

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

IN ASIA PACIFIC, 20 YEARS ON

PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND LESSONS LEARNED



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 20th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is a critical moment for the agenda and its relevance, which has been tested by the extensive impacts of COVID-19. We need to take stock of the progress as well as the gaps in implementing WPS in the Asia Pacific region¹ over the last 20 years, and build upon the lessons learned to move the WPS agenda forward in the years to come.

The WPS agenda is meaningful to all societies in the Asia Pacific region. Its fundamental purpose is to prevent insecurity and violence by harnessing the potentials of both women and men, and addressing structural gender inequality and discriminatory gender norms that are the barriers to sustainable peace. The agenda is wide-ranging and goes beyond recognized situations of conflict and emergency, although some aspects of WPS and international law may involve strict mandates within these settings. Pre- and post-conflict environments of gendered inequality and violence destabilize communities and may affect national and international peace and security. Thus, all countries and regions are expected to take ownership and responsibility in promoting gender equality and inclusion in peace and security processes.

In Asia Pacific, the WPS agenda faces unique challenges due to a frequent misperception that it applies exclusively to conflict contexts, but also due to the underrepresentation of the region in global WPS debates. The lack of visibility of peace and security efforts in the region, other than in Afghanistan and Myanmar, which are routinely on the Security Council agenda, diminishes the importance and relevance of the region's overall WPS agenda, and undermines regional commitments. There needs to be more effort at the global level, especially in UN institutions and reports, to include analysis of the region, and to make WPS initiatives in all regions equally visible.

The WPS agenda has never been more relevant than during the COVID-19 global pandemic. COVID-19 represents a threat to international peace and security in its own right. The pandemic is a conflict multiplier, and women's roles in preventing conflict and in responding to the health crisis are vital to support. However, as in conflict situations, the use of emergency powers and militarized responses has gendered impacts. Women's equal participation and gender-sensitive protection is needed to mitigate those impacts and enable alternative responses. The importance of women's meaningful participation has been demonstrated by the effectiveness of COVID-19 responses in countries with greater gender equality and, often, with woman leaders. But the universal 'shadow pandemic' of domestic and gender-based violence has serious consequences for women's security in the region and globally. Both the pandemic and the shadow pandemic demand a gender-inclusive human security response.

COVID-19 restrictions have disproportionately impacted women's physical and economic security, reduced resources for women's peacebuilding and increased the barriers to gender-equal decision-making participation. These setbacks to gender equality and women's rights further undermine the prospects for peace and security in the region (Azcona: 2020). At the same time, the pandemic has made more visible women's frontline roles as essential workers in responding to the crisis and has increased visibility of the gender-based violence that women and girls experience, and in so doing has created an opportunity for the WPS agenda to enhance resilience and peace in the region.

Looking ahead, addressing four key issues will be crucial to the future development and influence of the WPS agenda in the Asia Pacific region.

1. The focus on women's participation in peace and security needs to extend beyond peace processes and emergencies to the recovery of post-conflict, post-disaster and post-pandemic societies. This means governments and donors in the region must sustain their investments to lift women's social, political and economic empowerment beyond short-term political and aid funding cycles. This includes targeted support for women's rights to education, to employment and income-generation, and to physical security as well as bodily integrity, which includes sexual and reproductive rights. Without securing these rights women and girls do not have life chances that are equal to those of men and boys, and are barred from contributing to the prosperity and peace of the region. Adequately financing the WPS agenda should be the first priority for the next decade.

2. Ensuring our approach to peace and security is for all will require more men to become WPS champions and more men's leadership for greater gender inclusion in peace and security sectors and decision-making. Institutional capacity for WPS analysis and responses needs to be scaled up across governments, universities and other research institutions, and civil society. This is necessary to mainstream gendered insecurity in the analysis of peace and security threats and within indicators of state and regional instability in the region. WPS is not a niche agenda just for women; it is an agenda of gender equality and peace that seeks to mainstream gender perspectives on the differential impact of security policies and crises on women and men in order to better prevent, prepare for, and respond to them.

3. Gaps in protection must be addressed, and countries in the region should commit to tackling sexual and gender-based violence, whether within the context of recognized conflict or not, **with region-wide targets, building on existing frameworks for reducing the violence and enforcing sanctions against it.** While reports of male victims have increased in post-conflict societies there is little recognition or redress for them. Similarly, the representation of and attention to children born of

rape in conflict is also lagging in the region. WPS also has the potential to address gender-sensitive protection in the context of violent extremism. Sexual and gender-based crimes perpetrated against women foreign terrorist fighters or family members specifically as part of recruitment or within violent extremist groups need to be investigated and redressed as part of the processes of repatriation, reintegration and disengagement.

4. More emphasis on conflict and crisis prevention and the recognition of women mediators in mitigating crises and the escalation of conflicts is required in the implementation of WPS in the region.

COVID-19 has shown how difficult it is to pursue and politically sustain effective prevention policies and frameworks. This is in part because it is so difficult to measure or prove the effectiveness of a framework – whether it is designed to prevent terrorism, conflict, the spread of an infection or climate change – when the event does not occur. Yet WPS is fundamentally about prevention and acknowledging the range of factors and types of crisis that fuel conflict. The agenda has encouraged women’s everyday roles in prevention and the development of gender-sensitive early warning indicators of conflict and insecurity, violent extremism, extreme weather events or other impending disasters. Further action needs to be taken to operationalize these gender-inclusive early warning systems and roles and create accountable institutional mechanisms for conflict prevention.

The paper further develops these points and others in five main parts:

PART I reviews and summarizes the main developments in the global Women, Peace and Security agenda based on the state-of-the-art literature. It discusses the relevance and implications of these developments for the WPS agenda in the Asia Pacific region specifically.

PART II maps the progress of WPS in the Asia Pacific region highlighting the major relevant policy developments at the regional and national levels and WPS developments across a range of indicators for each of the four WPS pillars: women’s meaningful participation; gender-sensitive protection; gender-responsive relief and recovery; and conflict prevention.

PART III considers the important lessons learned in responding to Women, Peace and Security in the Asia Pacific region in various situations involving conflict, violence, disaster and emergency.

PART IV highlights the relevance of WPS in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and the future recovery.

PART V summarizes the progress, gaps and lessons learned to date in the development of the WPS agenda in the Asia Pacific region and recommends future key actions for states, civil society and regional institutions.

PART I.

Evolution of the global agenda on Women, Peace and Security

2000-2020

The international Women, Peace and Security agenda has substantially evolved since the founding UN Security Council resolution 1325 that established it in October 2000. After 20 years of commitments, including 10 resolutions of the UN Security Council and National Action Plans in 84 member states, women's "equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security," in the words of resolution 1325, remains the lynchpin of the agenda. There has been notable progress as well as continued implementation challenges at all levels and with regard to all four pillars of the agenda: *protection* of women's human rights; promotion of women's peace and security *participation*; support for women's roles in the *prevention* of conflict; and gender equality in *relief and recovery*.

Six areas of evolution over the two decades are noteworthy:

First, since the year 2000 security and peace have been re-conceptualized. Today the mantra "no women, no peace" is widely accepted in theory, if not always achieved in practice. While there has been a major implementation gap with respect to women's frequent exclusion from many peace processes (UN Women: 2015), a body of evidence now reveals the positive impact of women's meaningful participation on peace outcomes (Davies and True eds. 2019). That evidence has focused greater attention and effort to promote inclusive peace.² There have been parallels with the movement for gender balance in political rights and economic governance after the 2008 global financial crisis. Women's equal inclusion in peace processes, including at negotiation tables, has been progressively promoted in a

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manner analogous to the progress of women in corporate boardrooms. And there is growing evidence that there, too, the investment returns from women's presence in decision-making is strong and positive. The rationale for women's inclusion in peace negotiations and decisions about post-conflict reconstruction is clear: Women's participation contributes to the prevention and resolution of conflicts, while the lack of women's participation undermines it. Strong evidence supports the association between gender equality and peace: Countries with greater gender equality are less likely to engage in violent conflict or to be targets or hosts of terrorism than countries with low levels of gender equality (see Hudson et al: 2012; Salman: 2015). Nonetheless, the relationship between women's rights and state stability remains contested, as seen in the current intra-Afghan peace negotiations. Women's rights and participation are a red line for many, yet they are not guaranteed by the current process. At the same time, the significance of gender inclusion for the future peace in Afghanistan and other conflict-affected countries has never been more visible in global politics (Duncanson and Farr 2019).

Second, the pressure to end impunity for conflict-related sexual violence is an important development of the WPS agenda. Security Council resolutions, including the most recent WPS resolution, by promoting a survivor-centred approach, have broken the international silence on this violence as a weapon of conflict and terrorism (UN Security Council: 2019b). They have enabled data gathering concerning its risk and incidence, as well as the creation of new women protection advisor positions in UN missions, the implementation of common protocols on evidence and the treatment of victims and survivors, and community programmes to address stigma. Non-state actors represented by the NGO Working Group on resolution 1325 have argued that the focus on protection against sexual violence since 2008 highlights the victimization rather than the agency of women in peace and security.

Third, UNSC WPS resolutions over the two-decade period have progressively recognized the diversity among women, and the intersectionality of gender with age (girls/youth), sexuality (LGBTQI) and minority status (ethnicity, disability) (Davies and True: 2019). WPS has also acknowledged that men and boys as well as women and girls can be victims and/or survivors of gender-based violence, and that sexual and reproductive rights are foundational, reflecting the evolution of WPS. While it is coined "*Women, Peace and Security*" the gender perspective of the agenda extends its relevance to all groups, changing the meaning of gender as it has been understood in the peace and security realm and implemented in practice.

Fourth, militaries are taking up the Women, Peace and Security agenda to inform their gender-specific recruitment targets and their operational planning, in international operations in particular. The prerogative to increase women's security sector participation has required new

alliances between the military and other organizations, and that were not envisioned back in 2000 (Hewitt: 2016; Wittwer: 2019). Defence investment in WPS has been an opportunity to reform military practices and agendas, as well as definitions of peace and security within countries and within regions. In Asia Pacific, China's peacekeeping training and the Australian Defence Force's gender advisor training have brought about positive changes within defence culture and international operations. Innovation has occurred when WPS practitioners engage in joint problem-solving with military or peacekeeping forces. For example, in Asia Pacific some of these innovations include women's organizations working closely with military to support humanitarian operations and community policing in situations of displacement, including the provision of independent radio communication to rural areas. This WPS engagement ensures the flexibility of frameworks in responding to local situations of conflict and insecurity.

