lord's Resistance Army, which has been ongoing since 1987.<sup>11</sup>

Uganda recently adopted its third NAP, for the period 2021-2025. In 2008, it was one of the first post-conflict countries to develop an action plan, and the continuity of Uganda's NAPs since then demonstrates its political will and commitment to the WPS agenda.<sup>12</sup>

Like many inward-looking plans, the Ugandan NAP is embedded in national frameworks and domestic-level policies related to women's issues and post-conflict reconstruction processes. The road map of the third NAP was informed by the review and evaluation of the two previous action plans (2008 and 2011-2015) and applies the high-impact NAP methodology (see III, Best practices and lessons learned).

11 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/uganda/northern-uganda-understanding-and-solving-conflict>.

12 Action plan available at <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/document/uganda-nap-2021-2025/>.

## Emerging best practices

### 1. Comprehensive governance framework

To coordinate the implementation of the NAP, Uganda has established a particularly comprehensive governance framework. Applying lessons learned from good practices in other countries, it set up a three-tier coordination mechanism to ensure synergies between and among all stakeholders among Government and non-state actors. The structure of the three-tier coordination mechanism is as follows:

- a. The inter-ministerial, high-level National Steering Committee supports the NAP implementation process and provides strategic policy guidance;
- b. The National Technical Committee meets quarterly to share and document progress on NAP implementation, identify lessons learned and address emerging issues;
- c. The NAP secretariat ensures the tracking of results, coordination of joint activities, management of adequate information flow among partners and a Trust Fund.

### 2. Localization strategy and awareness-raising

Civil society and state partners, as well as women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and engaged, non-traditional stakeholders such as religious leaders, were involved from the beginning of the drafting process through in-depth consultations.

To foster local ownership and achieve meaningful change at the community level, the NAP is implemented through a localization strategy across different sectors. The guiding principle is a bottom-up approach to policy making and implementation, which emphasizes local ownership and participation. It includes national and local government ministries, departments and agencies, CSOs, faith-based organizations, media and private partners. In addition, to build awareness of the NAP a communication plan was created and partners have been encouraged to develop communication activities.

### 3. Innovative approach to new and emerging security threats

By emphasizing change at community level, the NAP has moved away from the traditional, militarized concept of national security and shifted the focus to civilian safety and protection from all forms of violence. The action plan addresses women's daily security concerns, including prevention and protection from GBV and discrimination, violent extremism, natural and economic resources, natural disasters and viral diseases.

Medium-term outcomes on natural and human-made disasters prevented and mitigated of the NAP<sup>13</sup> are:

- a. Increased women's involvement in environment conservation, natural resource management and climate change mitigation;
- b. Improved meaningful participation of women refugees and host communities in decision-making for peaceful co-existence;
- c. Increased participation of women in reduction of violent extremism;

<sup>13</sup> <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Uganda-2021-2025.pdf>.

- d. Increased women's leadership in the prevention and mitigation of emerging viral diseases in vulnerable communities.

#### 4. Monitoring and reporting system and identified and allocated resources

The M&E plan is led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, and supported by the Office of the Prime Minister, while the National Technical Committee is charged with providing technical guidance. At the time of this writing, the NAP financing mechanism is being constructed, but it will include both domestic and international financial, technical and human resources support. For example, the Embassy of Norway will support the implementation process (via its ongoing contributions to the UN Women country office) with about US\$3 million over the next four years; the Embassy of Ireland will support localization strategies estimated at about \$1 million, and other nations will either support specific NAP outcomes (programmes and projects) while Sweden will use its core contributions to the UN Women country office to support the secondment of staff across various ministries and the secretariat. In addition, with the involvement and support of the Office of the Prime Minister and the ministries of finance and planning, there is an intention to support some ministerial efforts with dedicated funding, building on already provided human resources dedicated to WPS functions and NAP implementation.

The M&E plan lays out performance indicators for each core and medium-term outcome. The source of information and the actors involved are also stipulated. The output of each medium-term outcome is given an estimated cost, along with a subtotal for each outcome. For example, under core outcome 2: 'Good governance enhanced at all levels', medium-term Outcome 1 is 'Increased participation of women in decision-making in the security sector.' It has the following costs associated (p. 38):

- a. Gender policies across all security sector institutions passed: 2,035,000,000 UGX;
- b. Increased knowledge and awareness of security sector leadership on the transformative role of women's participation: 827,068,000 UGX;
- c. Systems and structures for the implementation of gender policies in security sector institutions are strengthened: 750,000,000 UGX.
- d. M&E is also allocated at a cost of 2,682,923,648 UGX. The total budget comes to 90,570,166,912 UGX.

Every year, the National Technical Committee invites civil society, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), and district local governments to share inputs on NAP implementation in their respective mandate to the NAP secretariat. Based on the inputs collected, the committee develops an overall annual progress report. This report is then shared with relevant key stakeholders, including members of parliament, civil society, the media and the general public.

In addition, the NAP provides for a mid-term review to be conducted in 2023 and an in-depth external evaluation in the final year of implementation. The Government allocated a budget for these evaluation processes during development of the action plan.

## SUDAN

Sudan experienced three decades of brutal dictatorship and long episodes of conflict, including a devastating civil war between the north and south that led to the secession of South Sudan and violence in Darfur.<sup>14</sup> CSOs have taken the lead in strengthening women's participation in peace processes, however women have been systematically excluded from peace negotiations.<sup>15</sup>

Sudan adopted its first NAP in March 2020 for the period 2020-2022.<sup>16</sup> Its implementation is funded by the Norwegian Embassy in Khartoum and is the result of a joint initiative between the Ministry of Labour and Social Development with the Geneva Institute for Human Rights. The adoption of the NAP represents a welcome step towards integrating the WPS agenda into reconstruction and peacebuilding processes.

The NAP has three overarching goals:

1. Actively involving women in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, peace negotiations and decision-making processes at all levels, and in relief, reconstruction and development;
2. Promote the recognition of women's rights before, during and after armed conflict;
3. Ensure the protection of women against any form of GBV and end impunity.

### Emerging best practices & lessons learned

#### 1. Participatory process of development and implementation of the NAP

Initial phases of development of the NAP included consultations between the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the Geneva Institute of Human Rights and CSOs. Similarly, Sudan's NAP has taken a participatory and inclusive approach to implementation. Each pillar of the action plan includes a list of implementing bodies, among them ministries, CSOs, universities and academic institutions, the Women's Commission and the Central Bank of Sudan.

The participatory process not only ensures wider ownership of the plan, but it also raised awareness and recognition of women's roles in peacebuilding amongst different stakeholders. The October 2021 coup and the ongoing conflict have made the NAP particularly relevant as they have resulted in the development of an open dialogue about the links between VAW, peace and security and sustainable development among decision-makers and policymakers at the national and local level, in the security sector and civil society.

#### 2. The role of international institutions and donor countries in supporting the development of the NAP in conflict countries

Securing financial and technical support from the international donor community is essential for conflict-affected countries to realize the WPS agenda. In the extremely difficult militarized context of Sudan, the Norwegian Embassy in Khartoum and

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/december-alerts-and-november-trends#sudan>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/situation-sudan-and-activities-united-nations-integrated-transition-assistance-0>.

<sup>16</sup> Available at: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/document/sudan-2020-2022/>.

the Geneva Institute for Human Rights have played a crucial role in supporting the collective efforts of Government and civil society, and have collaborated for the sake of enhancing implementation of the NAP. The action plan currently lacks a budget, however it states that implementation will be funded by the Norwegian Embassy. The UN Women country office planned to mobilize support from the embassies of Sweden, Canada and the US but, the current situation in the country has effectively put all those plans on hold.

### 3. NAP as a framework to translate gender equality commitments into policy reform

The NAP builds on existing national policy and normative frameworks linked to gender equality, peace and the development agenda, which already exist in the national/local contexts. It provides an important framework for a comprehensive legal reform process to abolish discriminatory laws against women and to ensure women's full participation in decision-making, negotiations, peacemaking and construction and reconstruction projects. The first outcome is to "align Sudanese laws with international and regional instruments to which Sudan is a party, with a view to providing more protection to women and girls."

While the process is still in the initial stages, as part of its formal commitment to achieving gender equality, the Government of Sudan has adopted and ratified a number of regional, sub-regional and international conventions and legal frameworks that promote gender equality and non-discrimination, including CEDAW.

## C. Mixed models

### INDONESIA

#### Indonesia's inward-looking and outward-looking approaches to advancement of the WPS agenda

Indonesia's commitments combine inward-looking and outward-looking approaches to the advancement of the WPS agenda: Indonesia's first and second-generation NAPs, adopted respectively in 2014 and 2021, and the policy of increasing women's participation in peacekeeping, under the leadership of Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi in President Joko Widodo's administration (since 2014). The mixed nature of Indonesia's WPS engagement is particularly relevant for the Viet Nam context, as it approaches women, peace and security at the national, regional and international level, including via a contribution to UN peacekeeping operations. Viet Nam's WPS context will be explored in greater detail in section 2.

#### 1. International commitment

Integration of the WPS agenda in Indonesia's foreign policy started in March 2015, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the implementation of gender mainstreaming and protection of women and children in Indonesia's foreign affairs and policies.

In 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the pledge in the Indonesian Road map Vision to provide 4,000 peacekeepers to UN missions encompassed Indonesia's commitment to implement the WPS agenda by increasing the number of Indonesian female peacekeepers. That same year, the Government also took the initiative to establish the Southeast Asian Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators to enhance the WPS agenda in the region.

## **2. Presidential decree – “NAP”**

Indonesia adopted a presidential decree on the protection of women and children during the civil conflict in 2014. In 2021, the Government issued the second generation NAP for Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children in Social Conflict 2020-2025 (RAN P3AKS II). While the NAP on social conflict is widely referred to as NAP-WPS, it should be noted that it represents a much narrower interpretation of the WPS agenda. The NAP is led by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection.

Indonesia's NAP is inward-oriented and focuses primarily on the domestic application of the WPS agenda. The NAP is structured around the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 and lists four primary objectives to implement the WPS agenda: conflict prevention, relief and recovery, women's empowerment and children's participation.

### **Emerging best practices**

#### **1. Localizing the NAP**

During the implementation phase, efforts to localize the first NAP resulted in the establishment of local action plans (LAPs) in 15 conflict-prone provinces. The process of localization allowed for the empowering of local communities to shape the WPS agenda, by both strengthening the decision-making capacities of local women leaders and raising awareness of local populations about it.

However, localization of the NAP poses particular challenges, in part because development of local action plans differs vastly from one region to another. For example, in some regions where plans were developed, the responsible parties highlighted a lack of funds for their implementation. It remains crucial to ensure sufficient resources and to build the capacity of local actors to monitor and evaluate implementation of these plans.

#### **2. The role of civil society in advancing WPS**

As noted, the focus of the NAP (RAN P3AKS) had relatively limited scope for the WPS agenda and was limited to addressing social conflicts. During its drafting, human rights activists and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) disparaged the inclusion in the NAP of military institutions being involved in 'conflict cessation.'

Civil society has played a crucial role in advancing the WPS agenda in Indonesia, increasing collaborating with the Government. For instance, the NAP for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism 2021-2024 contains an extensive provision around gender-responsive conflict prevention as well as a Working Group on Women and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism, which were established as a

result of collaboration between Government and civil society.

More recently, the faith-based organization Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN), in collaboration with the Government, held a public national digital consultation to review NAP implementation. The consultation has had a significant role in scaling up the action plan to include more complex issues, in particular its intersections with climate change, violent extremism and the pandemic. This is also an example of how global disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can be leveraged to provide a broader space for the public to shape the WPS agenda.

However, to ensure full implementation of the WPS agenda, Indonesia will need to consider the implementation and harmonization of the NAP for Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children in Social Conflict 2020-2025 as well as the NAP for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism 2021-2024.

## THAILAND

### National measures and guidelines on WPS in Thailand

The WPS agenda has gained momentum in Thailand in recent years. The Thai Government has adopted a number of frameworks and guidelines on WPS and gender equality, including National Measures and Guidelines, Women's Development Plan 2017-2021 and National Economic and Social Development Plan 2017-2021, the latter incorporating guidelines on women's empowerment. In Thailand adherence to UNSCR 1325 is seen through the lens of supporting the country's drive to achieve its targets in the SDGs.

In Thailand's Southern Border Provinces women are at the forefront of human rights advocacy and humanitarian assistance. Women-led groups often support diverse and marginalized communities, work with the National Human Rights Commission, consult with local government to implement social safeguards, improve access to social services and facilitate dialogue between Buddhist and Muslim communities. Several organizations have received distinctions from local, national and international organizations for such work. In April 2015 more than 20 women-led groups formed the Women's Agenda for Peace network, now known as the Peace Agenda of Women. The network promotes an increased role for women in peacebuilding and peace negotiations.

In 2016, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security drafted a concept paper entitled "Measures and guidelines on women and the promotion of peace and security". It reaffirms the significant role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction, and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij, The Negotiation of Women in Conflict Situations in The Deep South of Thailand Social Science Asia, Volume 5 Number 3, p: 67-80.