Fifth, over the two decades, the WPS agenda has demonstrated flexibility to address emerging security issues and crises. WPS has had to accommodate issues of terrorism and violent extremism, armed conflict, migration and displacement crises, and most recently a health pandemic, as threats to security and women's security in particular (True: 2016). As such, approaches to WPS in civil society organizations as well as states and international organizations have been rethought and applied to a different set of issues, albeit sometimes unevenly. The WPS community has made connections between WPS and other cross-cutting agendas such as countering violent extremism, climate insecurity, disaster and pandemic preparedness. The advocacy of this community ensures that WPS is not co-opted for state security purposes alone and that the normative international goals of gender equality and non-violent peace are those against which all WPS achievements should be assessed.

Sixth, 20 years on we have seen major advances in the political leadership on women, peace and security, including in Asia and the Pacific.³ The WPS agenda has become an integral part of the normative international policy framework on peacebuilding and of the foreign policies of a growing number of states. Three of the Permanent Five (P5) member states have actively promoted women's security as matters of national and international security, while states seeking election to the Security Council (as non-permanent members) are strongly encouraged to champion WPS. Moreover, the rise of a feminist foreign policy movement across the world is a very significant development. WPS is now part of the soft power tools available to all state and non-state actors in their contributions to development assistance, peacekeeping and military operations as well as their diplomacy and multilateral engagement. It is even part of the traditional power positioning globally and regionally. This can be seen in the Asia Pacific region with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand devoting development assistance to various civil society-led WPS initiatives as part of their Pacific Step-Up and Re-Set policies,

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respectively launched in 2018, while China and India have advanced WPS in their traditional peacekeeping diplomacy (Liu: 2019). A very promising development is the pursuit of WPS as a means to prevent conflict and to sustain peace and security in the region by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which produced a joint statement in 2017 and 2019, and is promoting gender mainstreaming through its Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. This is an encouraging trend since many peace and security issues require cross-border collaboration in South-East Asia, including countering and preventing violence extremism, humanitarian responses to internally displaced people (IDP), and climate-induced disasters - not to mention the COVID-19 pandemic. WPS leadership through diplomacy needs to support populations – diverse women and men – to deliver peace and prosperity through principles of gender equality and inclusion.⁴

These developments in the WPS agenda have relevance for the Asia Pacific region, the largest single global region with considerable diversity of states, traditional and non-traditional security issues. The region is not well understood in WPS terms, perhaps because of its sheer size and range of challenges or because few UN peace operations are located within its borders. However, Asia Pacific is a strategic site for the world's future economic prosperity, which is tied to women's empowerment. It is also a site for global normative leadership given that, for example, the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia (ESCAP) is its only regional body that includes all P5 member states (Basu: 2016). This makes Asia Pacific a crucial region for upholding commitments to and ensuring international peace and security.

As stated in UNSCR 2493 (2019a) on Women, Peace and Security, “context-specific approaches” are needed.⁵ The role of regional institutions and architecture is important in developing practical and measurable steps toward the full implementation of the agenda. WPS is adapted for different regional contexts as there is no one size that fits all in realizing greater security for women, and for all. In Asia, for example, establishing normative frameworks that recognize women's roles and the gender dimension of peace and security has been vital given that anything to do with women has often been seen as a social issue and relegated to social committees rather than a matter of security and political decision-making. At the same, building networks to bring together women active in the peace and security field has also been imperative in Asia to further develop capacities for WPS analysis and response. By contrast, in the Pacific Islands, humanitarian and climate responses have been increasingly linked to the WPS agenda and women's leadership and activism has supported a broadening of human security agendas.

Non-traditional security issues of migration, displacement, terrorism, climate-induced disaster and pandemics have been substantial foci in the Asia Pacific region. The future direction of the WPS agenda in the region needs to reflect that multiplicity of challenges to peace and security and to better harness the responses to them under an integrated WPS framework.

Pillars of Progress on Women, Peace and Security in Asia Pacific

FROM 2000-2020

I. PARTICIPATION



II. PREVENTION



III. PROTECTION



IV. RELIEF AND RECOVERY



PARTICIPATION

14 Countries with National Action Plans on WPS.

From zero to **723 female peacekeepers**, hailing from 12 troop contributing countries.

Women have reached **one-third of peace negotiators** in the Philippines, 2011 and 2014.

Since 2010, **82 women peacebuilders and gender equality advocates** have been celebrated across 7 countries thanks to N-Peace (UNDP).

The region boasts **two networks with 45 women** experts in peace processes and mediators.

59% of peace agreements since 2000 with substantive gender provisions and above global average implementation.

PREVENTION

Countries in the region with laws against domestic violence increased from 7 to 34 between 2000 and 2020.

Women are 10% of the police force in the Asia Pacific region, above the global average of 9%.

Women hold 20% of prosecutorial roles and **23% of judicial appointments.**

PROTECTION

Women's community safety perception slightly improved between 2017 and 2019 with **68% women** now reporting they **feel safe walking alone at night.**

Countries in Asia Pacific are among the first in the world to incorporate in **P/CVE national plans explicit commitments to women's participation and gender-responsive policy and programmes** (Philippines and Indonesia).

RELIEF AND RECOVERY

One of the only **peace agreements in the world to include a gender financing provision** – the CAB (Philippines) – includes a five per cent allocation of development funds to support women's participation and 'return to normal life'.

Maternal mortality – a major impact of conflict/disaster/fragility – **has decreased** from between 214 - 384 to 129 - 157 deaths per 100,000 live births between 2000 and 2020.

Reporting of trafficking cases, indicating progress in governance responses, **has significantly increased** across the two decades from 3096 cases for 28 countries in early 2000s and to 9533 cases for 36 countries in the period in 2017.

PART II.

Progress on Women, Peace and Security

IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

This section maps the progress on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in the Asia Pacific region. First, it highlights some of the major relevant policy developments at the regional level, in ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum, and at the national level, with regard to WPS National Action Plans or similar policies. Second, it assesses progress considering a range of indicators for each of the four WPS pillars: women's meaningful participation; protection against sexual and gender-based violence; conflict prevention; and gender-responsive relief and recovery. It is important to review each respective pillar in its own right with regard to implementation while also recognizing the interplay among the pillars in a holistic approach to WPS (Davies and True: 2019: 9). The section uses data where possible to show change or the lack of it from 2000 to 2020 for countries in the region or the region as a whole, or if not the most recent indicators.

Overall, there has been uneven progress in implementing the WPS pillars in Asia Pacific. On the one hand, there have been important advances since 2000 in women's meaningful participation in peace and security in the region. These advances include the growing presence of female peacekeepers and of gender-sensitive peacekeeping training, as well as the increased adoption of gender provisions in peace agreements and women's participation in peace processes. With regard to women's security in peacetime, which can be an indicator of the likelihood of conflict, recovery and disaster or crisis resilience, the maternal mortality rate has substantially reduced across the 20-year period while state laws against domestic and sexual violence have been propagated across the region, resulting in new mechanisms for the protection of women's human rights. There is now also greater recognition and support for

women peacebuilders and their efforts to prevent conflict and fragility in the region as a result of the establishment of new networks and awards.

On the other hand, there have been persistent challenges with institutionalizing WPS in the Asia Pacific region, especially with regard to protection and responses to gender-based violence and human rights violations, but also in terms of women's leadership and meaningful participation in peace and security decision-making. There are not enough WPS political champions in the Asia Pacific region (Shepherd and True: 2014). Five foreign and defence ministers mentioned below are notable for their active leadership but others in a region of 39 countries have yet to lead the way. Women's participation in formal peace processes is still limited in the official intra-Afghan peace process, which began on 12 September. The negotiating team of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan included four women among the 21 negotiators on the government side, or 19 per cent. The Taliban does not have any women on their negotiating team. Of great concern is the widespread extent of gender-based violence in Asia Pacific whether in or outside of conflict given the impacts on women's security and state fragility. As discussed below, Asia was the region with the largest number of female homicides in 2017; while reports of human trafficking of women and girls suggest large increases and that rates of early marriage have been decreasing in the Asia Pacific region. Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that early marriages increase in crisis and conflict-affected situations as marrying off daughters younger than 18 years old becomes an economic coping strategy.

Regional policy developments

Twelve regional organizations have adopted Regional Actions Plans on WPS but there is only one in the Asia Pacific region—the Pacific Islands Forum. The ASEAN 2017 joint statement on Women, Peace and Security is the first statement by ASEAN as a whole to acknowledge UN Security Council resolution 1325 and the gendered effects of armed conflict. That commitment has been driven by the ASEAN sectoral bodies mandated to advance gender equality and empowerment of women under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillar, namely the ASEAN Committee for Women (ACW) represented by national women machineries from ASEAN Member States, and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). Some indicators of progress include the 2018 dialogue on WPS between Australian and ASEAN (Davies and Lee-Koo: 2018), and the 2019 Regional Symposium on Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women's role for Sustainable Peace and Security in September 2020, which marked an important starting point to establish cross-sectoral collaboration on WPS between the ASEAN socio-cultural community (ASCC) and political and security community (APSC) pillars.⁶ In addition, the ASEAN 2025 framework advocates mainstreaming gender in peacebuilding and

OVERALL, THERE HAS BEEN UNEVEN PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WPS PILLARS IN ASIA PACIFIC.

conflict resolution processes through the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation.⁷ There is not yet an ASEAN regional institutional mechanism to set forth actions on WPS, but that is a likely future development (Veneracion-Rallonza: 2019). Indeed, ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment to WPS in its joint statement issued at the 2019 ASEAN Regional Forum, which included stronger and specific language on advancing the agenda in the region (ASEAN: 2019a).