Since 2016, UN Women has collaborated with the ministry and local women's organizations in implementing and localizing the "Measures and Guidelines on Women and the Promotion of Peace and Security" at national and sub-national levels. The role of the women's network in advancing peace in the region provides an illustration of civil society engagement actively providing alternatives to the NAPs to advance WPS nationally.<sup>18</sup>

Government, the women's network and civil society champions are together advancing the WPS agenda in Thailand. The Coordination Centre for Children and Women in the Southern Border Provinces was established by the Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and in partnership with UN Women and UNICEF after the National Consultation on Women's Leadership and Peace and Security in 2019. There is potential to build on the coordination centre, which is a mechanism between central and local levels and among different line ministries, non-government and civil society actors, to ensure that commitments on WPS are translated into action. These pledges include CSO engagement in promoting social cohesion and peace in the provinces.<sup>19</sup>

### **III. Best practices and lessons learned**

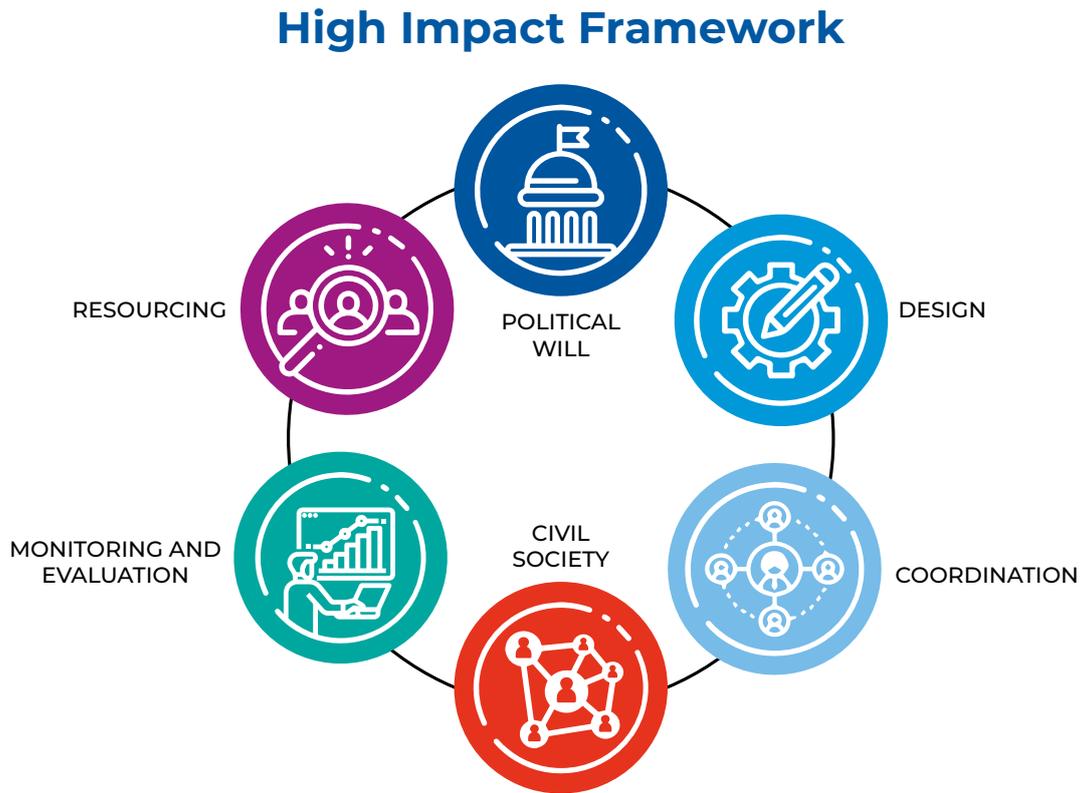
#### **A. The high-impact framework**

While the development of NAPs differs among countries and depends highly on the national context, structures and WPS priorities, the analysis of the six selected action plans highlighted several core elements and underlying principles that should be incorporated into the development of all NAPs as a matter of good practice.

Based on lessons learned from NAP development and implementation, the high-impact methodology was developed to guide work with national Governments in designing a NAP and ensuring successful implementation of the WPS agenda at the national level.

<sup>18</sup> <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand/women-peace-and-security>.

<sup>19</sup> UN Women, The ASEAN Regional Study on Women, Peace, and Security, 2021. Available at: <https://vietnam.un.org/en/144224-asean-regional-study-women-peace-and-security>.

**FIGURE 3: Simplified High Impact Framework of NAP**

### 1. Strong and sustained political will

The purpose of NAPs is merely to provide a framework to coordinate, develop activities and ensure accountability. **Without strong political will and institutional commitments, not even the best action plan can yield the desired results.**

A UN Women corporate evaluation found that often activities promoting ownership only focused on a limited group of actors directly involved in NAP processes and neglected to build broader ownership among wider actors and institutions, such as other Government ministries.<sup>20</sup> NAPs are typically implemented over three to five years, making it difficult to sustain impact over the long term. Thus, all relevant ministries must incorporate NAP activities and objectives into their own plans. Capacity-building and technical support among actors are useful to advance ownership and political will.

### 2. Localizing the NAP

In recent years LAPs have gained attention as avenues to realizing the WPS agenda and achieving NAP goals at the local level. They provide an excellent opportunity to raise awareness, offer space for local women to engage in policymaking and ensure that the needs of the community are addressed. In addition, LAPs play a vital role in building the capacity of local actors to participate in NAP implementation and monitoring efforts. However, experience across countries has shown that efforts to localize NAPs are greatly hindered by a lack of resources. It remains crucial to build the capacity of local actors to monitor the plans and to ensure that LAPs are integrated into local government plans/budgets.

<sup>20</sup> UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security. 2021.

### 3. An inclusive planning process that leads to a design focused on results

The planning process should be inclusive and participatory. The choice of which agency or agencies should lead the process depends on country-specific context and objectives. However, it is critical to secure political will and sufficient funding and to raise awareness in order to ensure that the responsible agency has sufficient governmental support, resources and authority to generate a NAP supported and implemented by all ministries and other collaborating partners.

WPS issues are complex and cross-cutting. Often, different Government departments and agencies routinely undertake activities that pertain to WPS without labelling them as such. Thus, all relevant thematic areas and ministries must be involved in the formulation of the NAP. Designing a NAP should build on existing national policy and normative frameworks linked to gender equality, peace and the development agenda in the national/local contexts.

Second, achievable, time-bound outcomes – and indicators to measure them – should be established during preparation of the action plan. In order to capture the targets accurately and effectively, it is necessary to organize inclusive consultations and engage key stakeholders such as CSOs, women's networks, academia, international partners and the private sector. Similarly, it is crucial for accountability purposes to designate responsibilities for every action and establish reporting measures. The more specific a NAP is, and the more it reflects stakeholders' needs and demands, the easier it will be to secure strong political will and commitment.

### 4. Considering local WPS priorities and contexts

The UN Women corporate evaluation highlighted that it is crucial to ensure that the NAP is aligned with the broader national context and connected with other national plans and processes.<sup>21</sup> Ensuring consistency and synergies between the different instruments pertaining to the WPS agenda, such as the SDGs, enables high-level political buy-in and helps to ensure the sustainability of the NAP. The action plan should incorporate both international norms and features of the national context. Similarly, special attention should be paid to the alignment of the NAP with the Government's planning and reporting cycle.

### 5. An established coordination system for implementation

Strong coordination and leadership are central features of successful NAP development and implementation. Implementation is typically facilitated by a cross-ministries working group or coordination body, whose role is to ensure that all relevant Government agencies are involved and take an active part in planning and implementation of the plan. The effectiveness of these mechanisms often depends on the extent to which the different ministries and agencies have operationalized and integrated NAPs into their work.

Cross-governmental coordination helps to generate political support and raise awareness across Government. While there are distinct benefits associated with the whole-of-government approach, many states struggle to effectively implement it. To offset these challenges, clear lines of responsibility, a delineation of tasks for each actor involved and political will at a prominent level within the Government are

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

required. In addition, an internal mechanism such as focal points in departments can assist in mainstreaming a gender perspective and ensuring that WPS is incorporated in policies.

States should consider establishing a road map to determine how the planning and implementation process will be undertaken. This can provide a foundation to establish a system of coordination from the start and ensure that this translates into meaningful ownership and implementation across key national stakeholders/relevant ministries and agencies.

## **6. Public accountability & transparency mechanisms**

To be effective, the NAP requires the development of a system of accountability based on specific, ascertainable goals. The absence of clearly defined goals with a clear description of roles and responsibilities can weaken accountability. Many countries still struggle with this, as in most NAPs public engagement follows a top-down approach, so it is a struggle to sustain stakeholder participation. Specific mechanisms should be established to hold the institutions leading implementation accountable and committed, through regular public reporting of measurable obligations and results.

In addition, periodic external evaluations also provide a basis for accountability. Evaluation should be participatory, subject to open scrutiny and include participation of key actors, including civil society.

Parliamentary committees can play a key role in overseeing implementation and holding the Government publicly accountable. However, the participation of parliaments in efforts to support the WPS agenda has been variable, with many either unaware of or uninvolved in national implementation efforts. At a minimum, the parliament can play a role in overseeing the budget.

The vibrancy and capacity of CSOs is another key factor in providing accountability. Civil society plays a vital role in strengthening national and donor accountability in financing for gender equality. It can also contribute alternative measures, evidence-based strategies and tools to support gender-responsive policymaking and programming.

## **7. A defined and inclusive role for civil society, sociopolitical organizations and academia**

While States are charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing NAPs, civil society can be a valuable partner for enhancing the accountability of a national plan's implementation. Development of a NAP is an opportunity to establish a regular dialogue between Government and civil society to advance the WPS agenda. However, meaningful partnership with civil society, especially on a traditionally inaccessible topic such as national security, might be challenging for States. To ensure successful implementation of the NAP, it is crucial to develop a strategy for civil society engagement and participation that is flexible and tailored to the country context.

Many benefits can arise from involving civil society from the start: CSOs play a significant role in raising awareness and advocating for the NAP. Most importantly, women's networks, academia and national and international NGOs can provide valuable

perspectives on the roots of gender-based discrimination and GBV and their impact on the day-to-day realities of women, men, boys and girls. In post-conflict or transitional contexts, where data has often been lost, civil society can serve as an essential source of information and a valuable partner in implementation.

### 8. Identified and allocated implementation resources

Experience has shown that one of the most critical weaknesses in current efforts to implement the WPS agenda is a failure to allocate proper resources to plans and programmes. According to the programme PeaceWomen, only 35 of the 100 WPS NAPs adopted worldwide included a budget.<sup>22</sup>

Every NAP should have a funding framework. Costing of a realistic action plan is an essential step in preparing a NAP budget. International experience with NAP implementation demonstrates that sources of financing can be internal and external and at local, regional, national and international levels. The Government should define the sources of the budget based on available state funding, including national budgets, but it can also include funds from donor agencies and the private sector. For example, in Liberia, UN Women tested innovative financing or a range of non-traditional mechanisms to raise additional funds for the NAP.<sup>23</sup>

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is especially relevant for advancing WPS and avoiding biases in resource allocation. To achieve the goal of implementing Governments' gender equality commitments, the planning and budget systems must provide an enabling environment for gender-responsive actions through policy decisions on finance and planning. Guidelines and operational mechanisms, including public finance monitoring systems, and the overarching macroeconomic frameworks that influence national planning and budgeting, must also be aligned. The GRB tool consists of different approaches that integrate the gender perspective or mainstream gender into the policy-budget cycle and are aligned with the principles of good governance. It comprises both revenue and expenditure and acts as a powerful fiscal policy tool to channel resources to finance and implement commitments on gender equality. Public finance reform and the budget process are entry points to introducing GRB, as a form of mainstreaming gender, into reform of public finance monitoring.

In addition, monitoring is a vital stage of GRB in order to evaluate planned spending on gender equality-related activities and the achievement of expected results and objectives. Collection of sex-disaggregated data is critical to monitor both deliverables and expenditures at the implementation stage. Such data can be reported and monitored through quarterly or annual reports at both national and municipal levels when the reporting mechanism of the NAP is part of the Government's monitoring mechanism.

It is important to review a budget holistically because addressing WPS requires a cross-sector approach. For instance, funding for the implementation of the Canadian NAP is provided from the budgets of responsible ministries. However, the cross-governmental

<sup>22</sup> <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/evaluation-un-women-support-to-national-action-plans> (p.15).

nature of the NAP creates a challenge – as budgets are allocated to each department on an annual or multi-annual basis, it introduces the risk that some departments choose to back away from their WPS commitments due to a lack of funding. Some emerging examples of better practice in this regard have shown that ministries, departments or other offices responsible for women's affairs can play a role in monitoring the allocation of financial resources and expenditure by other line ministries. Without specific responsibilities and budgets, it is unlikely that Government officials with heavy workloads and competing priorities will ensure that the NAP is effectively put in place. As a result, implementation of action plans will be contingent on the capacity and willingness of individual Government officials and not the result of an institutionalized, structured whole of government approach.

### **9. A properly resourced M&E and reporting system aligned with the national context**

The successful implementation of a NAP is dependent on the inclusion of structured monitoring and reporting systems. These mechanisms must be included at the start, before implementation begins, and should be aligned with the Government's monitoring and reporting system. In cases where the monitoring and reporting mechanisms of NAPs are integrated into the Government's reporting and monitoring cycles, gender markers can enable the generation of reports to show how much of the budget has been allocated and spent in promoting gender equality. By having these markers allocated against each programme, it is possible to capture the “cross-cutting” nature of such promotion.

Continued technical and financial support for the implementation of M&E frameworks is crucial to ensure the successful implementation of the NAP. A common pattern in many countries has been that even when M&E frameworks were in place, actual monitoring and reporting were limited. The lack of resources allocated to the monitoring and evaluation system together with lack of training and knowledge in results-based management (RBM) among implementing actors is a significant limitation to effective monitoring.

Reporting on the implementation of the WPS agenda through CEDAW strengthens the links between peace and security, women's rights and gender equality, facilitates greater inter-sectoral cooperation on women's rights and gender equality, and breaks down the “silos” within governmental structures.

Also important are mechanisms to ensure that monitoring is fed back into policy development. As a complement, periodic external evaluation of NAP implementation can help to interrogate more rigorously underlying or implicit assumptions that have become standard practice, in isolation from political interests or bureaucratic fatigue. In addition, an effective M&E system contributes towards ensuring accountability while enabling implementers to communicate the NAP's accomplishments to both internal and external audiences, which is crucial to increase popular and political support.

### **10. Responding to emerging challenges**

COVID-19 has claimed significant attention and national resources. As a result, national processes to adopt or implement NAPs have been delayed and funding for WPS has

been cut or diverted to respond to the pandemic. However, there is strong potential for WPS NAP principles and priorities to inform national responses to COVID-19. While an action plan could provide a useful gender-sensitive framework to inform national COVID-19 responses, there is still little evidence that they were or are being used to do so. Special attention should be paid to integrating and adapting the NAP to this changing context to directly address the challenges posed by the pandemic.<sup>24</sup>

## B. National action plan package

FIGURE 4 New NAP “Package”



To meet the standards of the high impact NAPs, over the last few years – often in partnership with progressive Governments interested in setting the bar higher to advance the WPS agenda and/or with several UN Women country offices – a new NAP package has been developed featuring an innovative approach that includes seven elements.

When developed in a joint and consultative process, resourced and staffed properly and supported by political will and international engagements, this approach has shown to not only produce a better document but to build a strong architecture for the NAP, which in turn facilitates much more effective and efficient implementation.

**This NAP package provides a useful approach for Viet Nam to formulate its first NAP. Its elements are:**

### 1. Narrative

This section starts with a statement of political will and endorsement from key ministries and other political actors. It then provides a narrative of the country’s context, including overall political development, gender dynamics and key statistics. It should include a more in-depth analysis of how and why the nation sees the relevance of its

24 *ibid.*

WPS commitments and previous key achievements. Finally, it presents the rest of the package and concrete efforts toward implementation.

## 2. Log frame

Using the RBM methodology, the NAP should include a logical framework that clearly states intended results at the outcome (long-term changes desired in the broader systems) and mid-term (tangible contributions to the specific objectives with a more specific statement of systemic changes) as well as outputs – most concrete results that MDAs intend to accomplish, and whose completion will logically contribute to the higher-level changes stated above. It should include indicators (aligned with UNSCR and SDG indicators), targets, milestones and baseline data, and be aligned with the Government's monitoring framework. Roles and responsibilities should be specified and include a clear timeline for implementation of activities.

## 3. Coordination structure

The plan should also include a clear mechanism for how the MDAs intend to coordinate their implementation efforts – typically one ministry takes the lead and several other MDAs serve as supporting partners. To facilitate this process, tools such as a TOR should be developed to outline in specific terms the roles and responsibilities of all involved actors. The official appointment of focal points is key.

In most countries, this coordination structure is organized at (at least) two different levels.

- 1 First, at the strategic level there is a high-level body typically composed of deputy/assistant ministers or heads of departments. This body sets the strategic objectives, provides needed political support, encourages whole-of-government participation and acts as the primary accountability mechanism.
- 2 Second, at the operational level there is a technical committee, composed of junior-medium level staff, who are hopefully designated as the NAP/WPS/gender focal points in their respective MDAs. This body is charged with running programmes and projects that advance implementation at the technical level. In addition to overseeing activities in their respective MDAs, members are also charged with seeking synergies and facilitating more collaborative approaches so that implementation is conducted by a wide number of Government actors.

## 4. Civil society

In most countries, a wide range of civil society actors continue to be the primary motivators for action on WPS. As witnessed over the last 25 years, this agenda originated and remains deeply rooted in the efforts of women leaders on the ground, who continue to pioneer efforts to prevent violence, resolve a range of disputes in a constructive manner and help build community strength and resilience to withstand a range of human and natural threats to peace and security.

In all countries that have adopted NAPs civil society plays a range of roles – from supporting consultations at the grassroots level to informing the action plan's design and partnering in implementation, monitoring activities and reporting on results.

Recently, in addition to traditional actors like community-based organizations and women's groups, other segments of society – especially academia/ think tanks and the media – have increased their involvement.

## 5. Resources

At the onset, it is critical to start planning how the NAP will be resourced, as most nations develop their plans as a 'theoretical' exercise of what should be done while a much better approach is to focus on what could be accomplished recognizing resource limitations. Obviously financial resources are key but most NAPs remain without a clear budget, which often hinders implementation at all levels. Increasingly there are tools and sources of support that can facilitate a costing exercise that could inform both the national Government and prospective donors of possible costs of running certain key initiatives. Gender-responsive budgeting is especially relevant for advancing WPS and avoiding biases in resource allocation.

However, in practice the most critical resources remain technical and human resources. We have seen that even in cases where there is no designated budget, if staff are motivated, supported and – most importantly – equipped with technical tools and training to apply WPS skills and knowledge, the success rate of NAPs is higher.

## 6. M&E and reporting structures

Across countries, the most common challenge is in the area of monitoring and reporting. It is hard to find the balance between accountability, on the one hand, and ensuring tangible change for people in partner countries, on the other. A common pattern has been that even when M&E frameworks were in place, actual monitoring and reporting were limited due to insufficient internal resources and commitments.<sup>25</sup> It is hard to combine the need for clear measures of accountability (at the output level) with indicators that can capture complex systemic and societal changes that are at the core of the WPS agenda and the ultimate reasons for adopting and implementing the NAP in the first place.

A lot of countries continue to struggle with this critical operational aspect of reporting and coordination. In addition, countries with NAPs continue to try to address some of the following shared questions and challenges:

- a** **Political: WHY** do we focus on WPS and **why** should NAPs be a well-supported tool? These unanswered questions lead to languishing M&E plans and persistent questions about their need and purpose;
- b** **Conceptual: WHAT** do various actors contribute and **what** is the change we want to measure? These are complicated substantive WPS issues that are deeply qualitative in nature and are often not supported with the necessary capacities and operational skills on planning for results and theories of change;
- c** **Technical: HOW** – Policy/programme staff often lack the time and tools to

25 Myrtilinen H, Shepherd L, Wright H. Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in The OSCE Region. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); 2020. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/4/444577.pdf>.

collect, collate, analyse and present data in ways that explain to various audiences the differences NAP implementation has actually made.

#### **7. Other envisaged challenges in the development and implementation of NAPs**

The following are some of the practical problems experienced in States that have already adopted NAPs for the implementation of UNSCR 1325:

- a. NAPs lack of credibility owing to little public participation, public awareness and/or political will;
- b. Lack of technical expertise and capacity;
- c. Lack of awareness and understanding of the provisions of UNSCR 1325;
- d. Lack of clear prioritization of objectives, particularly because of the limited availability of resources;
- e. Insufficient budgetary allocations for the plan's development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- f. Lack of an adequate normative framework;
- g. Overly ambitious and ultimately unrealistic objectives;
- h. Lack of agreement on implementing and monitoring responsibilities;
- i. Insufficient coordination and ownership among those who implement the plan;
- j. Lack of continuation of previous plans or programmes;
- k. Lack of efficient coordination between all levels of Government.

## CONCLUSION

An NAP reflects the Government's commitment and accountability in ensuring the advancement of the WPS agenda. It can provide a practical and operational tool to translate and localize UNSCR1325 into national policies. Through a comparative analysis, we have identified policy priorities, useful features of NAPs and specific areas that should be strengthened, including accountability, sustained engagement, adequate resources and alignment with the national context.

Our analysis demonstrates that high-impact NAPs are those that are inclusively designed with clear, concrete and measurable objectives that can rely on political will and adequate resources and contain a realistic and achievable M&E framework.

With broad-based ownership and meaningful participation of key national stakeholders, a NAP can provide a useful structure to coordinate and develop activities of all involved ministries and actors. It allows for a clear division of responsibilities and can help to identify potential collaboration between Government and civil society partners for implementing the WPS agenda.

The process of drafting a plan is also one of awareness-raising among implementing partners. It should be inclusive and participatory to generate a sense of ownership and responsibility among partners. An effective M&E system helps ensure accountability to the population, as well as to those providing resources. It enables implementers to translate the value of the NAP for internal and external audiences, which in turn can increase popular and political support. Funding remains the most serious challenge to implementing a NAP, so it is important to have in place a financial framework before implementation.

The rise in non-traditional security challenges has shown the importance of learning from the experiences of existing NAPs and the challenging nature of conflicts and security concerns in the 21st century. It will be important to continue to strengthen global implementation of the WPS agenda, with particular emphasis on localization of efforts in order to be more relevant to the national and local contexts for sustaining peace. NAPs should remain 'living documents', with the flexibility to align with emerging issues and adjust to incorporate lessons learned from implementation in different contexts. ■

# SECTION 2

## EXISTING NATIONAL CONTEXT & RATIONALE FOR VIET NAM'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

As explored above, NAPs should be designed according to the State's WPS priorities nationally and internationally, be aligned with existing national priorities, build on key national policies and normative frameworks and should address the fundamental links between gender equality and sustaining peace and development in the context of Viet Nam.

This section provides an overview of Viet Nam's international commitments and national context in terms of women, peace and security. Specifically, it examines the country's international engagement in peace and security and explores a number of domestic priorities that intersect with and are relevant to the broader WPS agenda.

Section 2 is structured around the pillars of UNSCR 1325 on WPS:

- a. Participation of women in the security sector and political process;
- b. Prevention of VAW;
- c. Protection of women;
- d. Relief and recovery.

### **I. Viet Nam's context in relation to the development of a WPS NAP**

#### **A. Engagement in multilateral forums on peace and security**

##### **1. Viet Nam's preventive diplomacy through mediation and prevention**

Historically, Viet Nam's foreign policy and definition of national security interests have focused on creating and maintaining a stable and peaceful environment.<sup>26</sup> Viet Nam has long aspired to ensure its security interest through active preventive diplomacy and enhanced cooperation with its neighbouring countries.

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26 Oanh, Hoang. "Viet Nam's Role in Regional Peace and Mediation". ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute - Perspective, 6, (2021).

The White Paper on Defence (2006) states as a chief foreign policy goal: “willing to become a friend and reliable partner of all countries in the world community, striving for peace, independence and development”.<sup>27</sup>

Recently, in response to Viet Nam’s two main security challenges in the South China Sea and the Mekong region, greater emphasis has been placed on the goal of proactive contribution to international peace and security.<sup>28</sup>

In this context, there is a consensus and combined efforts among leaders to increase and promote Viet Nam’s pivotal role in mediation and resolution of regional conflicts with the strategic objectives of enhancing its own conflict management and resolution capacities. This is illustrated by the repeated use of the phrase “hoa giai” (translated as either reconciliation or mediation in English) in Vietnamese officials’ public speeches.<sup>29</sup>

Issued in August 2018, Directive No. 25 CT/TW of the secretariat of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) Central Committee, on enhancing the role of multilateral diplomacy, institutionalized Viet Nam’s mediation diplomacy while highlighting its willingness to take a leading role in international peace and security on regional and international stages. In parallel, Viet Nam has expanded its commitment to share its experience on post-conflict reconstruction, national reconciliation and promotion of integration and sustainable development in various multilateral forums, including the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, on topics such as the handling of unexploded devices.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. Viet Nam’s international commitments on WPS

### Priorities of the Vietnamese chair of ASEAN and the country’s non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, Viet Nam has played a leading role in strengthening the WPS agenda and the role of women in peace. In 2009, Viet Nam played a leadership role in facilitating the adoption of UNSCR 1889 on Women, Peace and Security, which further emphasizes the participation of women in all phases of the peace process.<sup>31</sup>

In 2020, as the Chair of ASEAN and during its term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council (2020-2021), Viet Nam reaffirmed its commitment to WPS. Its expressed priorities for those terms was “partnership for sustainable peace,” and it focused its activities related to WPS on five key areas:

- 1 Promoting women and girls’ participation and increasing women’s leadership in conflict prevention;
- 2 Suggesting solutions to remove barriers to women’s participation in peace operations;

27 <http://www.VietNam.gov.vn/portal/page/portal/English/strategies/strategiesdetails?categoryId=30&articleId=3036>  
Accessed 23 November 2021. Accessible only in Viet Nam.

28 Oanh, Hoang. “Viet Nam’s Role in Regional Peace and Mediation”. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute - Perspective, 6, (2021).

29 *ibid.*

30 *ibid.*

31 High-Level Global Event – Strengthening Women’s Role in Building and Sustaining Peace: From Commitments to Results – United Nations in Viet Nam, <https://vietnam.un.org/en/97883-high-level-global-event-strengthening-womens-role-building-and-sustaining-peace-commitments>.