In the Asia Pacific region, however, only the Pacific Islands Forum has adopted a Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, for the period 2010-2015 (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat: 2015). That plan, which has now expired, has had important impacts on the mainstreaming of gender inclusion of women's networks in security policy and practice (George: 2019). A wide range of institutional mechanisms on development, gender equality and human rights have been promoted in the Asia Pacific region. For example, civil society organizations such as the Asia Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security (2015) support the application of the General Recommendation 30 of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on women in conflict and post-conflict, "to ensure women's meaningful participation in and benefit from all initiatives and measures to build peace and establish security". ASEAN's Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women is an important foundation for WPS action plans given the connections between violence against women and the perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict, disaster and displacement situations, and by violent extremist groups (ASEAN: 2015b; Davies et al: 2014). Indeed, the Regional Action Plan on eliminating violence against women is the most comprehensive policy that ASEAN has produced to address gender equality. It outlines eight core actions to prevent violence against women, protect and support victims and survivors, amend legal frameworks, and cooperate on capacity building, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, women's rights in conflict, recovery and peacetime are integral to the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. At the "Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+25 Review" in November 2019, ministers and high-level officials from 45 countries committed to intensify "priority actions towards realizing women's rights and fundamental freedoms for an equal future." (UN Women Asia Pacific: 2019b)

National policy developments

In 2000 there were no national action plans on WPS anywhere in the world. In 2004, Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general at the time, called for WPS National Action Plans (NAPs) with Denmark the first member state to adopt a NAP in 2006. In the Asia Pacific region, Philippines was the first country to adopt a NAP WPS and is currently implementing its third NAP. In 2020, there are now 14 member states in the region and

more than 80 states globally that have adopted NAPs or similar policies to implement the WPS agenda.

In Asia Pacific, NAPs have taken distinct forms based on the peace and security concerns of each country and various approaches to women's needs, rights and security (Swaine: 2017; Lee Koo and Trojanowska: 2017). In the Philippines, for example, the NAP covers the domestic implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty provisions through national laws to regulate small arms transfer and exchange, given their frequent use in the perpetration of gender-based and sexual violence in conflict-affected areas (Nario-Galace 2019). The Pacific Islands regional plan (2010-2015) focused on women's contributions to peacebuilding and security sector reform (George: 2016), while in Nepal the NAP (2016) enables the inclusive participation and protection of war widows in post-conflict decision making. By contrast, Australia's NAP (2012–2018) implemented targets to increase women's participation in the Australian Defence Force, especially in frontline and leadership roles (Lee Koo: 2016) while Indonesia's NAP 2014-2019 has focused on social rather than political conflict and is connected to the Law on Social Conflicts, which has a narrower definition of Women, Peace and Security than UNSCR 1325 and the WPS global normative framework.⁸

Nine countries in Asia Pacific have involved civil society organizations in the planning, design and/or implementation of NAPs. In the Philippines and Australia, such organizations have had comprehensive input and been co-drafters in the case of Timor-Leste (University of Sydney: 2019). This civil society engagement can be seen as an indicator of an inclusive process, which enhances the accountability mechanisms for NAPs and potentially, the effectiveness of NAPs in achieving WPS outcomes. Greater civil society monitoring of NAPs and regional collaboration should be encouraged and supported as more countries in the region adopt them (Afghan Women's Network: 2016).

National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security (NAPs WPS)

COUNTRY / YEAR(S)

AFGHANISTAN

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2015

AUSTRALIA

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2012-2018,
2020-2029 (second)

BOUGAINVILLE (PNG)

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2016

INDONESIA

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2014-2019,
2020-2025 (second)

JAPAN

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2015

PHILIPPINES

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2005-2010, 2010-2016
(second), 2017 (third)

NEW ZEALAND

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2015

SOUTH KOREA

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2014

SOLOMON ISLANDS

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2017

TIMOR LESTE

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2016

NEPAL

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2011-2016,
2020 (second)

SRI LANKA

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2020

BANGLADESH

YEAR OF NAP WPS
2019

THAILAND

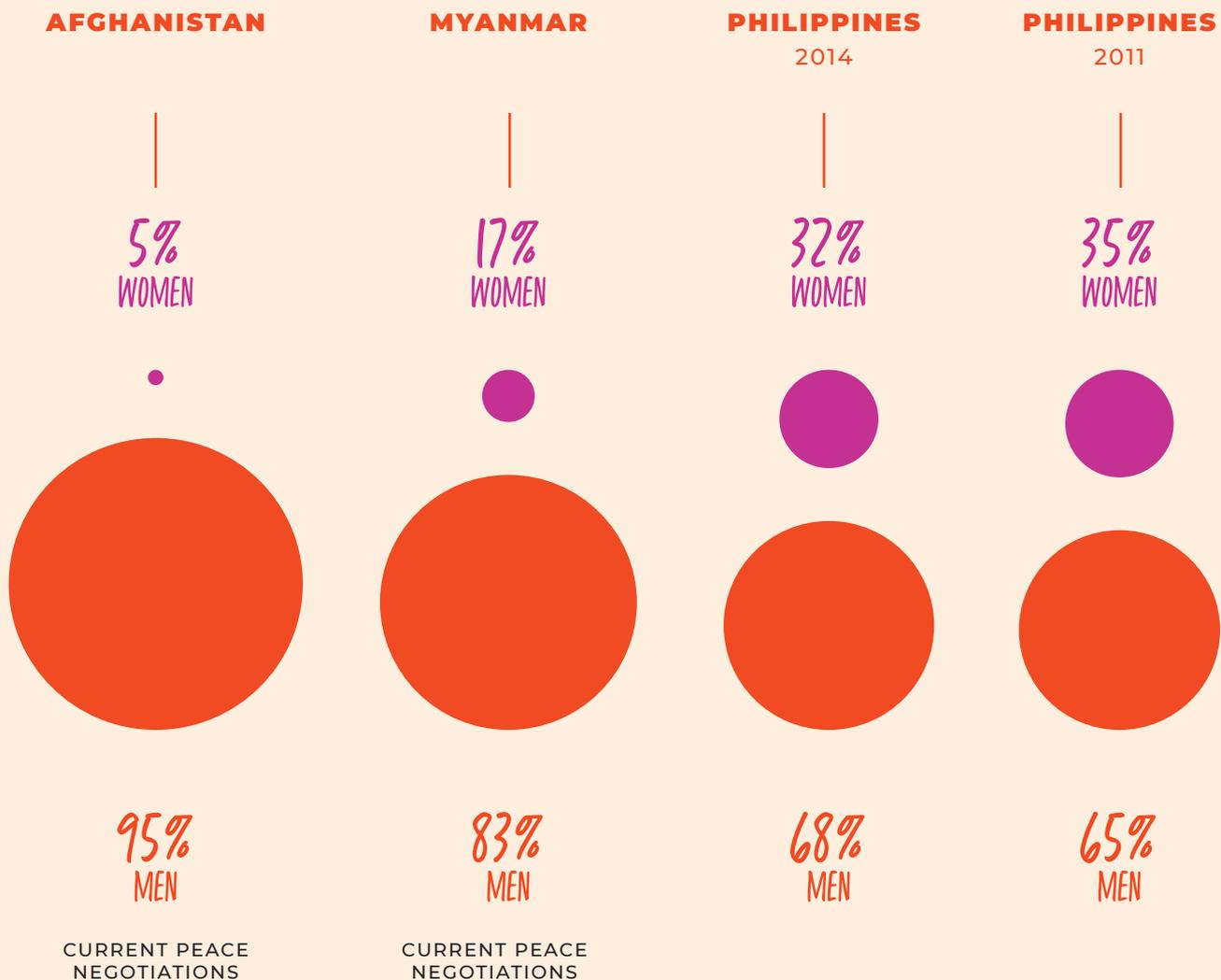
YEAR OF NAP WPS
2019

PARTICIPATION

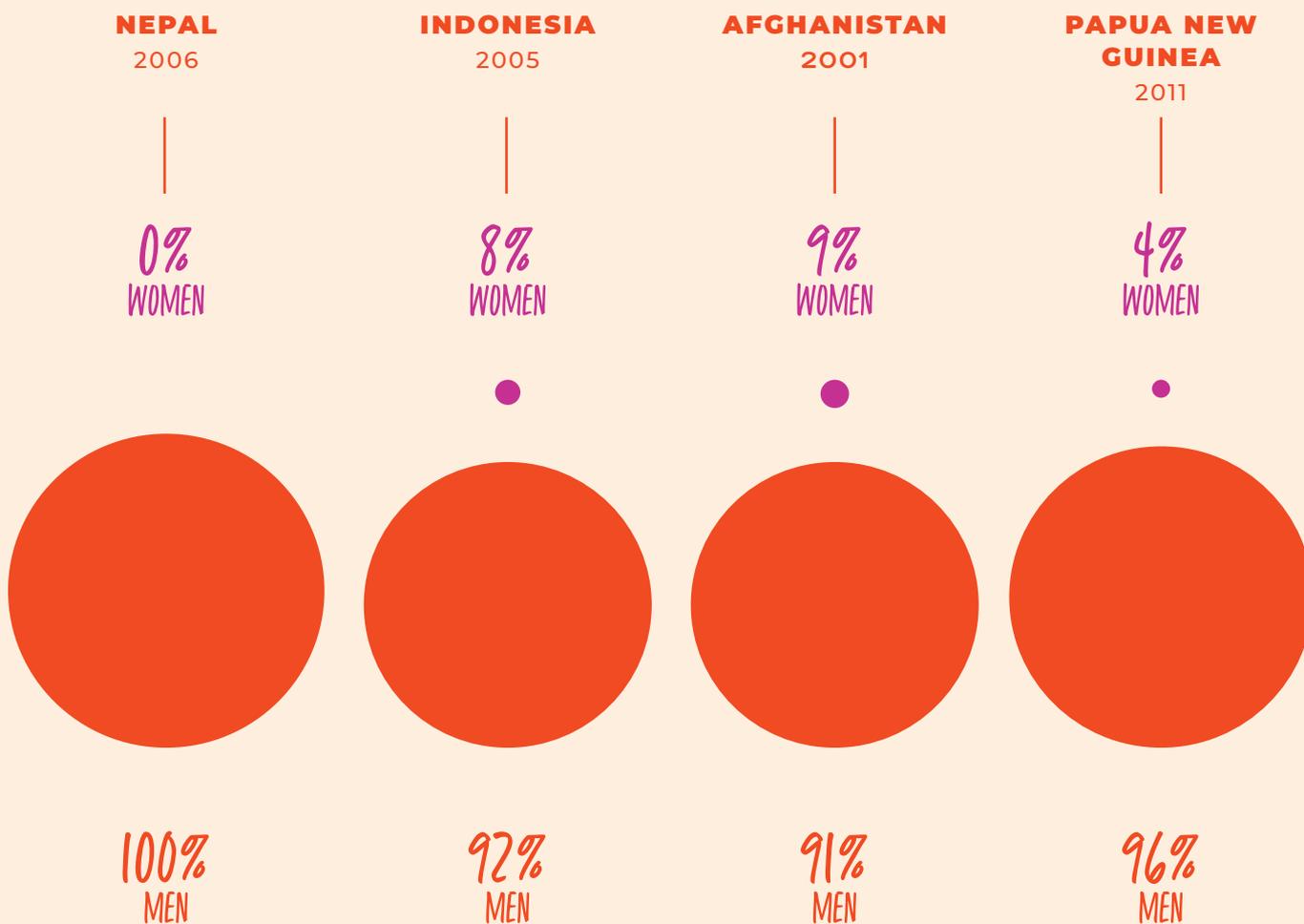
The landmark Security Council resolution 1325 stresses the importance of women's "equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security". This participation pillar of WPS includes women's peace and security leadership; gender mainstreaming and women's participation in the security sector including in UN peace operations, in political and justice institutions, in civilian policing; and women's meaningful participation in peace processes and negotiations (Paffenholz: 2019).

WPS champions: The Asia Pacific region has had several political leaders who have been champions of WPS agenda through their public statements and leadership actions as foreign and defence ministers. Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, for example, in 2020 emphasized the need to remove the structural barriers to a greater participation of women in peace and security, while Australian Defence Minister Linda Reynolds, the same year highlighted that gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to national and global security.^{9,10} Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN Ambassador Elizabeth Buenuceso has been a crucial facilitator of the establishment of the ASEAN Women Peace Registry. Kang Kyung-wha, the foreign minister of the Republic of Korea, in 2019 focused on the persistence of sexual violence in conflict zones drawing on the Korean experience (Jung: 2020),¹¹ whereas former Indian Foreign Minister, Nirupama Rao, in 2018 promoted the importance of multilateral diplomacy that takes into account women's experiences and voices. Moreover, in the region, leaders in Japan, Indonesia, Australia, and the Republic of Korea all became champions of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative led by the United Kingdom in 2015.

Women in peacekeeping: Currently, women only make up 6 per cent globally of uniformed personnel in the UN Peace keeping Operations. In 2000, when 1325 was adopted, there were *no female peacekeepers* from the Asia Pacific region. By 2019, there were *723 female peacekeepers from the region*, with the largest numbers provided by Nepal (142), Indonesia (107, recently increased to 159 across 7 peacekeeping missions), China (74) and Bangladesh (74) (UN Peacekeeping: 2020). Training for female peacekeepers in the region has been provided by both China (Liu: 2019) and Indonesia (Marsudi: 2020). Indonesia has explicitly taken up the issue of women’s roles in peacekeeping and peacebuilding in its non-permanent membership on the UN Security Council, securing a new Security Council resolution, UNSCR 2538, adopted on 29 August 2020. This Indonesian-led resolution encouraged member states “to develop strategies and measures to increase the deployment of uniformed women to peacekeeping operations” by providing access to information and training and by “identifying and addressing barriers in the recruitment, deployment, and promotion of uniformed women peacekeepers”.



Women in peace processes: Globally, between 1992 and 2018, women only constituted 13 per cent of negotiators, 3 per cent of mediators and 4 per cent of signatories in major peace processes (UN Women: 2019). In 2000, when UNSCR 1325 was adopted, there were few examples of women having served as peace negotiators, mediators or signatories in Asia Pacific.¹² There has been significant progress since then, as listed below (Council of Foreign Relations: 2019):¹³



In Bougainville, women participated in many, if not all of the national and internationally supported peace negotiations, and one Bougainvillean woman was a signatory to the 2001 agreement between the Government of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville leaders. Three women also sat on the 24-member Bougainville Constitutional Commission between 2002 and 2004 that deliberated on the future institutional governance for the autonomous territory (George: 2018). In the Philippines' Comprehensive Agreement for the Bangsamoro (2014) almost a third of negotiators were women due to the strong resolve of the government to include a representative number of women among its own negotiators. In Myanmar's Union Peace Conference involving multiple ethnic armed groups and the government, 17 per cent of participants were women, although the 2016 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement agreed to a 30-per cent target (Davies: 2018). It is also important to note that these women were primarily confined to a single committee, the one on social issues. Afghanistan remains an outlier with nine women witnesses to the 2001 agreement and just four women or 11 per cent on the government team in the intra-Afghan talks with the all-male Taliban negotiating side.

Despite the uneven progress in making peace processes inclusive, women peacemakers are more widely recognized in the Asia Pacific region in 2020 than in 2000. This is in part due to the *N-Peace Network* founded by UNDP in 2010,¹⁴ which gives annual awards to highlight the achievements of women community peacebuilders and leaders of civil society organizations promoting gender equality in peacemaking. Since 2010, 82 gender equality advocates and women peacebuilders have received the award, across the seven eligible countries in the region.¹⁵

In 2018, the ASEAN Register of Women in Peace was established with a pool of 27 women experts in peace processes, consisting of one from Brunei, and three each from the other countries in the regional security alliance: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam and two from Singapore.¹⁶ The Women of Commonwealth Mediators Network established in 2018 also has 18 members from the region.¹⁷ The recent creation of the Southeast Asia Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators reinforces the mandate of the existing ASEAN Women of Peace Registry. Moreover, the Registry may be integrated within the action lines of the ASEAN Political and Security Community Blueprint. These initiatives are significant achievements since 2000, which have publicly established the talent pool for more inclusive peace processes in the region.

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PROTECTION

The WPS agenda recognizes the importance of the protection of women's human rights before, during and after conflicts, as well as in apparently peaceful situations. Women's security is an indicator of stability and resilience, while women's insecurity is an indicator of fragility and/or impending conflict or other risk. Responses to some previously neglected human rights violations define the protection pillar of WPS: namely conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, which affects women and girls but also men and boys in conflict and humanitarian situations (Donges and Kullenberg: 2019).

Gender-based violence is considered to be widespread in Asia and the Pacific with impacts on societal and state fragility (Asia Foundation: 2017). As part of the measurement of indicators under the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, data on the prevalence of intimate partner-related violence is available for at least one year since 2015 for 20 per cent of the population in the Pacific Islands sub-region, and for 13 per cent of the population in the Eastern and South-Eastern Asia sub-regions (UN Economic and Social Council: 2020).¹⁸ In 2017, Asia was the region with the largest number of women killed (20,000) with 11,000 killed as a result of intimate partner violence. The UNODC records that 39 per cent of all homicides in Oceania¹⁹ are the result of violence related to intimate partners or family, compared with 24 per cent in Asia. However, the data on a wider range of types of gender-based violence is of limited quality and scope. For many countries, it is hard to find reliable data on honour killings, forced marriage, female infanticide, dowry violence, sorcery or witchcraft killings, or sexual violence including conflict-related sexual violence (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: 2019).²⁰ For instance, the likelihood of a woman or girl being killed as a result of allegations of witchcraft in Papua New Guinea was 0.25 per 100,000 population in 2016 (UNODC 2019).

Global datasets tend to focus on just one type of perpetrator – intimate partners – compared with the many others that exist, and tend to define sexual violence as rape rather than the broader definition contained in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.²¹ Intimate partner violence is the most prevalent form of gender-based violence but that is in part due to the fact that demographic and health surveys typically focus largely on this type of violence (World Health Organization: 2013). In the region, Afghanistan was among the six worst-performing countries globally with rates of intimate-partner violence in the past 12 months approaching 50 per cent²², well above the average rates in Asia Pacific (GIWPS and PRIO: 2019, p. 4). According to data reported under UN SDG target 5.1, in Afghanistan, 46 per cent of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 years had experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, compared with 35 per cent in Timor Leste, 11 per

cent in Myanmar, and 5.5 per cent in the Philippines. Regrettably, none of the Asia Pacific countries have comparable data available²³ for more than one year in the 2000-2020 period that would enable an assessment of whether levels of violence have been reduced, as indicated by the percentage of women and girls over 15 who have experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months. There are some country-level indications that increased awareness and reporting of these types of violence explain the increase in prevalence reflected in surveys. For instance, a recent Viet Nam study revealed an increase in sexual violence experienced from a non-partner over a woman's lifetime from 2.3 per cent in the 2010 study to 9 per cent in 2019, and in partner sexual violence from 9.9 per cent in 2010 to 13.3 per cent in 2019 (UNFPA et al: 2020). While we cannot yet assess progress in reducing gender-based violence across the whole region as an indicator of gender-responsive protection under that pillar of the WPS agenda, increased reporting of violence may be an indicator of progress in the societal awareness that certain acts constitute violence and violations of human rights or it may indicate increased violence.

Notwithstanding such possible improvements in awareness, underreporting of sexual and gender-based violence remains overall pervasive due to cultural stigma and the lack of accessible institutions. One of the starkest indications that gender-based violence is widespread in a society is the presence of gender norms that prohibit or constrain its reporting (True: 2017: 224). This pattern is reflected in the conflict-affected areas of Myanmar (Davies and True: 2017; 2019) and the Philippines (Davies, True and Tanyag: 2016), in particular. Thus, increases in the reporting of rape to authorities, such as in Bangladesh since 2009 and Myanmar since 2011, and of domestic violence, such as in Malaysia since 2010, Mongolia since 2013, Nepal since 2011, and in Pakistan since 2013, are in some respects an indicator of progress.

In addition to gender-based violence, women's security from maternal death, female infanticide, human trafficking and early or child marriages are further key indicators of women's status and security and the resilience of societies in the face of external threats of conflict, natural disasters and/or pandemics (Hudson and Den Boer: 2002). These factors tell us much about the extent to which the Asia Pacific region can prosper and sustain its peaceful development. In this regard, we have seen both progress and setbacks in women's rights. The average maternal mortality rate, for instance, has fallen significantly from 2000 to 2017 in the region from on average 214 (South-Eastern Asia), 223 (Oceania) and 384 (Southern Asia) to 137 (South-Eastern Asia), 129 (Oceania) and 157 (Southern Asia) deaths per 100,000 live births across the 39 countries of the region recorded in the SDG database. However, overall rates of early marriage steadily decreased in the Asia Pacific region between 2004 and 2019, especially when taking into account the changes across generational cohorts.²⁴

Early or child marriage is a harmful traditional practice but it also frequently an economic coping mechanism used by families to offset expenses and/or increase resources through bride price during and after crises such as conflict, disaster and pandemics. The proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married before 15 has significantly decreased in Southern Asia from 19.1 per cent in 2004 to 7.6 per cent in 2019. In South-Eastern Asia rates of early marriage for this same age group have decreased by more than one-third from 3.5 per cent in 2009 to 2.2 per cent in 2019, while in Oceania they have decreased to a lesser extent by slightly more than a tenth from 8.7 per cent in 2004 to 7.6 per cent in 2019. With respect to early marriage rates for women aged 20-24 expressed as the percentage of those married before the age of 18, the declines are similarly promising. In Southern Asia, these rates have been reduced almost by half from 52.3 per cent in 2004 to 29.2 per cent in 2019. In South-Eastern Asia, the decrease is more modest but close to a fifth, from 20.9 per cent to 16.4 per cent, while in Oceania they have decreased to a lesser extent by barely a tenth from 29.3 per cent in 2004 to 26.5 per cent in 2019. Bangladesh and Nepal were the countries with the highest early marriage rates of the Asia Pacific region, with 58.6 per cent and 39.5 per cent respectively of women 20-24 married or in union by 18 years old.²⁵ This reflects, *inter alia*, the conflicts and natural disasters affecting both these countries.