- 3 Promoting relations between ASEAN and the United Nations and ASEAN and the Security Council by sharing ASEAN's experience in implementing initiatives on WPS, conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy;
- 4 Promoting initiatives on enhancing women's roles in conflict and post-conflict areas affected by climate change;
- 5 Taking advantage of projects and resources from the UN and the private sector to support Viet Nam's implementation of programmes for women and children.<sup>32</sup>

Commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNSCR 1325, Viet Nam hosted in Ha Noi in December 2020 the international conference, "Strengthening women's role in building and sustaining peace: From commitments to results" in collaboration with the United Nations. The conference resulted in the adoption of the Ha Noi Commitment to Action, which promotes women's role in peace processes. The document was proposed by Viet Nam and co-sponsored by 75 countries in the region.<sup>33</sup>

As the 2020 ASEAN Chair, Viet Nam concentrated its efforts on enhancing the leadership and roles of women in sustainable peace, security and development across the region. In September 2020, Viet Nam held the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women's Role for Sustainable Peace and Security. Among its priorities was enhancing cooperation to promote the role of WPS in ASEAN and supporting implementation of UNSCR 1325.<sup>34</sup> During the meeting, countries agreed to strengthen activities of ASEAN Women for Peace Registry and boost inclusion of the WPS agenda in programmes and policies in all pillars of the ASEAN Community.<sup>35</sup>

Pursuing its commitment, on 6 April 2021 Vietnam and Japan, as co-chairs of the ADMM+ Experts Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, proposed the establishment of a WPS platform in order to consolidate member states' WPS-related experiences.<sup>36</sup> Viet Nam led an initiative of Women, Peace, and Security Platform, with the cooperation of Japan, on 6 April 2021. In August 2021 Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs Bui Thanh Son called for more attention to the WPS agenda and emerging issues in the APSC Blueprint 2025.<sup>37</sup>

32 Nguyen Viet Lam, Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the UN Security Council and Viet Nam's participation. [https://tapchicongsan.org.vn/web/english/international/detail/-/asset\\_publisher/ZeaSwtFjtMgN/content/women-peace-and-security-agenda-at-the-un-security-council-and-Viet-Nam-s-participation](https://tapchicongsan.org.vn/web/english/international/detail/-/asset_publisher/ZeaSwtFjtMgN/content/women-peace-and-security-agenda-at-the-un-security-council-and-Viet-Nam-s-participation), accessed on 22 November 2021.

33 <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-promotes-womens-role-in-building-peace-conference/192904.vnp>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

34 <https://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns200917082927/view>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

35 <https://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns200916132635/view>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

36 <https://www.mod.go.jp/en/article/2021/04/8f7d4a67327a2d86856123c6fb00cb1a6e0cb2af.html>. Accessed 29 June 2022.

37 <https://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns210806100142/view>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

These recent policy developments signal a clear commitment and willingness on the part of Viet Nam to take a more leading role in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and promotion of women's participation in peace, both at the international and regional level.

### 3. Increased emphasis on women's participation in peace operations

Established in 2014, the National Department of Peacekeeping Operations plays a key role in Viet Nam's multilateral diplomacy and contributes to the country's foreign policy. Since its establishment, the peacekeeping force has included 34 servicewomen, accounting for more than 16 per cent of the total force, compared with the 10 per cent required by the UNSC under Resolution 1325.<sup>38</sup>

Most recently, the Prime Minister of the 14th National Assembly adopted Resolution No 130/2020/QH14 on participating in UN peacekeeping operations, which took effect on 1 July 2021. Drafted by the Central Military Commission and the Ministry of Defence, the resolution was approved by the Prime Minister in February 2021 and lays the legal foundation for Viet Nam to further this contribution. The Government has also announced its intention to upgrade its UN peacekeeping training centre into a regional facility for the Asia Pacific.<sup>39</sup>

The rapid increase in Viet Nam's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations and the elevated levels of women's participation in the country's peacekeeping armed forces is a solid display of objectives and commitment to enhancing women's participation in peace and security.

## B. Domestic priorities and machinery on gender equality

### 1. Relevant international obligations

While Viet Nam does not yet have a UNSCR 1325 NAP and does not yet explicitly consider 1325 and its four pillars in the design of its laws and policy, a number of domestic priorities and processes are relevant to the WPS agenda. This section explores domestic priorities and programmes concerned with the four pillars of UNSCR 1325, namely participation of women in the security sector and political processes, prevention of VAW, protection of women, and relief and recovery.

Viet Nam is party to a number of international instruments relevant to the WPS agenda:

- a** The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- b** The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- c** The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

<sup>38</sup> <https://en.daihoidang.vn/Viet-Nams-peacekeeping-force-wins-high-appreciation/1313.vnp>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

<sup>39</sup> <https://en.qdnd.vn/military/intl-relations-and-cooperation/Viet-Nam-and-japan-work-to-promote-women-peace-and-security-initiative-534530>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

- d** The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. (CEDAW. General Recommendation thirty represents an important accountability mechanism complementary to UNSCR 1325.);
- e** The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
- f** The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## 2. National priorities and architecture on gender equality

In recent years Viet Nam has made earnest efforts to implement measures to advance gender equality. In 2013, the country amended its Constitution to establish basic equality for women and prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender.

In addition, article 5 (2) of the Constitution (2013) states: “All the ethnicities are equal and unite with, respect, and assist one another for mutual development; all acts of discrimination against and division of the ethnicities are prohibited”; article 16 (1): “All people are equal before the law”. And (2). “No one is subject to discriminatory treatment in political, civil, economic, cultural or social life.”

Viet Nam’s Law on Gender Equality, adopted in 2006, requires gender mainstreaming in the development of legal normative documents, and provides specific measures to promote gender equality in politics, economics, labour, education and training. This issue was also prescribed in Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW (27 April 2007) of the Politburo on Women’s Affairs during the process of accelerating industrialization and modernization. In 2010, the Prime Minister approved the National Strategy for Gender Equality for 2011-2020 and its following strategy for 2020-2030. The State Budget Law 2015 requires the State to allocate a budget for gender equality as one of its priorities.<sup>40</sup> In 2017, the Prime Minister adopted the NAP to implement the 2030 Agenda for the SDGs, in which the global SDGs have been ‘translated’ into 115 Viet Nam SDGs. More recently, the Prime Minister approved the National Strategy for Gender Equality for 2021-2030. It is intended to contribute to implementation of CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs.<sup>41</sup>

## Gender mainstreaming in the law-making process

At the policymaking level, the National Assembly, the Standing Committee of the National Assembly and the Ethnic Council are responsible for monitoring the implementation of gender equality law and gender mainstreaming in the draft laws, ordinances and resolutions. The National Committee for the Advancement of Women acts as a research and advisory agency to the Prime Minister, while the Women’s Union of Viet Nam provides feedback on gender equality laws and policies and organizes

40 <https://Viet.Nam.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/GRB-ENG-FINAL-COMPRESSED.pdf> Accessed November 24, 2021.

41 <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/national-strategy-on-gender-equality-2021-2030-launched-595846.html>.

activities to support women in achieving gender equality objectives.<sup>42</sup>

To date, gender equality issues have received little attention from the National Assembly or its committees and have not been adequately incorporated in the oversight activities of the assembly. Moreover, the Committee for Social Affairs has yet to hold a session on issues related to gender equality.

### 3. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Institutionally, national machinery on gender equality is led at the central level by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), which is tasked with managing gender equality mandates country-wide. MOLISA's Department for Gender Equality works closely with other ministries and ministerial agencies to ensure that gender equality is integrated into their mandates. As part of their commitments to address gender equality, some ministries have tasked an internal department or unit to provide advice on with gender equality issues. These include the Administrative Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Family Department of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the Minority Department of the Committee for Ethnic Affairs.<sup>43</sup>

However, Viet Nam has not yet developed a comprehensive tool for monitoring implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030 or the international conventions on human rights, including CEDAW. Reporting is based mainly on reports received from local levels through MOLISA.

At the local level, the provincial Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) is responsible for mainstreaming gender equality within the scope of its mandate. It has done so either by establishing a Division on Gender Equality or by designating an officer-in-charge within its administrative office. As of 2015, 13 provinces and cities had established a new Division for Gender Equality and the remaining 50 had designated an officer in charge to oversee gender equality issues.<sup>44</sup>

However, the CEDAW committee notes that this system is hampered by a lack of monitoring mechanisms and human, technical and budgetary resources, as well as limited understanding and technical knowledge among lawmakers and Government officials on gender equality.<sup>45</sup> In this regard, there appears little conceptual understanding of current, broader applications of UNSCR 1325 mandates (and more recent resolutions), or technical abilities to translate those mandates into operational objectives of various MDAs, which would make a NAP a very useful overall framework given the country's various commitments.

42 United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, List of issues and questions in relation to the seventh and eighth periodic report of Viet Nam, Addendum Replies from Viet Nam, CEDAW/C/VNM/Q/7-8 (9 June 2015).

43 The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, National Assembly, Law on Gender Equality, Law No.73/2006/QH11, 10th Session of the XI Legislature. English translation available here: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_isn=76089](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=76089).

44 United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, List of issues and questions in relation to the seventh and eighth periodic report of Viet Nam, Addendum Replies from Viet Nam, CEDAW/C/VNM/Q/7-8 (9 June 2015).

45 United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Viet Nam, CEDAW/C/VNM/CO/7-8 (29 July 2015).

#### 4. Actions on the four pillars of UNSCR 1325

Support and promote the full participation of women in peace and security decision-making processes at all levels.

##### **Enhancing women's active representation in political life**

The Vietnamese Government has adopted affirmative action, via a quota system, to improve the participation of women in public life and decision-making. The law on the election of deputies of the National Assembly and People's Council (No.85/2015/QH 13) states (article 8 [3]): "The number of women who are nominated National Assembly candidates shall be proposed by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly at the Law on Gender Equality (2006)" and at least 35 per cent of National Assembly candidates must be women. These measures seem to be producing conclusive results, as the number of women elected rose from 26.8 per cent in 2016 to 30.26 per cent in the election of 2021.<sup>46</sup>

However, women's representation in senior decision-making positions and senior management remains low. There is a lack of statistical information regarding the number of female staff in the public service.<sup>47</sup>

As of now, most actions in the political arena are restricted to supporting women's participation in legislative and decision-making processes. The WPS agenda can potentially serve as a guide for addressing these systemic gaps and provide a framework for future changes.

##### **Enhancing women representation in the People's Public Security Forces**

In recent years Viet Nam has made commitments and taken steps to address the under-representation of women in the public security forces and to strengthen the role of women police officers and soldiers. The Committee for the Advancement of Women, Family and Children's Affairs, under the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), is responsible for implementing gender equality tasks and objectives, as stated in a resolution of the VCP's 12th Congress, a resolution of the 6th Congress of the Central Public Security Party Committee, as well as in its action programme on "Women's work in national industrialization and modernization".<sup>48</sup>

In January 2021, the Public Security Women's Union launched its annual working plan and held a workshop on how to best support female public security officers and soldiers. Chapters of the union in public security agencies and units are tasked with advising leadership and committees on measures to effectively implement gender equality in the People's Public Security Forces. These workshops are also seen as an opportunity for delegates to exchange on international experiences of gender equality in the Asia - Pacific region and review the roles of women in law enforcement in ASEAN countries and of female public security officers in Viet Nam.

46 UN Women Viet Nam, Inception Report: Project: Empowering women for sustainable peace: Preventing violence and promoting social cohesion in ASEAN (2021-2025), 2021.

47 United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Viet Nam*, CEDAW/C/VNM/CO/7-8 (29 July 2015).

48 <http://en.bocongan.gov.vn/news-events/mps-promotes-gender-equality-for-advancement-of-women-in-public-security-forces-t5005.html>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

In March 2021, the Committee for the Advancement of Women, Family and Children's Affairs under the MPS, held its yearly review of implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2016-2020 and announced its priorities for 2021. In the previous year, women's representation in public security was enhanced and capacity-building training was offered to female officers. The MPS has announced the appointment of 135 female police officers as police chiefs and deputy chiefs at all levels.<sup>49</sup>

Additionally, the deputy minister of the MPS called on the management of public security agencies to develop more training on gender equality for leaders and policymakers in the context of development of the Public Security Forces' implementation plan for the new National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030.<sup>50</sup>

### Persisting challenges to women's full representation

As in most countries in the region and globally, gender discrimination and stereotypes continue to hamper women's participation in public life in Viet Nam. Harmful gender norms cause gender inequality and the perception that men have played a better role in decision-making than women. In its 2018 concluding observations, CEDAW noted the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women in the family and society.<sup>51</sup>



**“The Committee is concerned about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted gender stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society that overemphasize the subordinate and caring roles of women and are reflected in practices such as son preference. It also notes with concern the prevalence of harmful practices such as child marriage in some areas of the State party and about the persistence of gender bias and gender stereotypes in the media.”**

— CEDAW, Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Viet Nam.

CEDAW also expressed concern about the lack of possibilities for CSOs to participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of laws, policies and programmes. Additionally, it noted the lack of effective channels and measures to ensure that women, especially from ethnic groups, take part in decision-making processes.