Alongside these mixed indicators of women's insecurity, which potentially weakens sources of resilience and recovery in the Asia Pacific region (ActionAid and EUI 2015), there has been a significant increase in reported cases of human trafficking of women and girls. They increased from 3,096 cases reported for 28 countries across various years in the 2000s decade to 9,533 for 36 countries in the period since 2017.²⁶ The increase in the number of reported cases likely reflect the improvement in registration processes and data reporting by governments. The Trafficking in Persons Report is an annual report issued by the US State Department, ranking governments based on their efforts to acknowledge and combat human trafficking. It is based on the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) passed into federal law in 2000. Over the 20 years from 2001 to 20, six countries have moved up the tier system (Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Singapore), seven countries have remained in the same tier (Bangladesh, India, Japan, Lao DPR, Myanmar, Nepal and Thailand), while four countries (Cambodia, China, Sri Lanka and Vietnam) have moved down a tier.²⁷ China, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea are the only countries in the Asia Pacific region currently in tier 3 (US State Department: 2020, p55).

In terms of gender-responsive protection, an important indicator of progress in the WPS protection pillar is the adoption of laws against domestic violence in the region. In 2000 just seven countries in the Asia Pacific region had passed legislation specifically addressing domestic

32 OUT
OF 36
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ADDRESSING
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

violence. By 2020, however, this number has increased to 32 out of 36 countries in the region (World Bank 2020).²⁸ Countries that do not have legislation on domestic violence are unlikely to recognize other types of violence that affect women and girls especially, such as conflict-related sexual violence.

There is also evidence that women are more likely to report gender-based violence to justice institutions that are gender-responsive and themselves employ women in protection roles. Women account for 10 per cent of the police force in the Asia Pacific region, slightly above the global average of 9 per cent (UN Women: 2012; UN DESA: 2009). In ASEAN Member States the proportion of women police officers in law enforcement agencies ranges from just 6 per cent in Indonesia to 20 per cent in Lao PDR, with a 10 per cent quota for annual female recruitment (UNODC et al: 2020). There have been great efforts in some countries to improve women's presence in policing, but it is still marginal. For instance, in Vanuatu, a very traditional and rural country, women now make up 13 per cent of the police force, while in Timor Leste 15 per cent of police are women. The proportion of female judges and lawyers in Asia Pacific, however, is below the global average, with women holding approximately 20 per cent of prosecutorial roles and 23 per cent of judicial appointments (UN Women: 2012). In the Philippines, the proportion of women judges is one in four (UN ESCAP: 2015), while underrepresentation is also evident in the courts and police systems in Vanuatu, where two of the eight Supreme Court justices and just 17 per cent of the lower-level Island Court justices are women (UN Office for Drugs and Crime: 2018).

PREVENTION

The prevention pillar of WPS emphasizes gender equality as a structural condition that promotes peace and the prevention of future conflict, including the recurrence of previous or current conflict. It also underscores the importance of supporting women's peacebuilding roles (discussed above under the participation pillar) and preventing sexual and gender-based violence, which fuels and exacerbates conflict (discussed above under the protection pillar). *Inclusion of gender equality and women's rights provisions in peace agreements* is a conflict-prevention mechanism that aims to promote equal and sustainable peace by empowering all agents and beneficiaries of peace. Between 2000 and 2016 there were 98 peace agreements negotiated in the world. Twenty-seven of these agreements were in the Asia Pacific region, of which 16 (or 59 per cent) included substantive gender provisions (True and Riveros-Morales: 2019). Asia Pacific is home to two agreements in particular, namely the Comprehensive Agreement for the Bangsamoro (2014) and the Final Constitution of Nepal (2015), where gender inclusivity has been a key factor in sustaining peace (Krause et al: 2018).

Women’s community safety is an indicator of women’s security and of conflict prevention, based on the notion that assessing the security of women, a traditionally marginalized group, can provide a critical insight into broader societal and state security (Hudson et al: 2012). Women’s perception of community safety is reported as a percentage of all women 15 years and over in the Asia Pacific region who responded “Yes” to the Gallup World Poll question “Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?” (GIWPS and PRIO: 2019: 65).²⁹ The regional percentage is reported for two periods, 2010-2016, and 2016-2018, based on the Women, Peace and Security Index reports in 2017 and 2019. Comparison of the two periods reveals a slight increase in women’s perception of safety in the region, a positive indicator of progress.

59%
OF PEACE
AGREEMENTS IN ASIA
PACIFIC INCLUDED
SUBSTANTIVE GENDER
PROVISIONS.

AVERAGE ASIA PACIFIC COMMUNITY SAFETY 2017	58.312
AVERAGE ASIA PACIFIC COMMUNITY SAFETY 2019	61.914

Finally, the development of *National Action Plans on the prevention and countering of violent extremism (P/CVE) with gender provisions* that promote women’s participation and empowerment as agents of P/CVE is a marker of progress in mainstreaming WPS commitments in Asia Pacific. Countries in the region have incorporated explicit commitments to women’s participation and gender-responsive policy and programmes in the prevention and countering of violent extremism (Gordon and True: 2019). The Philippines, for instance, has mainstreamed gender throughout its framework for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE), including within the risk and preventions factors associated with radicalization. The government has ensured the inclusion of women across all contributing government and non-government sectors, including women religious leaders (UN Women: 2019d).³⁰ At the time of writing, Indonesia is in the process of adopting a P/CVE action plan with gender provisions that align with the UN Secretary-General’s 2016 Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The country has also played a leading role in coordinating the adoption and implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism 2019-2025 and subsequently its Multi-Sectoral Work Plan (Bali Work Plan), which includes the WPS approach to PVE and involvement of ASEAN women sectoral bodies (ACW and ACWC) and ASEAN Senior Official on Social Welfare Development (SOMSWD). It is the largest multi-sectoral plan of ASEAN to date and requires cross-sectoral collaboration with strong emphasis on gender-responsive PVE. A key objective of this ASEAN P/CVE Plan is empowering women and promoting gender equality (ASEAN: 2019b).

RELIEF AND RECOVERY

The relief and recovery pillar of WPS aims to promote gender-responsive humanitarian and post-conflict planning. It seeks to achieve a gender-just economic recovery from conflict, disaster or crisis that secures women's social and economic rights, enhances gender equality, and redresses gender injustices. (True and Hewitt: 2019: 180-181) Over the past 20 years this pillar has increasingly engaged with the humanitarian-development nexus and encompassed responding to disaster in addition to conflict. In the Pacific, there has been significant WPS engagement through the relief and recovery pillar assisted by women's civil society mobilization around climate and disaster-induced displacement, but also by mainstreaming WPS into the security sector responding to disasters in the region, in part trained and facilitated by the Australian Defence Force (Bhagwan-Rolls: 2019; Tan: 2020; Wittwer: 2019). By contrast, in Asia where gender mainstreaming in security governance and disaster response is relatively recent, it has taken longer for this pillar to gain traction. ASEAN, for instance, is currently developing a new legally binding ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) 2021-2025, which for the first time is integrating a gender and protection lens into disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action.

Relief and recovery is inextricable from the other WPS pillars and can be seen in both a short- and a long-term time frame. Gender provisions in peace agreements are intended to facilitate gender-responsive post-conflict recovery. A test of the 1) awareness of these gender provisions, 2) the institutions tasked with their implementation, and 3) the gender equality outcomes as result found the Asia Pacific region to be above the global average. However, financing of gender-inclusive peace and reconstruction processes that secure women's representation, rights and economic livelihoods has been more limited (True: 2019; OECD: 2020). For example, the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro in the Philippines included a gender provision with a 5-per cent allocation of development funds to support women's return to normal life and participation in economic activity and governance. However, none of the seven programmes funded by the Mindanao Trust Fund (MTF) for Reconstruction and Development Program (2013-2017, Phase 1) has reported on the allocation of funds set aside to fund programmes that benefit women's economic empowerment (Davies and True: 2020). Funding and projects approved appear to privilege women's governance participation in community forums and civil society organizations, and in their voluntary capacity, rather than enabling women's economic participation through innovative financing and support.

THERE IS STILL WORK LEFT TO DO IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS:

Persistent Challenges on Women, Peace and Security in Asia Pacific

Twelve regional organisations have adopted regional actions plans on WPS, but there has been only one in the Asia Pacific region. The ASEAN 2017 joint statement on WPS acknowledges the gendered effects of armed conflict, and the ASEAN 2025 framework advocates mainstreaming gender in peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes. However, there is not yet a Regional Action Plan on WPS or institutional mechanism to prioritize action on WPS in South or Southeast Asia. The Pacific Islands Forum adopted and implemented a Regional Action Plan on WPS from 2012–2015, but this plan has not been renewed.

There are not enough WPS champions in the Asia Pacific region. Five Foreign or Defence Ministers—Retno Marsudi (Indonesia), Marise Payne (Australia), Linda Reynolds (Australia), Kang Kyung-wha (South Korea) and Nirupama Rao (India)—have given ministerial speeches championing WPS. But what about the others in a region of 39 countries?

Women's participation in peace is still limited. Just 5 out of 45 individuals (11%) on the Afghan government negotiating side are women at the current intra-Afghan talks with the Taliban.

Gender-based violence is widespread in Asia Pacific. Asia was the region with the largest number of women killed in 2017 (20,000 women), and 39 per cent of all homicides in Oceania were the result of intimate partner or family-related gender-based violence (UNODC 2019). In Indonesia, domestic violence is the second highest cause of violent death.

Overall, rates of early marriage have not decreased in the Asia Pacific region. The number of women aged 20-24 who were married before 18 in East Asia and the Pacific is estimated to have increased from 9.7 million (2010) to 10.3 million in (2020); and in South Asia from 24.4 million to 25.9 million (UNFPA).

Continual lack of financing for implementation of key measures of the WPS agenda in Asia Pacific has stalled progress in the above areas as well as implementation of the agenda as a whole.

PART III.

Lessons Learned

From conflict, peace and transition processes to situations of disaster, displacement and humanitarian emergency, there have been important lessons learned in responding to Women, Peace and Security in the Asia Pacific region. These lessons are important for current and future crises, including COVID-19 recovery.

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND SECURITY

The current WPS debate highlights the importance of making women's participation count in substantive peace agendas (Paffenholz et al: 2015). Making women's participation meaningful requires asking how societies can be rebuilt in ways that ensure the sustainability of peace and that recognize the agency of women. This language of meaningful participation is echoed in the most recent UN Security Council WPS resolutions. Progress on women's meaningful participation in the Asia Pacific region, as well as how to achieve it, is illustrated by the Philippines' Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed in March 2014. *The CAB peace process represents a model of how to advance women's meaningful participation and transformation in gender relations in ethnic, religious and culturally diverse settings in the region.*³¹

Role modelling and participation of experienced women negotiators with backgrounds in civil society on the government side effectively promoted the participation of women on the MILF side, even when conservative religious values appeared to undermine this possibility. (Coronel-Ferrer: 2018). Numerous strategies were used to promote women's meaningful participation through the talks as described first hand by Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, who headed the Government of the Philippines' delegation (Tisdall: 2013). They convinced the MILF leadership to allow the Government delegation to meet with the Bangsamoro Islamic Women's Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB) where they asked them to speak about their plans after the agreement. They argued persuasively to the MILF that "the parity of esteem between the majority and minority populations that you ask is no different from the parity of esteem that we want to see between the men and women of the Bangsamoro" (Coronel-Ferrer: 2018). The international community provided logistical support for the

MILF delegation to include women. In the end, two members of the MILF secretariat were women, and around 12 technical working group women members joined the MILF delegation. “They were NOT token women. They became a fixture in the negotiations, although they never officially chaired any of the bodies.” (Coronel-Ferrer 2018: 15).

Still, it is as important to ensure women’s meaningful participation after peace processes in the implementation of agreements and in the governance of new post-conflict institutions. The Philippines case is instructive. Despite the inclusive process and agreement, women are currently critically underrepresented in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) political institutions and decision-making mechanisms, including the formal conflict mediation mechanisms for communal conflict (Arguillas:2019). The new Organic Law for the BARMM provides minimal provisions for women’s representation – requiring at least one woman in the Cabinet and in the Council of Elders and setting aside just one sectoral seat in parliament for a woman. However, there are 13 women out of 80 representatives in the BARMM parliament. Political commitments and investment in women’s meaningful participation need to extend to gender-inclusive governance to sustain peace in post-conflict societies (Monash GPS: 2018).

The need to *address structural barriers to women’s participation in peace and security* has been a crucial lesson in the Asia Pacific region. Gender divisions of labour in the household mean that many women have caregiving responsibilities for family members and do not have time to devote to leadership roles and participation in public decision-making. The International Labour Organization (ILO), for instance, estimates globally that women spend 4.1 times more time than men on unpaid care work, which involves tending to others, cooking, cleaning, fetching water and firewood and other non-market essential daily tasks within households. Women in the region spend as much as 11 times more hours than men on such tasks (Asian Development Bank and UN Women: 2018). Women’s participation in the informal economy and often precarious employment in Asia also constrains the time they have available for political or peace participation. In Myanmar, efforts to bring women into the national ceasefire peace process involved providing travel and childcare support. USAID, for instance, has a women’s participation rapid funding mechanism, managed through DAI (an international development agency) and supports women’s childcare, including assistance for carers to accompany them, travel, visas and so on. These measures aim to lower the barriers to women’s participation and are deliberately easy to access with minimal paperwork. The Paung Sie Facility (PSF) Gender, Peace and Security Window funding stream is aimed at increasing the substantive participation of women in building social cohesion at the sub-national level in Myanmar. This fund has a childcare budget upon application for anyone caring for a child who has

the opportunity to participate in a peace-related process. The PSF also supports childcare costs when women (or men) attend workshops and seminars related to the Gender, Peace and Security Window funding programme. Another large grant from the Joint Peace Fund to the signatory armed groups has childcare built into all levels of the budget. This was designed by Nyein Foundation as part of their technical support to the armed groups to develop and negotiate this grant.³²

Nuanced, culturally sensitive strategies have also been used to build trust while advancing gender inclusion. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer describes how, at a civil society forum during the early years of the talks, MILF representatives refused to sit beside her on the stage because she was a woman. At the forum, they answered from the floor and she sat alone in the front. Later at a ceremony organized by the European Union, it was arranged that the government panel, consisting of two women, would for the first time be seated beside the MILF panel, made up of two men, not across from them, while the all-male EU delegation was squeezed on the other side. When it was Coronel-Ferrer's turn to speak, she was able to quip that the gender parity was better on the Filipino side of the room. As a result of the concerted efforts to broker an inclusive agreement between the Philippines Government and the MILF, several daughters of the MILF leaders have become peacebuilders and leaders of women's organizations who are actively promoting the WPS agenda, while the male leaders have changed their language to refer to "our Muslim brothers and sisters" (Coronel-Ferrer: 2018: 16).

When women have been unable to participate in formal peace processes at all, civil society participation and forums have allowed them to assert their voice and influence in post-conflict societies. For example, in the Solomon Islands, women created their own parallel space at a National Women's Peace Summit for women peacebuilders to share their experiences and their frustrations over their ongoing marginalization from national policy debates. Moreover, women's civil society groups assisted by UN Women Asia Pacific (2019a) established a Provincial Women's Caucus project in three provinces to provide an independent source of advice and legislative oversight to decision makers in provincial government. Religion, whether it is Islamic, Buddhist, Christian or other – has also been an enabling factor for women's participation in peace-making. In Bougainville, women have found that their customary matrilineal authority and the population's strong identification with the Catholic figure of Mary as their Island's patron saint has provided them with some standing as they worked to mediate conflict between combatants (Monash GPS: 2019: 13).

The value of women's participation in delivering community-based solutions to security in the Asia Pacific region across diverse communities has also been demonstrated in the context of crises. Women's knowledge and their civil society leadership in communities has enabled them

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to develop an early-warning approach involving preparedness and rapid response to violent extremism and natural disasters as well as gender-based violence and conflict. This is evident in initiatives such as FemLinkPacific in Fiji, or Vanuatu's initiatives *Women I Tok Tok Tugeta* (Women Talk Together) and *Women Wetem Weta* (Women's Weather Watch), which uses community radio to prepare for and respond to cyclones and tsunamis in the Pacific Islands (Bhagwan-Rolls and Rolls: 2019). Women pool their knowledge to help their communities negotiate risk reduction, adaptation strategies, alternative livelihoods and relocation (Tanyag and True: 2019). In Indonesia, the establishment of designated peace villages that recognize localised drivers of conflicts with unique characteristics at the village level empower women as agents of peace who promote community problem-solving, including interfaith dialogue for conflict prevention. The concept builds on the programme of designated schools for peace established by Indonesian women's groups to enable early-warning responses led by women to threats of violent extremism and communal conflict (Eddyono and True: 2017). Community organizations and families often have better access to vulnerable individuals and groups than government actors. They can lead grassroots movements to prepare for disaster situations and to prevent fundamentalism and violence.

A key lesson learned on meaningful participation in the Asia Pacific region has been the importance of *building inclusive alliances*. In the Pacific, regional alliances such as the Shifting the Power Coalition and the Pacific Feminist Forum, have been crucial in enabling women's voice to be heard by policymakers (Radio New Zealand: 2019).³³ In spite of women's very low political representation in Pacific Island countries, women have pursued policy change through civil society alliances (Spark and Corbett: 2018). These alliances include a diverse range of groups: LGBTQI; persons with disabilities; feminist; indigenous; ethnically diverse; urban; rural; young; older; and non-feminist women. There has been a conscious effort to develop an inclusive approach to women's participation by identifying the groups most marginalized and involving them. They conceptualize security broadly and have been at the forefront of climate change action linking gender, economic and climate justice issues (George: 2016; Barkha: 2020). Pacific women activists successfully advocated for the Pacific as a separate region in the Women's Major Group for Sustainable Development in 2017 and speak with a regional voice at international forums such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women (Alver: 2020; Women's Major Group: 2017). Their advocacy promotes the Pacific regionalism framework and has contributed to the 2050 Pacific Islands Forum Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (Pacific Islands Forum Leaders: 2014).

Similarly, in Myanmar, the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process has brought together diverse women's non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) and international donors committed to increasing women's participation. In conflict-affected environments, the opportunity to participate safely and represent women's security concerns may only be possible through civil society organizations (CSOs) that are able to advocate for women's human rights. Local women activists and the positive impact of their efforts to lobby for inclusion in peace processes through the UNSCR 1325 framework can inform and encourage activists in other countries. During Myanmar's ongoing peace process, the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP) instigated conversations about women's participation in spaces traditionally considered male, such as conflict, security and peace (Kamler: 2019). They have secured women's participation in the peace conferences held annually since the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement was signed in 2015. The Asia Foundation attributed the success in increasing women's representation in federal parliament in the 2016 election by 10 percentage points (from 4 to 14 per cent) to AGIPP's public campaigns on gender inclusion.

Gender inclusion has been possible primarily in institutions responsible for social welfare rather than technical ministries relating to energy, meteorology, land and natural resources. To address these gaps, promoting women's participation and leadership across all agencies needs to start by integrating and supporting women's expertise within community or village governance structures.

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Awareness of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and other gender-specific human rights violations is emerging but still at a low level in the region. The progress seen in the laws against domestic violence adopted across Asia and the Pacific is positive. However, conflict-related sexual violence by armed and violent extremist groups and during displacement from conflict and natural disasters remains a direct threat to women's human rights not adequately addressed in law or practice.³⁴ *Limited awareness of these types of violence results from both underreporting and the societal stigmatization of victims and survivors.* Pervasive oppression along lines of gender, ethnicity, class, caste and other categories attach the shame of sexual and domestic violence, for instance, to the victim or survivor and not the perpetrator. Victims may not report experiences of violence to avoid dishonouring themselves and their family. Male as well as female victims or survivors are increasingly reporting their experiences of sexual and gender-based violence, as seen in rising reports of sexual violence in Sri Lanka since the end of the civil war and in the recent prevalence survey in Viet Nam (Davies and True: 2017; UNFPA et al: 2020).