### Prevention and protection from all forms of GBV

Violence against women is a persistent and ongoing problem in the country. The National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019 indicated that: “In 2019, nearly two-thirds (62.9 per cent) of women experienced at least one or more types of

49 <http://en.bocongan.gov.vn/news-events/mps-leader-gender-equality-in-public-security-forces-to-be-improved-t7815.html>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

50 *ibid.*

51 United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Viet Nam, CEDAW/C/VNM/CO/7-8 (29 July 2015).

violence (physical, sexual, economic and/or psychological violence) in their lifetime by a husband and 31.6 per cent experienced such violence in the last 12 months.”<sup>52</sup>

On 21 November 2007 the Government passed the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control, which came into force on 1 July 2008. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism has responsibility for coordinating relevant agencies in the implementation of the law while the MOLISA oversees the mainstreaming of prevention of domestic violence within the scope of its mandate and leads efforts to support victims of domestic violence at social institutions and in the context of the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020.

Over the last few years, Viet Nam has put in place a number of policies and programmes to reduce domestic violence. These include Decision No. 2356/QĐ TTg (2013) on the introduction of action programmes to implement the Strategy on Ethnic Affairs, until 2020, and the subsequent project, “Reducing child marriage and marriage between blood relations among ethnic minority groups”, including key measures to eliminate these negative practices. In 2019, the Viet Nam Women’s Union worked with police forces, the army and Government agencies to design the “Envision 2019: Year of Safety for Women and Children”. The campaign focused on safety for women and children in the family and in public places; the effect of the environment and climate change; promoting proper food hygiene, and cybersecurity.

Notwithstanding these initiatives, the current framework addressing VAW considers it only as an individualized phenomenon and refers mainly to cases of domestic violence. As a result, not all forms of GBV are criminalized. For example, the current legislative framework does not cover marital rape, sexual harassment in public spaces, stalking or cyber violence.<sup>53</sup>

### **Promoting the role of women as actors of change in relief & recovery**

According to the World Bank, Viet Nam is one of the five countries most threatened by climate change. It ranks 91st out of 191 countries facing high-disaster risk levels and 16th globally in terms of severe impacts due to climate change-related effects on the INFORM index.<sup>54</sup> Among these emerging security threats, the issue of water resources has become increasingly important in recent years, as highlighted first by President Truong Tan Sang at the plenary session on “Water: A New Global Strategic Resource” at APEC 20 in 2012.<sup>55</sup>

As climate change accelerates, its impacts will become more severe. However, climate change and natural resource scarcity are not recognized as causes of conflict in the current National Strategy on Gender Equality. The existing government framework on crisis and disaster management does not integrate gender-specific analyses. For example, the Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (2013, amended 2020) lacks any gender-specific aspects such as specific measures on economic empowerment

52 MOLISA, GSO and UNFPA (2020), Results of the National Study on Violence against Women in Viet Nam 2019 – Journey for Change.

53 UN Women Viet Nam, Inception Report: Project: Empowering women for sustainable peace: Preventing violence and promoting social cohesion in ASEAN (2021-2025), 2021.

54 <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/vietnam/vulnerability>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

55 Truong Tan Sang, T. E. (2012), Water: A New Global Strategic Resource, Address at the plenary session APEC-2012 CEO Summit, Vladivostok.

after a disaster, especially for women living in rural areas, who are the most vulnerable.<sup>56</sup>

Against this backdrop, the WPS agenda provides a solid framework for responding to crises and ensuring that women's voices, particularly those of rural women, are included from the early stages of disaster prevention through post-disaster reconstruction.

## II. Opportunities and advantages for Viet Nam to develop a NAP

In light of the best practices of NAP implementation highlighted in section 1 and Viet Nam's context and existing WPS commitment, we can present a number of arguments on why Viet Nam should adopt a NAP:

### 1. Relevance of the WPS agenda

The current laws have provided a fundamental framework to promote women's participation in the political arena as well as to eliminate VAW. The NAP would be a complementary tool to the already existing governmental efforts to strengthen women's rights and address the multiple security needs of women.

Second, including women's experiences in post-conflict reconciliation and conflict prevention at the national, regional and international level, including contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, has been emphasized as a key priority for Viet Nam. The country's international engagements will only improve and become more enduring with the adoption of a gender perspective.

Third, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities. The WPS agenda and UNSCR 2242 (2015), are critical to addressing the immediate and long-term impacts of the pandemic.

### 2. Increased ownership and awareness

Recent policy developments and commitments have shown the willingness and determination of the Vietnamese Government to take a more prominent role in international peace and security on the regional and international stage by promoting multilateral diplomacy and the WPS agenda. Viet Nam has also made significant efforts to implement measures to advance gender equality. Developing a NAP could increase the visibility of those recent efforts and parallel domestic initiatives and provide an opportunity for the Government to reflect on what is already being done, identify future priorities and opportunities and ensure policy sustainability. That process should be inclusive and participatory in order to generate a sense of ownership and responsibility among partners.

### 3. Increased cost-effectiveness and coherence between initiatives

With broad-based ownership and meaningful participation of key national stakeholders, a NAP can provide a valuable mechanism to ensure coherence and facilitate coordination between all involved ministries and actors. In addition, the process of formulating a NAP

<sup>56</sup> UN Women Viet Nam, Inception Report: Project: Empowering women for sustainable peace: Preventing violence and promoting social cohesion in ASEAN (2021-2025), 2021.

can help identify the required financial resources and the potential partners required for successful implementation. To ensure its success, the NAP should be aligned with existing Government planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Adopting a NAP could also facilitate the identification of synergies between national initiatives such as the National Strategy for Gender Equality and the NAP to implement the 2030 agenda (as part of the implementation of SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 8 on economic development and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions) which can, in turn, improve cost-effectiveness and coherence between initiatives.

#### **4. Effective channels and mechanisms for dialogue with a range of actors**

Through localization efforts, the NAP is a valuable framework to ensure a dialogue between local authorities, local government bodies, and civil society organizations. As Viet Nam's civil society is uniquely different from other countries, as such a NAP can provide the opportunity to formulate a flexible and resilient strategy for the engagement and participation of a wide range of actors, such as local governments, Viet Nam Women's union, international organizations, academic institutions and a representative from civil society organization that has already had ongoing work related to the relief and recovery of WPS in Viet Nam. ■

# SECTION 3

## WAY FORWARD

In reviewing the experiences of other countries, it has been highlighted that the NAP should be developed with results in mind; its logical structure has to link impact with outcomes, outcomes with outputs, and outputs with activities. The log frame should also include indicators, baseline data, targets and milestones.

To start the process of creating the NAP, the Government could consider doing the following:

- 1 Raise awareness about the WPS agenda and its implementation, including through capacity-building workshops, before starting formulation of the NAP in order to secure national ownership and build political will;
- 2 Conduct an assessment to identify key gaps/concerns regarding the WPS agenda;
- 3 Map actors at national and local levels to identify stakeholders who should be involved in implementing and coordinating NAP activities;
- 4 Conduct consultative workshops at national and local levels to raise awareness on the importance of the implementation of the WPS agenda and identify key priorities for the country;
- 5 Draft the NAP WPS, which could follow the following outline: a results-based logical framework that will capture clear indicators, targets, baseline data, implementation timeline, responsible institutions and estimative budget, as well as terms of reference for the proposed implementation structure;
- 6 Conduct a costing exercise for the action plan to identify funding gaps and to request relevant resources from development partners, including technical expertise and other assistance. This should be done after the NAP WPS is drafted;
- 7 Conduct validation workshops;
- 8 Organize an official launch to foster political will;
- 9 Establish a multisectoral platform involving state authorities, representatives of civil society, such as Viet Nam Women's Union, academia, and media. The existing committee working on gender equality could play a role in providing oversight of the WPS agenda. ■

# ROAD MAP

## TOWARDS A NAP WPS IN VIET NAM

### Introduction

#### The vision for the road map

The purpose of this section is to provide a ‘road map’ and a tool that could be used by the Vietnamese Government and other stakeholders to articulate the country’s vision and ambition to advance the WPS agenda. While the process of developing a NAP differs among countries because of national context, structures and WPS priorities, the above analysis of the selected action plans highlighted several core elements and underlying principles that should be incorporated into the development of all NAPs as a matter of good practice. Those countries were selected due to their similarities with Viet Nam in terms of foreign affairs, defence and development goals. They are also countries that have been highlighted globally for their best practices in WPS engagement.

#### The case for a NAP in Viet Nam

##### 1. Maintaining the momentum toward achieving gender equality

Viet Nam has made great efforts in implementing measures to advance gender equality. In this context, a NAP could be a complementary tool and provide a useful framework for action. Developing an action plan could also increase the visibility of Viet Nam’s recent efforts in advancing gender equality and the WPS agenda at home and abroad.

##### 2. Increased ownership and awareness of the WPS agenda

Development of NAPs, if conducted in a participatory manner, can contribute to awareness-raising and capacity-building of actors on WPS issues. This would also be the case in Viet Nam, where the process would raise the profile of and consolidate efforts to date to advance the WPS agenda.

##### 3. Increased cost-effectiveness and coherence between initiatives

A NAP can facilitate identifying synergies between national strategies, such as the National Strategy for Gender Equality and the NAP, to implement the 2030 agenda, which can in turn improve cost-effectiveness and coherence between initiatives. To ensure its success, the NAP should be aligned with existing Government planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

#### **4. Effective channels and mechanisms for participatory dialogues with a range of actors**

A NAP can provide the opportunity to formulate a flexible and resilient strategy for the engagement and participation of a wide range of actors, such as local government, international organizations, academic institutions and CSOs.

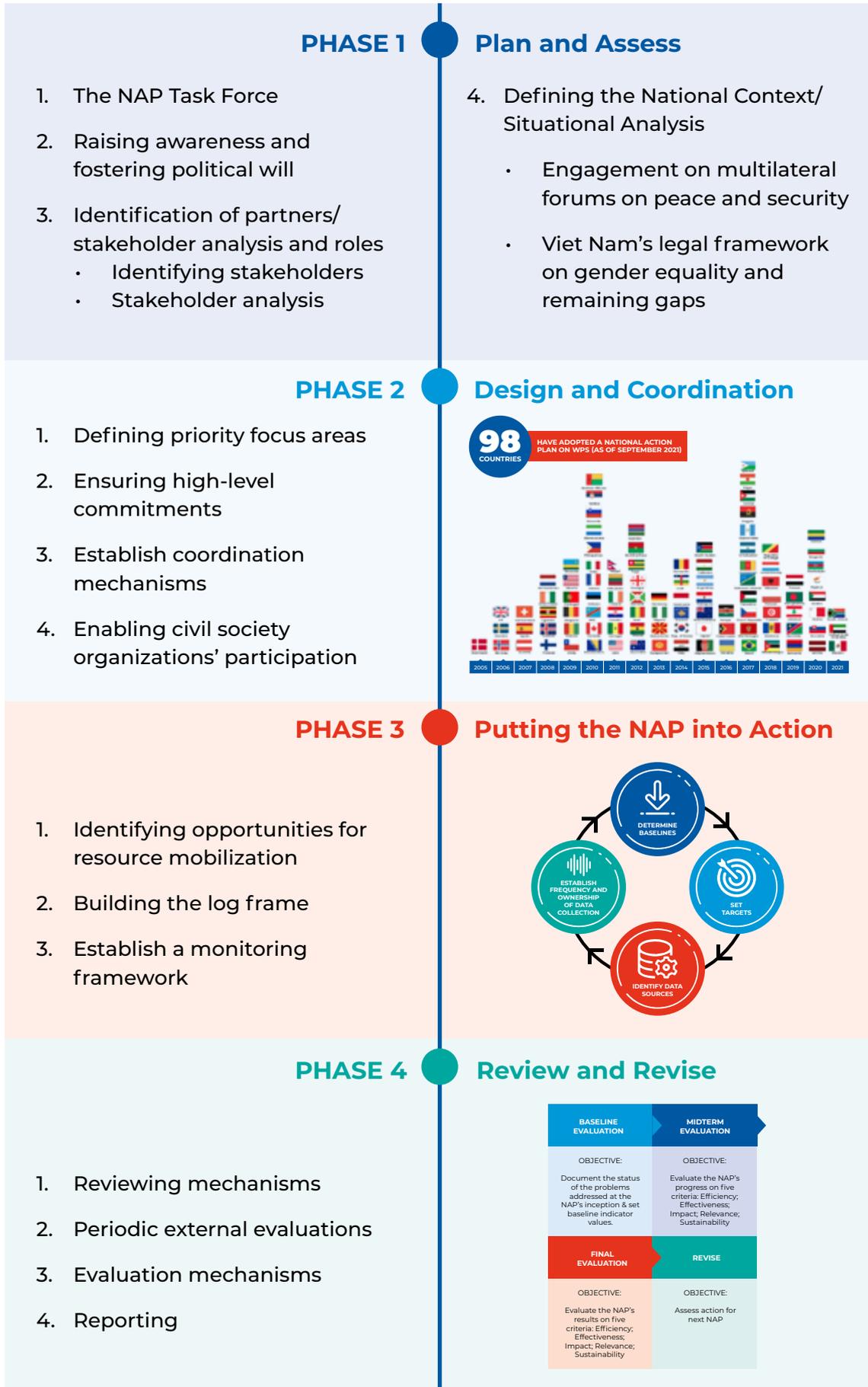
#### **5. Increased accountability and transparency**

The process of creating an NAP facilitates transparency and public accountability by assigning clear responsibility, with defined targets and objectives, to institutions. It also empowers women and civil society by providing them with platforms for action and tools for monitoring and evaluation. Finally, a clear and defined M&E plan enables political awareness to mobilize support and improves public participation in the policy process, by gaining trust and bolstering collaboration.