However, there are still limitations to the recognition of male victims and to the responsive services that they can access. Sexual violence,

in particular, is shrouded in silence and is sometimes considered a normal male entitlement for the perpetrator, which undermines the possibility for prevention or elimination. Gaps also remain with regard to the representation and redress available to children born of rape in conflict, who frequently experience discrimination and marginalization, as recognized by Security Council resolution 2467 (2019). For example, many babies were born as a result of rape during the 25-year Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste, yet efforts to take forward the recommendations of the Chega! report following the Truth, Reception and Reconciliation Commission in 2005 remain underfunded and do not prioritize survivors of sexual violence (CAVR: 2005; Harris-Rimmer: 2007).

A key WPS lesson learned in Asia Pacific is that *where awareness of SGBV is low there is lower reporting and a need for even greater gender sensitivity in protection responses*. For example, in Rakhine State in western Myanmar, where conflict has been ongoing between the Myanmar army and ethnic armed organizations, SGBV against women, girls, men, boys and transgender persons is extremely underreported. However, gender-specific human rights violations, including killings, have been recorded by the UN system (UN Security Council: 2017, para 51). The UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar found that Myanmar's army has systematically employed rape, gang rape and other violent forced sexual acts against civilians in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States since 2011 (UN Human Rights Council: 2019).³⁵

Paradoxically, one of the starkest indications that SGBV is widespread in a society is the presence of gender norms that prohibit or constrain its reporting (Davies and True: 2015: 14). Surveys in the region show high levels of self-reported SGBV, such as spousal violence, and sexual violence including non-partner rape and gang rape, perpetrated overwhelmingly by men against women (Fulu et al 2013).³⁶ When we compare prevalence surveys, such as the UN Partners for Prevention study across nine rural and urban settings in Asia and the Pacific (Fulu et al 2013), with actual reports of violence to government and non-government institutions, we can see that this violence is significantly underreported across Asia Pacific.

Despite this pattern of underreporting, *a WPS framework has enabled practitioners to identify and respond to the groups most vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, including women of ethnic or religious minority status, politically active women and women human rights defenders*. Efforts are being made to address the obstacles faced by victims and survivors in reporting violations in conflict-affected areas and in recovering from the violence, obstacles that include widespread societal stigmatization. Examples include the GenCap interagency network of referrals, and initiatives to combat the stigma experienced by sexual violence victims and survivors such as the Preventing Sexual Violence Network's programmes in Sri Lanka (De la Puente and Davies:

2017; Fokus Women: 2017). When women survivors return to their homes and communities, for instance, they may experience further SGBV as well as socio-economic marginalization.

A key WPS lesson in Asia Pacific is that *humanitarian responses to disasters can promote peacebuilding and greater awareness and responsiveness sexual and gender-based violence to gender-based violence where there have been major constraints on these activities*. In Myanmar, for instance, awareness about SGBV was triggered by the presence of international actors in the context of disaster response to Cyclone Nargis. This presence facilitated, in a way not possible before, global media reports of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated against civilian ethnic minority women by uniformed men (GEN: 2015). Davies and True (2017) observe that reporting of domestic violence perpetrated by civilians began to escalate at the same time as the increased reporting of conflict-related sexual violence with the opening of the country after Cyclone Nargis in 2008 (Faxon et al: 2015). Recourse to justice, however, remains limited given the immunity of the *Tatmadaw* or military authorities (Thomson: 2015; UN Human Rights Council: 2019). The UN Security Council (2018) listed the Myanmar army as a suspected perpetrator of conflict-related sexual violence for the first time in April 2018. However, there is virtually no voice or civil society organization within the ethnic Rohingya community of Rakhine state to represent women and girl survivors although Razia Sultana, a woman Rohingya lawyer, was able to brief the UN Security Council Open Debate in April 2018 on behalf of the NGO Working Group on WPS (Davies and True: 2017: 13).

Due to conflict and human rights violations as well as natural disasters, the Asia Pacific region has the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. In 2014 there were 3.2 million new IDPs. There is a lack of data disaggregated by age and sex,³⁷ but some estimates put the proportion of women and children at more than 80 per cent (OCHA: 2016). Internally displaced women and girls in refugee camps or on the move and often belonging to minority groups are most at risk of SGBV including intimate-partner physical and sexual violence. In Afghanistan, for example, a 2012 study found that underage internally displaced girls were targeted by outsiders for purchase for forced marriages and that 26.9 per cent of IDP households had at least one child who had been forced to marry, and this was more likely in female-headed households (Majidi and Hennion: 2014; Hall: 2019). In the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda in December 2014, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimated that 5,000 women were exposed to sexual violence as 4.1 million people were forced to leave their homes and live in bunkhouses and tent cities in Leyte province. Some women were further forced into trafficking to survive and provide for their families (UNFPA: 2015; Tanyag: 2018). Thus, an important WPS learning in the region is that *gender-*

responsive protection is as crucial in IDP camps and during migration journeys as it is in active conflict zones.

During displacement, furthermore, women and girl's mobility is greatly restricted by the security situation within and around refugee or IDP camps. The mass displacement of close to 1 million Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state in displacement zones and across the border into Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, has exacerbated already high rates of sexual and gender-based violence (UN Human Rights Council: 2019; Davies and True: 2017, 2018). Rohingya people lack citizenship rights, are dependent on humanitarian aid and are vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups given their grievances, which all compound the situation of vulnerability to SGBV.

Across the Asia Pacific region, *women and girls often face grave threats to their physical security when passing checkpoints and crossing borders during migration journeys.* South-East Asia has the largest volume of hazardous, irregular border crossings of any global region, and the female proportion of those crossing borders has grown dramatically. The 2015 Andaman Sea crisis showed an increase in the numbers of women irregularly crossing borders in South-East Asia from 10 per cent of the 62,000 irregular migrants in 2014 to 15 per cent in 2015 (UNHCR: 2014, 2015, 2016). This shows an increasing trend in the number of women migrating along this irregular pathway, with a fatality rate that is three times higher than in the European migrant crisis experienced in the Mediterranean Sea (Pickering and Powell: 2017).

Women and children fleeing conflict zones also often face significant threats to their security when they seek repatriation after having been enslaved, recruited to violent extremism, or accompanied a family member who was a foreign terrorist fighter. In the latter situation, a WPS framework should enable protection for women and children experiencing isolation and stigma as well as acute trauma from having been in an active conflict zone, whether as witness or perpetrator, especially if they have been subject to reproductive coercion or been victims of sexual or gender-based violence (GCTF: 2019; Hutchison: 2019). The current lack of operationalization of WPS in this repatriation and reintegration process is serious gap in the agenda.

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ROLES IN CONFLICT PREVENTION

Women peacebuilders have important conflict-resolution knowledge and skills, but they must be supported. As noted in Part II, one of the key indicators of WPS progress in the Asia Pacific region has been the increased public recognition of women peacebuilders and mediators. We have seen some good efforts being made in Asia Pacific to highlight and resource their ongoing work through the creation of new regional networks such as the ASEAN Women's Register and the Women Mediators of the Commonwealth Network, but also through regional civil society initiatives such as the Asia Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security (APWAPS) and Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) founded in 1999 in India (Gopinath and Marchanda: 2019). These are an important developments since *only when women's conflict prevention capacity is recognized and supported can it be fully utilized and effective in stopping violent conflicts and promoting a culture of peace.*

Funding for peacebuilding often dries up soon after a conflict is formally resolved – yet peacebuilding work is ongoing given the ever-present risk of the recurrence of violence and conflict. The Women's Peace School in Poso, Indonesia was founded to prevent conflict after the religious communal conflict in 2003-4, however, they sustained their work to prevent the spread of violent extremism. *Women's conflict prevention efforts may be more effective than those of traditional security providers because they do not stop when the conflict or violence is officially ended but carry over from communal conflicts to the prevention of violent extremism.* As a woman leader in Poso stated: "If you want to know the security situation, don't ask the military, don't ask the local government, ask the women" (Eddyono and True: 2017). Peacebuilding is important not only to prevent armed conflict, as recognized by the UN Security Council, but also to prevent the spread of hate crimes and extremism that is conducive to violent extremism. In this respect, WPS practitioners in Asia Pacific have been ahead of the curve. Their conflict-prevention work anticipated the extension of the WPS agenda to the threats of violent extremism and terrorism (Qadeem: 2018).

Counter-terrorism intelligence and state security responses have until recently entirely neglected gender perspectives as well as women's participation in countering violent extremism (CVE). However, non-state violent groups have frequently organized around regressive agendas, including restricting women's movements and dress, hate speech and acts of gender-based violence, highlighting the need for a gender-equality approach to combatting extremism. Recent studies have evaluated and compared CVE programmes with and without a dimension of women's empowerment and found that an increase in women's empowerment and gender equality has a positive effect on countering extremism (UN

Women: 2018, True et al: 2019). The UN Women programme in the region titled Empowering Women, Peaceful Communities tested the idea that when women are individually empowered economically and part of decision-making in their communities, societies are more cohesive, resilient and peaceful. As part of this initiative, the peace village concept was pioneered by UN Women and the Wahid Foundation to promote women's leadership in community-based solutions to violent extremism, and is now included in the Indonesian PVE action plan at the national level and strongly supported by Indonesia's National Counter-Terrorism Agency (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme*, or BNPT). Peace villages are an emerging good practice that could advance the implementation of WPS and its conflict-prevention pillar in ASEAN and the broader region.³⁸

In survey research alongside the Empowering Women, Peaceful Communities programme in Indonesia, Bangladesh and Philippines, Johnston and True (2019) found that attitudes characterized as misogyny and support for violence against women were stronger predictors of support for violent extremism than religiosity, which is commonly perceived to be the major cause. *Thus, the gender dynamics associated with recruitment and support for violent extremism are beginning to be explored in the Asia Pacific region and have the potential to inform more effective approaches to preventing and countering terrorism.* For one, a gender-based approach that takes men and women's sexist beliefs seriously has the potential to better identify likely perpetrators of all kinds of extremist violence. Such an approach also underscores the importance of promoting gender equality at the community level as a way to promote greater tolerance and peace.