#### **6. Crisis responses to ecological and health disasters such as Covid-19**

By prioritizing the gendered needs of women and girls in times of crisis, an NAP could help Viet Nam prepare for a climate or health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes planning the response to such an event in terms of the WPS pillars (prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery). Such an approach calls for women's increased participation in planning and recovery efforts and commits the Government to ensure that gender analysis is incorporated into crisis and recovery plans, at both national and local levels. ■

FIGURE 5 Roadmap towards a WPS NAP in Viet Nam



# ROAD MAP

## PROPOSED ACTIONS PHASE 0: PREPARATION

### 1. Capacity-building

The first step in developing a NAP is to build and strengthen the capacity of policymakers in Government and CSOs to advance the WPS agenda in Viet Nam before starting formulation of the action plan, including through workshops. The UN Women country office can play a role in coordinating such efforts.

### 2. Awareness-raising

To secure political will, the advantage of developing a NAP must be publicly and effectively communicated to relevant Government agencies as well as major interested actors, such as CSOs, academia and media. Also, efforts should be made to raise awareness among the general public and private actors of the need to advance the WPS agenda. Developing awareness-raising strategies at this preliminary stage in order to get all stakeholders committed can help generate national ownership of the plan and facilitate a participatory approach to its development, implementation and monitoring.

### 3. Facilitating the sharing of best practices

Developing a NAP from the WPS agenda largely depends on the country's context, facilitating sharing, learning and dialogues on best practices and lessons learned elsewhere in creating an action plan can provide useful resources for Viet Nam's first NAP.

### 4. Build political will

Building and securing political will at this stage is crucial. A preliminary decision by the Government to proceed with the plan must be secured. Reaching a political agreement at the highest level will ensure that the NAP has the endorsement of key political authorities. Reaching out for international cooperation from the start can also be useful.

### 5. Feasibility study – what else exists in what other mechanisms

In order to develop a NAP, it is important to assess whether the conditions that facilitate the effective adoption of such a plan are met. It is particularly important at this stage to assess the institutional framework, including which mechanisms already exist nationally in order to avoid any duplication. ■

# ROAD MAP

## PROPOSED ACTIONS

### PHASE 1: PLAN AND ASSESS

#### 1. Creation of a NAP task force

The first step is the creation of a formal group that will lead the official NAP development process. It should be composed of actors who can mobilize interest, promote WPS awareness, identify champions and lead the process overall. In addition, it is important to identify key leaders and form a NAP team from all relevant Government agencies and CSO partners to assess the WPS environment and drive the NAP process forward.

##### 1.1. Determine NAP task force composition

NAP processes are strongest when they incorporate diverse participants across Government and civil society. Ministries that do not have a specific gender mandate are also important participants and stakeholders since they likely play a role in security issues that the NAP aims to address. The task force should also include the individual(s) in charge of leading the initial process of building political will for the NAP, and who have experience in strategic planning.

##### 1.2. Define NAP task force and responsibilities

The NAP task force's roles and responsibilities can involve a range of administrative, technical and substantive components. For example, it can include setting timelines, mobilizing resources, conducting outreach, providing guidance and training throughout the process, and coordinating and collecting input. A TOR should be developed clearly stating the roles and responsibilities of the task force team.

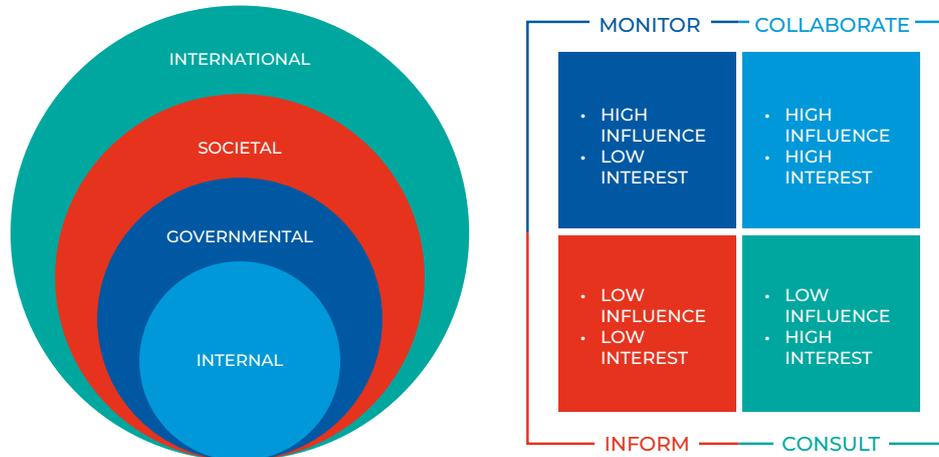
#### 2. Raising awareness and consensus and fostering political will

To ensure the sustainability of the NAP, it is important to raise awareness about the WPS agenda and to secure political will and institutional commitments. These activities should start prior to and continue during and after the formation of the action plan.

In Viet Nam, awareness-raising about the WPS agenda and NAP has taken place and is ongoing. On 7 December 2021, an international conference was held in Hanoi to discuss and share the experiences of countries that have implemented NAPs on WPS, thus providing an overview and proposing initiatives for agencies and stakeholders about the possibility of developing the country's own NAP.

### 3. Identification of partners/ stakeholders analysis and roles

FIGURE 6 Stakeholder mapping



Because WPS issues are complex and cross-cutting, the NAP is a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral initiative, and delivering on it requires the collective effort of diverse partners, including Government, civil society, communities, the UN system and development partners.

#### 3.1. Identifying stakeholders

To identify stakeholders who should be involved in implementing and coordinating NAP activities, a mapping of actors at the international, national and local levels should be conducted.

#### 3.2. Stakeholder analysis

It is important to remember that all stakeholders, including academia, CSOs and sociopolitical organizations, should be involved in the design and implementation of the NAP.

However, once the stakeholders have been identified, assessing their interests and their potential impact (nature, magnitude, extent and effects of their involvement can help you design an effective engagement strategy to maximize their contributions.

### EXERCISE: STAKEHOLDER IMPACT ANALYSIS MATRIX

| Stakeholder name  | Interest (Low, Medium, High) | Influence (Low, Medium, High) | What is important to the stakeholder? | How could the stakeholder contribute to the NAP? | Strategy for engaging the stakeholder |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Stakeholder one   |                              |                               |                                       |  |                                       |
| Stakeholder two   |                              |                               |                                       |  |                                       |
| Stakeholder three |                              |                               |                                       |  |                                       |

## 4. Defining the national context/ situational analysis

NAPs should be designed according to the State's WPS priorities nationally and internationally, build on key national policies and normative frameworks and address the fundamental links between gender equality and sustaining peace and development in the national context. Two types of assessments should be conducted:

### 4.1. Context assessment

This assessment will provide an overview of WPS issues in the country. Typically, context assessments are done through consultation with different stakeholders.

### 4.2. Institutional audit

This audit can assess the work of relevant Government departments on WPS issues, existing human and financial resources and persistent gaps and needs. These assessments can be conducted either by the NAP team or through the hiring of an expert. They provide an opportunity for the Government to reflect on what is already being done, identify future priorities and opportunities and ensure policy sustainability. The more specific a NAP is, and the more it reflects stakeholders' needs and demands, the easier it will be to secure more political will and commitment.

### 4.3. Engagement in multilateral forums on peace and security

Recent policy developments and commitments have shown a consensus and combined efforts among Vietnamese leaders to increase and promote Viet Nam's pivotal role in mediation and resolution of regional conflicts, with the strategic objectives of enhancing its own conflict management and resolution capacities.

- 1 Issued in August 2018, Directive No. 25 CT/TW of the secretariat of the VCP Central Committee on enhancing the role of multilateral diplomacy institutionalized Viet Nam's mediation diplomacy while highlighting the country's willingness to take a leading role in international peace and security on the regional and international stage.
- 2 In parallel, Viet Nam has expanded its commitment to share its experience on post-conflict reconstruction, national reconciliation and promotion of integration and sustainable development in various multilateral forums, including the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, on topics such as the handling of unexploded devices.<sup>57</sup>
- 3 Most recently, the Prime Minister of the 14th National Assembly adopted Resolution No 130/2020/QH14 on participating in UN peacekeeping operations, which took effect on 1 July 2021. The resolution, drafted by the Central Military Commission and the Ministry of Defence and approved by the Prime Minister in February 2021, lays the legal foundation for Viet Nam to further this contribution. The Government has also announced its intention to upgrade its UN peacekeeping training centre into a regional facility for the Asia Pacific.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> <https://en.qdnd.vn/military/intl-relations-and-cooperation/Viet-Nam-and-japan-work-to-promote-women-peace-and-security-initiative-534530>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

These are solid examples of Viet Nam’s objectives and commitment to take a more leading role in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and promoting women’s participation in peace, both on the international and regional scene. Developing a NAP can increase the visibility of recent efforts in advancing gender equality and the WPS agenda at home and abroad.

#### 4.4. Viet Nam’s legal framework on gender equality and opportunities for the NAP

##### a. Participation

Current laws have provided a fundamental framework to promote women’s participation in the political arena and public security forces.

- a** The Government has adopted the law on the election of deputies to the National Assembly and People’s Council, establishing a quota system to improve the participation of women in public life and decision-making by implementing affirmative action.
- b** Actions and commitments such as decree TT15/216/TT-BCA 2016, establishing the quota for women officials in public security at 14.75 per cent, have been taken to address the under-representation of women in the public security forces and to strengthen the role of women police officers and soldiers.

However, women’s representation in senior decision-making and senior management positions remains low. The WPS agenda can potentially provide a framework to increase women’s representation in the political arena and public security forces, including decision-making positions.

##### b. Prevention

VAW is a persistent and ongoing problem in the country. The National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019 indicates that: “In 2019, nearly two-thirds (62.9 per cent) of women experienced at least one or more types of violence (physical, sexual, economic and/or psychological violence) in their lifetime by a husband and 31.6 per cent experienced such violence in the last 12 months.”<sup>59</sup>

Over the last few years, Viet Nam has put in place a number of policies and programmes to reduce domestic violence:

- a** Decision No. 2356/QĐ TTg (December 2013) on the introduction of action programmes to implement the Strategy on Ethnic Affairs, until 2020, and the subsequent project, “Reducing child marriage and marriage between blood relations among ethnic minority groups”, with key measures to eliminate these negative practices.

<sup>59</sup> MOLISA, GSO and UNFPA (2020), Results of the National Study on Violence against Women in Viet Nam 2019 – Journey for Change.

- b** In 2019, the Viet Nam Women’s Union worked with the police forces, the army and Government agencies to design the “Envision 2019: Year of Safety for Women and Children”.

However, not all forms of GBV are criminalized. For example, the current legislative framework does not cover marital rape, sexual harassment in public spaces, stalking or cyber violence.<sup>60</sup> In this context, a NAP can be a complementary tool to the already existing governmental efforts to strengthen women’s rights and address the multiple security needs of women in Viet Nam. ■

## PHASE 1 CHECKLIST

During this phase, you should have answers to the following questions:

1. Who should be a part of the Task Force that is collectively responsible for NAP design?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of the NAP Task Force?
3. Who are the key stakeholders associated with the WPS agenda?
4. Who can make the change?
5. How should they be involved in the NAP development and/or implementation process?
6. What are the existing priorities of the WPS agenda?
7. What are the remaining gaps in the area of women’s participation, legislation addressing VAW and crisis management?

<sup>60</sup> UN Women Viet Nam, Inception Report: Project: Empowering women for sustainable peace: Preventing violence and promoting social cohesion in ASEAN (2021-2025), 2021.

# ROAD MAP

## PROPOSED ACTIONS PHASE 2: DESIGN AND COORDINATION

### 1. Defining priority focus areas

It is vital for the creation of an effective and applicable action plan that the designing stage is a participatory process between Government and CSOs. The Government can also choose to hire a WPS expert to support the drafting process.

Translation of the WPS agenda into national policies largely depends on the country context. NAPs developed by donor countries are characteristically outward-looking and tend to implement WPS provisions through their foreign policy, specifically through their relations with conflict-affected recipient partner countries. Meanwhile, post-conflict and conflict-affected countries are more likely to focus on implementing the WPS agenda in their domestic political context.

However, most NAPs have focussed on the core pillars of the UN Security Council resolutions on WPS:

- 1 Prevention of conflicts;
- 2 Participation of women;
- 3 Protection of women and girls;
- 4 Emerging issues such as climate change, disarmament and human trafficking;
- 5 Coordination, M&E, reporting and resource mobilization.

According to the World Bank, Viet Nam is one of the five countries most threatened by climate change. It ranks 91st out of 191 countries facing high disaster risk levels and 16th globally in terms of severe impacts due to climate change-related effects on the INFORM index.<sup>61</sup>

However, climate change and natural resource scarcity are not understood as causes of conflict under the current National Strategy on Gender Equality. The framework on crisis and disaster management does not integrate gender-specific analyses. For example, the Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (2013, amended 2020) lacks any gender-specific aspects and specific measures of economic empowerment post-disaster, especially for women living in rural areas, who are the most vulnerable.<sup>62</sup>

61 <https://www.VietNambreakingnews.com/2021/10/enhancing-gender-equality-in-response-to-climate-change/>. Accessed 23 November 2021.

62 UN Women Viet Nam, Inception Report: Project: Empowering women for sustainable peace: Preventing violence and promoting social cohesion in ASEAN (2021-2025), 2021.

Against this backdrop, the WPS agenda provides a solid framework for responding to crises and ensuring that women's voices, particularly those of rural women, are included from the preliminary stages of disaster prevention through to post-disaster reconstruction.

| Emerging good practice  | NORWAY |
|---|--------|
| <p>A weakness of early NAPs is that they often sought to cover the breadth of the WPS agenda while approaching each issue only superficially. Norway's fourth NAP chose to emphasize only four overarching objectives of WPS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Peace and reconciliation processes</li> <li>2 Implementation of peace agreements</li> <li>3 Operations and missions</li> <li>4 Humanitarian efforts.</li> </ol> <p>Similar to Canada, Norway's plan provides for implementation of the WPS agenda both internationally and domestically. The NAP includes substantive emphasis on implementing the WPS agenda domestically, through a focus on women asylum seekers, radicalization and VAW in Norway. Additionally, an entire section of the NAP is devoted specifically to women, gender, and violent extremism.</p> |        |

To define the priority areas for a NAP, organizing consultations with stakeholders identified in **Phase 1** is a best practice.

| Emerging good practice   | UGANDA |
|--|--------|
| <p>To ensure that the NAP effectively responds to the needs of all stakeholders to ensure sustainable peace, Uganda's third NAP has made a conscious effort to involve women peacebuilders. Civil society and state partners, as well as women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and engaged non-traditional stakeholders such as religious leaders, were involved from the beginning of the drafting process through in-depth consultations.</p> |        |

## 2. Conducting a baseline study

A baseline study or needs assessment can help to determine the NAP's priorities by identifying pressing local and national needs of the WPS agenda in Viet Nam.

### 3. Ensuring high-level commitments

#### 3.1. Choice of the leading agency

The choice of which agency or agencies should lead the planning and implementation process depends on country-specific context and objectives. However, it is critical to make sure that the responsible agency has sufficient governmental support, resources and authority to generate a NAP that is supported and implemented by ministries and other collaborating partners. Cross-governmental coordination helps to generate political support and to raise awareness across Government.

In Viet Nam, a number of options could be considered depending on the NAP orientation (inward/outward/mixed), such as:

- MOLISA
- National Assembly's Committee for Social Affairs
- MOFA
- Committee for National Defence and Security
- Ministry of Public Security

#### Emerging good practice

#### CANADA

While the second Canadian NAP tasks Global Affairs Canada (GAC) with the responsibility of coordinating NAP implementation, it also identifies “lead” and “supporting” partners for implementation. The supporting partners are Public Safety Canada, Women and Gender Equality Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and the Department of Justice. All are charged with domestic implementation of the WPS agenda within their mandates. Canada’s NAP is one of the most compelling examples of an action plan in a non-conflict-affected country that connects foreign with domestic policy.

#### 3.2. Designation of expert posts for NAP implementation

NAPs are typically implemented over three to five years, making it difficult to sustain impact over the long term. Frequent change of political leadership at national and sectoral levels often leads to discontinuity in policy commitment. In addition, an internal mechanism such as focal points or WPS champions in departments can assist in mainstreaming a gender perspective and the WPS agenda in policies and ensure continuity in policy commitments.

**Emerging good practice****CANADA**

Each lead department created the role of WPS Champion to advance NAP implementation. Champions have the responsibility to lead internal advocacy, function as key resources on the WPS agenda and ensure the coherence of the department's strategy. In addition, Canada's NAP established a WPS focal point system to assist in mainstreaming WPS issues into policies and reporting on the implementation of the NAP. These are two important, effective and strategic institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the action plan.

#### 4. Establish coordination mechanisms and define clear roles and responsibilities

The plan should also include a clear mechanism of how the MDAs will coordinate their efforts in the implementation phase. Typically, one ministry takes the lead and several other MDAs serve as supporting partners. To facilitate this process, tools such as a TOR should be developed to outline in specific terms the roles and responsibilities of all involved actors.

In most countries, this coordination structure is organized on (at least) two distinct levels.

- 1 At the strategic level is a high-level body typically comprised of deputy/assistant ministers or heads of departments. This body sets the strategic objectives, provides needed political support, encourages whole of government participation and acts as the primary accountability mechanism.
- 2 At the operational level is the Technical Committee, comprised of medium-junior level staff, who are hopefully designated as NAP/WPS/gender focal points in their respective MDAs. This body is charged with running programmes and projects that advance implementation at the technical level. In addition to overseeing activities in their respective MDAs, the members are also charged with seeking synergies and facilitating more collaborative approaches so that implementation is conducted by a wide number of Government actors.

**Emerging good practice****UGANDA**

To coordinate implementation of the NAP, Uganda has established a particularly comprehensive governance framework. Applying lessons learned from good practices in other countries, it set up a three-tier coordination mechanism to ensure synergies between and among all stakeholders, including Government and non-state actors. The tiers are:

- 1 The Inter-ministerial, high-level National Steering Committee supports the NAP implementation process and provides strategic policy guidance.
- 2 The National Technical Committee meets quarterly to share and document progress on implementation, identify lessons learned and address emerging issues.
- 3 The NAP secretariat ensures the tracking of results, coordination of joint activities, management of adequate information flow among partners and a Trust Fund.

## 5. Enabling CSOs' participation

In most countries, a wide range of civil society actors continue to be the primary motivators for action on WPS. As witnessed over the last 25 years, this agenda originated and remains deeply rooted in the efforts of women leaders on the ground, who continue to pioneer efforts to prevent violence, resolve a range of disputes in a constructive manner and help build community strength and resilience to withstand a range of human and natural threats to peace and security.

In all countries that have adopted NAPs, civil society plays a range of roles – from supporting consultations at the grassroots level to informing the action plan's design, being a partner in implementation, monitoring activities and reporting on the results. Recently, in addition to traditional actors like community-based organizations and women's groups, there has been a notable increase in the participation of other segments of civil society in NAP processes, especially academia/think tanks and the media.

As Viet Nam's civil society is different from that of other countries, a NAP can provide the opportunity to formulate a flexible and resilient strategy for the engagement and participation of a wide range of actors, such as local governments, Viet Nam Women's Union, international organizations, academic institutions and a CSO representative that is already working on WPS-related issues of relief and recovery.

UN Women and development partners can also play a role in building the capacity

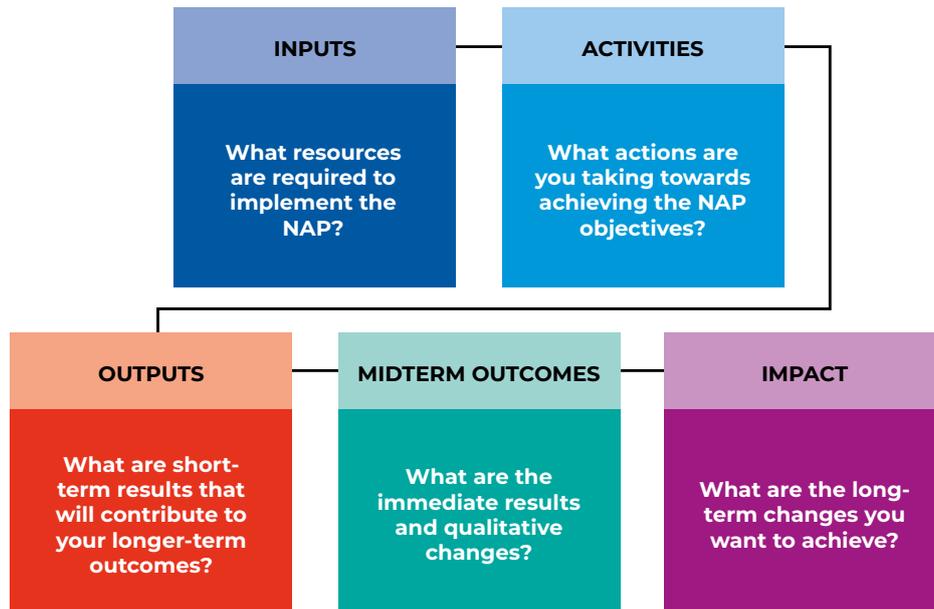
of state and non-state institutions, especially through training or coaching sessions on strengthening relevant knowledge, skills and practices regarding the NAP process based on the priorities of the Government. Development partners can also support the mobilization of stakeholders and resources, as well as the establishment of NAP coordination mechanisms.

| Emerging good practice  | INDONESIA |
|---|-----------|
| <p>Civil society has played a crucial role in advancing the WPS agenda in Indonesia with growing collaboration with the Government in recent years. For instance, the NAP for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism 2021-2024 contains an extensive provision around gender-responsive conflict prevention and a Working Group on Women and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism, which was established in collaboration between Government and civil society.</p> <p>More recently, faith-based organization AMAN, working with the Government, held a public national digital consultation to review the NAP implementation. The consultation has had an important role in scaling up the NAP to include more complex issues, in particular the intersection with climate change, violent extremism and the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also an example of how global disruption, such as COVID-19, can be leveraged to provide a broader space for the public to shape the WPS agenda.</p> |           |

## 6. Building the log frame

Using the RBM methodology, the NAP should include a logical framework that clearly states intended results at the outcome (long-term changes desired in the broader systems); mid-term outcomes (tangible contributions to the specific objectives with more specific statements of systemic changes) as well as outputs – most concrete results that MDAs intend to accomplish, and whose completion will logically contribute to the higher-level changes stated above.

FIGURE 7 Logframe analysis



Emerging good practice

INDONESIA

In Uganda’s third NAP, each core outcome is subdivided into midterm outcomes and outputs. In addition, the output of each medium-term outcome is given an estimated cost, along with a subtotal for each outcome. For example, under core outcome 2: ‘Good governance enhanced at all levels’, medium-term outcome 1 is ‘Increased participation of women in decision-making in the security sector’ has the following costs associated (p. 38):

- 1 Gender policies across all security sector institutions passed: 2,035,000,000 UGX
- 2 Increased knowledge and awareness of security sector leadership on the transformative role of women’s participation: 827,068,000 UGX
- 3 Systems and structures for the implementation of gender policies in security sector institutions are strengthened: 750,000,000 UGX

Monitoring and evaluation is also allocated at a cost of 2,682,923,648 UGX. The total budget comes to 90,570,166,912 UGX.<sup>63</sup>

63 Action plan available at <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/document/uganda-nap-2021-2025/>.

To ensure a consistent understanding of the logical framework and promote better alignment with an implementation plan, some countries have adopted a theory of change approach to underpin their NAPs.

**FIGURE 8** Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2017-2022

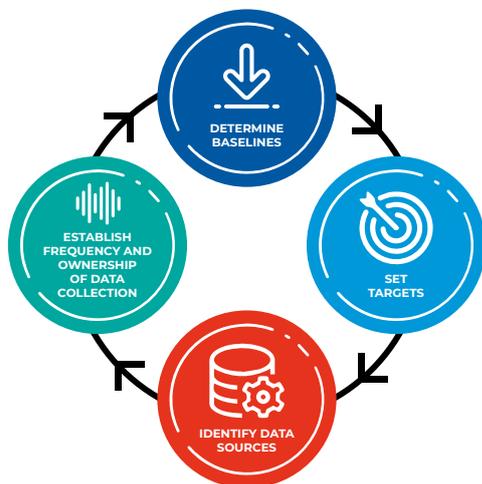


[https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/gender\\_equality-egalite\\_des\\_genres/theory\\_of\\_change-theorie\\_de\\_changement.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/theory_of_change-theorie_de_changement.aspx?lang=eng)

## 7. Establish a monitoring framework

Successful implementation of a NAP is dependent on the inclusion of structured monitoring and reporting systems. It is crucial that these mechanisms be included from the start, before implementation begins. The M&E system for a NAP should strive to have a focused number of specific outcome-level indicators, accompanied by an elaboration of these indicators – how they are understood and the data collection tools and methodologies that can be used to gather evidence against these. For these indicators to track progress meaningfully, reliable baselines should be established with robust data.

**FIGURE 9** Establishing a monitoring framework



This remains the part of the high impact framework that countries struggle with the most, as it is indeed hard to combine the need for clear measures of accountability (at the output level) with the indicators that can capture complex systemic and societal changes that are at the core of the WPS agenda, and are the ultimate reasons for adopting and implementing NAPs in the first place.

To overcome these shared challenges, it is important to address the following questions from the outset:

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>POLITICAL</b>  | <b>WHY</b> do we focus on WPS and why should NAPs be a well-supported tool? These unanswered questions lead to unprioritized M&E plans and persistent questions about their need and purpose.   |
| <b>CONCEPTUAL</b> | <b>WHAT</b> do various actors contribute and what is the change we want to measure? These are complicated substantive WPS issues that are deeply qualitative in nature and are often not supported with the necessary capacities and operational skills on the real use of planning for results and theories of change. |
| <b>TECHNICAL</b>  | <b>HOW</b> – policy/programme staff often lack the time and tools to collect, collate, analyse, and present data in ways that explain to various audiences the differences that NAP implementation has actually made.   |

### EXERCISE: FILL IN M&E MODEL FOR YOUR NAP

|   | Narrative summary | Objectively verifiable indicators | Means of verification |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>IMPACT</b><br>What do you want to achieve?   |                   |                                   |                       |
| <b>OUTPUTS</b><br>What medium-term results do you expect?                                   |                   |                                   |                       |
| <b>ACTIVITIES</b><br>What actions or activities will you take to achieve the NAP objective? |                   |                                   |                       |
| <b>INPUTS</b><br>What financial, human and material resources are needed?                   |                   |                                   |                       |

## 8. Create mechanisms for public accountability

The M&E framework also provides a basis for public accountability. For a Government to demonstrate commitment to accountability, it is important that monitoring of the NAP be transparent. Specific mechanisms should be established to hold the institutions in charge of implementation accountable through regular public reporting of measurable obligations and results. Leveraging regular international reporting obligations, parliamentary committees can also play a key role in overseeing implementation and holding the Government publicly accountable.

## 9. Estimation of cost and non-financial resources needed

Successful implementation of the NAP will require both financial and non-financial resources. At this stage a rough estimation of costs should be made for each specific activity. The need for other non-financial resources, for instance staff or thematic experts, should also be identified. This budget outline should be detailed in the M&E plan and will guide how funding is managed over the NAP lifecycle across ministries and departments, help to align expenditures with NAP performance and outcomes and ensure the NAP objectives remain realistic.

Increasingly there are tools and sources of support that can facilitate a costing exercise to inform both the national Government and prospective donors of the possible cost of running certain key initiatives. In practice, the most critical resources remain technical and human resources. A capacity needs assessment of those in charge of implementing the NAP should be conducted in order to anticipate and remedy these possible implementation problems.

## 10. Identify opportunities for resource mobilization

At the onset it is critical to start planning for how the NAP will be resourced, as most nations develop their plans as a 'theoretical' exercise of what should be done, while in reality a much better approach is to focus on what could be accomplished recognizing resource limitations. Dedicated funding will allow for consistency in accomplishing identified objectives, rather than conducting activities on an ad-hoc basis.

International experience with NAP implementation demonstrates that sources of financing can be internal and external. The Government should define the sources of the budget based on available state funding but funds can also include money available from earmarked national budgets, donor agencies or private-sector sources.

Gender responsive budgeting and planning is an effective tool to track budgetary allocations and for monitoring and conducting evidence-based advocacy.

**Emerging good practice****TIMOR-LESTE**

In Timor-Leste, UN Women strengthened the capacity of women's machinery's staff and further supported women's machinery to track allocation of budgets for the implementation of NAPs on GBV and WPS. Since the women's machinery had limited power to influence other line ministries, UN Women supported the Government to strengthen the partnership between the women's machinery and the Prime Minister's Office. It also developed and trained civil servants to utilize advocacy tools and as a result 40 per cent of line ministries allocated resources for NAP GBV commitments in their annual action plans. Likewise, 71 per cent of ministries included NAP-GBV commitments in their 2016 Annual plans.

**11. Setting the timeframe**

A NAP should set, along with specific target dates for the achievement of each of its activities, a period for the plan as a whole. This timeframe should allow enough time for the necessary administrative, resource, educational and infrastructure measures to be put in place and for some of the objectives to be achieved. This will allow both the Government and civil society to have a frame of reference for assessing the plan's achievements and shortcomings. The period should not, therefore, be too short. Equally, it should not be so long that a sense of continuity or overall perspective is difficult to maintain.

**12. Drafting the NAP**

Drafting the action plan includes designating a coordinator, if possible, and assigning entities to lead particular tasks. It is equally important to determine how internal and external feedback from experts and stakeholders will be communicated and incorporated into the document.

The Outline should contain:

- 1** A table of contents and a list of abbreviations;
- 2** Letter of political support (ministers etc.);
- 3** Introduction that includes information on:
  - a. General background
  - b. Global context of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions
  - c. Viet Nam's national context
  - d. The stakeholders and their roles in the NAP elaboration process.
- 4** The development process, including a timeline for such things as workshops, events, conferences, key meetings, consultations with civil society;

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The NAP. This section should include:

- a. The vision
- b. The mission
- c. Clearly stated priority themes
- d. Clearly stated strategic objectives with:
  - i. Specified activities
  - ii. Indicators for measuring progress
  - iii. Specified implementing actors
  - iv. Other partners
  - v. Financial allocation and timeframes for implementation.

All this information should also be presented in the form of a matrix.

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Clearly established M&E plan with allocated resources.

### 13. Adopting the NAP

High-level political endorsement of the NAP is essential. Draft action plans should receive validation by all stakeholders at all levels to ensure collective ownership.

### 14. Launching the NAP

While the specific features of the launch will depend on each country, it should be a high-profile media event involving senior governmental officials, as well as representatives of various target groups. Furthermore, the relevance of international human rights mechanisms may be emphasized through the participation of representatives of the United Nations or other international or regional organizations. Finally, there should be media and public dissemination strategies to reinforce the action plan's messages, target specific audiences and raise awareness among the general public. The NAP should be issued in a user-friendly format and brochures, leaflets and posters might be produced and distributed through State bodies and NGOs or sent directly to schools, community organizations and members of the public on request. ■

## PHASE 2 CHECKLIST

During this phase, you should have answers to the following questions:

1. What are the NAP's priorities?
2. How do they align with broader policy objectives on women's rights, gender equality, security, peacebuilding and conflict prevention?
3. How will the NAP be drafted?
4. What will the NAP WPS look like (outline, number of pillars, etc.)?
5. How should political will be fostered? How will consensus be built?
6. Which focal ministries/implementation modalities are best to enhance effective implementation?
7. What coordination mechanisms will be developed to ensure effective implementation?
8. What monitoring/ reporting mechanisms will be developed to ensure effective implementation?
9. What kind of relationship does civil society have with the Government, and how can civil society effectively collaborate to strengthen NAP efforts?
10. What results do you want the NAP to achieve?
11. Can you distil those results into a small group of outcomes? How do these outcomes relate to the gaps you are trying to fill in the area of WPS?
12. What financial and human resources are needed to fully implement the NAP? How can it be financed?
13. What accountability mechanisms need to be developed to ensure monitoring and reporting on UNSCR 1325?
14. Can the NAP's launch be used to raise awareness?

# ROAD MAP

## PROPOSED ACTIONS PHASE 3: PUTTING THE NAP INTO ACTION

Implementation implies a number of measures, mechanisms and resources (human, financial, information and technological), that largely depend on the NAP's objectives and the country context. If the plan has been developed on the basis of realistic objectives, clear targets, broad scope and inclusive participation, it will be much easier to ensure effective implementation.

### **1. Engage implementing partners and sustain political commitment**

Responsibility for implementing the plan is likely to be spread over several levels of Government. Local and regional authorities should be involved from the start. Multiple Government agencies, including ministries of foreign affairs, defence, gender and social affairs, are responsible for implementing the plan. While discussions about the specific roles of each implementing body should be part of the NAP's development, it remains crucial to continue to engage Government actors and implementing bodies throughout the implementation phase. A strategy should be established to sustain and increase support for NAP objectives in each department and secure political commitment from the leadership.

### **2. Raise internal and public awareness of the NAP**

Raising awareness of the NAP and its objectives, domestically and internationally, can help signal political leadership and build momentum. Outreach activities should be conducted during the implementation phase and can include awareness-raising campaigns, announcements at the UN, speeches and events with representatives from the Government, private sector and general public.

### **3. Identify if additional stakeholders need to be reached**

As with NAP development, implementation should be inclusive and collaborative. It may require engaging additional stakeholders.

#### 4. Integrate the NAP's activities into Government planning and the budget

##### Emerging good practice

##### TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste underwent a decentralization process in 2015, which was key to ensuring ownership of national-level policies on WPS by local leaders and facilitating integration of WPS commitments in local development plans. In 2015, UN Women supported the women's machinery to review the law on municipal administration in order to integrate gender quotas at the municipal level and mainstream gender into the law. The decree-law that was approved by the Council of Ministers stated that the local administrator has the responsibility for implementing gender commitments, including the NAP WPS, in local plans and budgets.

##### Lesson learned

##### CANADA

Funding for implementation of the Canadian NAP is provided from the budgets of responsible ministries. However, the cross-governmental nature of the NAP adds to the challenge. As budgets are allocated to each department on an annual or multi-annual basis, it introduces the risk that some departments choose to back away from their WPS commitments due to a lack of funding. Without specific ministries' responsibilities and budgets, it is unlikely that Government officials with heavy workloads and competing priorities will ensure that the action plan is effectively implemented. As a result, implementation will be contingent on the capacity and willingness of individual Government officials and not an institutionalized, structured whole of Government approach.

#### 5. Monitor and adapt when necessary

Monitoring of the NAP should be an ongoing process, via a mechanism that has high-level political and financial support from the Government. It is crucial to maintain frequent communication through periodic workshops, reporting meetings or other convening mechanisms to share knowledge, identify challenges, lessons learned and areas for any needed course corrections. As part of monitoring, new targets and indicators should be set on a continuous basis during the implementation phase. It should always be possible for the NAP's objectives and activities to be revised or modified in light of the monitoring process.

## 6. Ensuring accountability & transparency

Many Governments conduct periodic reporting every year as an additional accountability mechanism. Reports can contain updates from implementing bodies, successes and challenges and highlights of impactful cross-governmental collaboration.

To encourage transparency, these reports should be made public and disseminated to high-level Government officials, including legislative representatives, and implementing actors. Leveraging regular international reporting obligations, such as the CEDAW reporting mechanism, should be considered. Parliamentary committees can also play a key role in overseeing implementation and holding the Government publicly accountable. ■

### PHASE 3 CHECKLIST

During this phase, you should have answers to the following questions:

1. How should sustained political commitment be secured throughout implementation?
2. What strategies should be developed to raise internal and public awareness of the NAP?
3. Which additional stakeholders should be engaged? How to ensure sustained engagement from previously identified stakeholders?
4. How will NAP activities be integrated into Government planning, including the budget?
5. How should implementation be monitored?
6. How should the NAP incorporate reflection, learning and flexibility in order to meet the strategy's goals and objectives?
7. What should be the role of parliament in reporting on implementation?
8. How should accountability and transparency be ensured throughout the implementation phase?

# ROAD MAP

## PROPOSED ACTIONS PHASE 4: REVIEW AND REVISE

**N**APs should be time-bound documents, which are evaluated and revised at the end of the set period. Reviewing mechanisms are a crucial tool for Government agencies to learn from past experiences and adapt to changing circumstances as needed.

It is crucial that evaluation mechanisms be identified and included in the formulation of the NAP from the onset. Ideally, the Government should allocate a budget for these evaluation processes during development of the action plan.

### Evaluation events

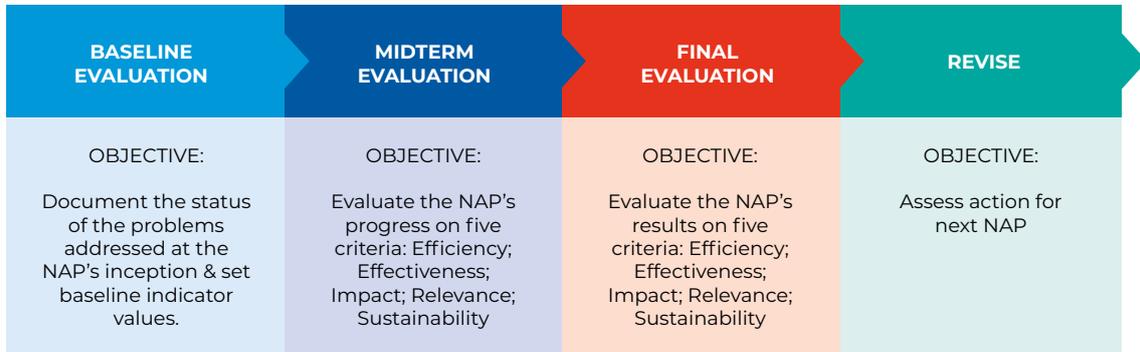
Periodic external evaluations of implementation are an effective way to know whether a policy is achieving its intended goal and to challenge implicit assumptions. The evaluation should be participatory, engage civil society and when possible, the results should be available to the public.

While each NAP will need to establish its own mechanisms for evaluation, it is suggested that, at a minimum, five criteria are examined:

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>EFFICIENCY</b>     | To what extent were NAP outputs delivered in a timely and fiscally efficient manner? |
| <b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>  | To what extent have the intended NAP outcomes been achieved?                         |
| <b>IMPACT</b>         | What are the long-term effects of the NAP to date?                                   |
| <b>RELEVANCE</b>      | To what extent has the NAP solved the problems it addressed?                         |
| <b>SUSTAINABILITY</b> | To what extent can the results be sustained beyond the NAP?                          |

The evaluation should be conducted with a view to laying the foundation for a successor plan. ■

**FIGURE 10** Suggest evaluations, with objectives



# Towards Full Implementation of WPS Agenda in Viet Nam

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REPORT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE  
POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF VIET NAM'S  
FIRST NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON  
WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