Conversely, as a way of combatting the extremist sexist attitudes conducive to violent extremism, women-led civil society organizations have been promoting gender equality in Islamic religious teaching and texts as a form of conflict prevention. Gender equality awareness in the family, where children are first socialized, may be a preventative factor for extremism. If Islamic fundamentalist views hold that women are subordinate to men, then family norms and structures that exemplify gender equality effectively confront fundamentalism and its spread. One of the most significant efforts to counter violent extremism is the reinterpretation of religious texts to highlight principles of gender equality and women's empowerment within the framework of the Koran and Islamic teachings (Muhammad et al: 2007; Rinaldo: 2011). Empowering women religious leaders and educating for gender equality within religious communities indirectly challenges extremist ideologies. It is also a crucial strategy for promoting a culture of tolerance and peace, and encouraging resilient communities. In the words of one woman *ulama*, or Islamic scholar: "If women are not actively involved in the debate,

they will be overwhelmed by the gender-biased *tafsir*" (interpretation of Islamic teachings) (True and Eddyono: 2017: 54).

Women in the security sector can enhance the prevention of conflict and they need to be supported as a result. Countries in the region are committed to increasing the number of female peacekeepers and enhancing the gender sensitivity of peacekeeping training. This is to showcase the view that women are important agents of peace. Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi argued in a *Jakarta Post* op-ed in 2019 that "female peacekeepers possess better situational awareness, can provide comfortable protection of civilians from sexual and gender-based violence, and are more easily acceptable in winning the hearts and minds of the local community" (Marsudi 2019). However, there are many structural barriers to women's participation in the security sector, including the highly controversial issues in some countries around virginity testing, the lack of facilities for women police, and allegations of sexual harassment in peacekeeping operations. Indonesian-sponsored Security Council resolution 2538, adopted in August 2020, affirms support for the Secretary General's general zero tolerance policy on all form of sexual harassment. It also requests that the UN Secretary General strengthen efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment within peacekeeping operations, in close cooperation and consultation with member states.

Women peacebuilders have developed adept conflict-resolution skills in a voluntary capacity within community organizations during conflict. However, in some countries, such as the Solomon Islands, women's contributions to peacebuilding have never been formally acknowledged and women's political representation remains low. Their skills continue to be undervalued, although since women peacebuilders moved into the post-conflict security sector, they have been highly valued. This reality underscores the importance of developing frameworks and responsibilities for conflict prevention in the implementation of WPS in the region. It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of conflict prevention since effectiveness is equivalent to the non-occurrence of an event. However, gender-sensitive early warning indicators have been used in the Philippines and Timor-Leste. Key institutions and actors in ceasefires and community mediation could be trained and made responsible for operationalizing them in other countries too.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE RELIEF AND RECOVERY

Gender-responsive planning and preparedness for disaster, climate change and pandemics have necessarily been a major focus of WPS in Asia and the Pacific given the frequency of non-conflict crises and their confluence with conflict. In the region, the relief and recovery pillar of the Women, Peace and Security agenda is increasingly linked to gender-inclusive disaster preparedness and climate change mitigation.

Both WPS and the 2015 Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction recognize and promote women's participation and resilience. Specifically, the Sendai Framework requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to those disproportionately affected by disasters. To assist with the implementation of the framework, the 2016 Ha Noi recommendations for action on gender and disaster risk reduction provide guidelines for countries to improve the prevention and mitigation of disaster, climate and conflict risks. These recommendations also reinforce the WPS focus on the leadership of women and diverse groups in disaster preparedness in national and local mechanisms. One major recommendation calls for policies and practices to address underlying inequalities and risk factors including access to resources, which are necessary for building back better. Another recommendation suggests allocating resources for women-led, gender-responsive early warning systems, and preparedness and recovery policies, plans and programmes.

Early-warning and preparedness initiatives already exist at the community level in the Asia Pacific region. However, national and regional frameworks have enabled government and civil society partnerships that have increased the scale and reach of these initiatives. The UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, for example, has provided a framework for bridging government policymaking and women's civil society networks, to enable gender-responsive relief and recovery. The framework requires the integration of gender, age, disability and cultural perspectives in all policies and practices, and encourages civil society, women's and youth leadership. Initiatives such as the South Asia Women's Resilience Index (WRI) assist governments to assess gender equality and women's empowerment in institutional settings and to reveal areas where women's resilience for disaster risk reduction and recovery is poor and important to monitor and target (Action Aid and EUI: 2015).

There is great potential for a joined-up approach to gendered insecurity across different types of crises in the Asia Pacific region. *Women are frequently on the frontline of crisis response, committed to remaining in-country for recovery and reconstruction and bridging the humanitarian relief-long term development divide* (Higelin and Yermin: 2015; Davies and de la Fuente: 2015). The resilience of women's civil society organizations in responding to natural disasters in the region, for instance, has enabled them to unite to drive peace processes. In Myanmar, crisis responses to Cyclone Nargis in 2010 triggered and unified women's groups in civil society. Women's mobilization in the disaster response expanded into campaigns to address violence against women, discriminatory land rights, and women's inclusion in the Myanmar peace process (Faxon et al: 2015; Hedstrom et al: 2020).

This coming together of women's civil society groups was also the case in conflict-affected Aceh, Indonesia in response to the Asian Tsunami, which also brought government and non-government actors together (Lee Koo: 2012). Violence against women is also a significant inhibitor to women's participation in Aceh. In this case, one participant noted that the strict interpretation and practice of Sharia Law has facilitated state-sanctioned violence against women, including public shaming and caning. In Myanmar, there is still no law prohibiting violence against women that provides clear legal norms and redress for women and girls, though such a law has been under discussion since 2014.

In summary, where democratic spaces are limited by authoritarian rule or discriminatory gender norms in the region, *women's networks have been able to use the spaces designated for climate response and disaster risk reduction to promote public deliberation on peace, security and sustainable development.* This is a major lesson learned in the quest to achieve the goals of Women, Peace and Security in Asia Pacific.

Part IV.

Implications of WPS

FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY

The COVID-19 global pandemic has exacerbated situations of conflict and fragility, and of gendered violence. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by pandemics since, as in conflicts and disasters, they experience unequal gender norms (Wenham, Smith, Davies et al: 2020). This gender inequality is compounded by intersectional factors such as rural location, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality and immigrant status, and socio-economic disadvantage in a region with the largest number of IDPs and where more than two thirds of the population subsist in the informal economy.

In Asia, COVID-19 cases have been growing rapidly since May, in a delayed wave following that in China, Iran, Europe and the United States. And while there are still few cases in the Pacific Islands they have been increasing also (see Johns Hopkins n.d.). Efforts to prevent the spread of the disease through civil restrictions on freedom of movement have limited women's access to security, to health services and to economic resources. Quarantine housing and emergency powers have often been aggressively enforced with particular impacts on women's human rights and vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence. Women have lost employment and opportunities to generate income to an even greater extent than men and concurrently, the care burdens and the violence they face in the home have both intensified. In April, the United Nations declared the rise in domestic violence a "shadow pandemic" and called for governments worldwide to commit more funding to ensure safety from violence during this period (UN Women: 2020a, b).

In the context of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and community and border lockdowns, it is now more difficult than ever for humanitarians to access vulnerable communities to protect women's rights. Gender-based violence was already widespread in Asia and the Pacific before COVID-19; now perpetrators are using the threat of infection to control women and their families further. Further, the imposition of curfews, surveillance and checkpoints and the use of security forces to enforce

them heightens the risk of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence in fragile situations (Mra: 2020a, b; Silbert: 2020). COVID-19 is exacerbating existing gender inequalities and violence, and there is a risk of political and economic disempowerment that will be destabilizing for the peace and prosperity of the region. Conflict continues and is being fuelled in some settings during the pandemic. COVID-19 provides an opportunity for violent extremist and non-state armed organizations to recruit women as well as men to their causes, and to further expand their influence in most-affected communities.

Despite these many challenges in the Asia Pacific, as in some other regions, women have been frontline responders, providing health care and information, caring for the sick, the elderly and children no longer at school, and women peacebuilders have been adapting their work to respond to the pandemic and its impact on communities (WPHF: 2020; Monash GPS: 2020). The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic both demands and opens the space for re-defining national and international security. Responding to the health and economic crisis affecting individuals and nations is not helped by the traditional security apparatus (Caballero-Anthony: 2004). Rather, WPS advocates call for investment in “human security priorities ranging from our health and social welfare systems, to revitalized civil society and community organizations able to cope with and mitigate these risks” (Anderlini: 2020).

The UN Secretary-General’s statement to the Security Council on 12 August, 2020 called for the “cessation of hostilities in the context of COVID.” It stressed the importance of responding to the pandemic in an inclusive and conflict-sensitive way, and highlighted women’s roles specifically: “We must find avenues for far stronger engagement with women’s groups who play such a pivotal role in securing peace at the community level.” How, then, can the lessons learned on WPS better inform and strengthen responses to the COVID-19 global pandemic and recovery in Asia Pacific, turning a crisis into an opportunity? To answer this question, we return to the four pillars of WPS as a lens to gain insight.

Participation

Gender-inclusive participation is needed to recover from the unequal impacts of the global pandemic in the region. Viet Nam’s initiative to host a high-level international conference in December 2020, focused on women’s roles in building and sustaining peace, is an important contribution to advancing gender-equal participation and leadership. In COVID-19 responses and recovery, just as during peace processes and disaster planning, inclusive participation involves both gender-sensitive analysis of impacts to be able to mitigate them, and gender-responsive leadership that represents and is accountable to marginalized people and groups most affected. Due to the gender inequalities in most countries in Asia Pacific, decision making about measures to suppress the

pandemic and to promote economic recovery has been male dominated. As a result, the specific experiences and issues that women face have often not been taken into account at all by policy responses. Gender and conflict-sensitive advice and impact assessment from government officials to policy makers therefore need to be provided as a routine part of addressing the crisis.

An inclusive response to the pandemic is imperative. Skewed gender balance in leadership may call into question the reliability of a country or a region's governance and decision-making institutions, as occurred with regard to financial institutions after the 2008 global financial crisis. All countries in the Asia Pacific region lack gender parity in leadership roles across politics, the economy and society. As a result, male leaders have a particular responsibility to ensure gender-inclusion and women's representation (Davies and True: 2020). In the WPS agenda, male leaders have been crucial actors in mainstreaming gender issues and conflict-related sexual violence as matters of national and global security (Parisi: 2020; Davies and True: 2017). Men's leadership and attitudes are important since both men and women can champion and support gender equality through their governance actions in domestic and international settings (Bjarnegard and Melander: 2018).

Protection

The WPS agenda has demonstrated over two decades that home is not a safe place anywhere for women and girls. This message has never been more important than during the current pandemic when stay-at-home orders have been the major government response, and have by all accounts intensified the situation and severity of domestic violence, with particularly negative impacts on the abuse of women and children (Peterman et al: 2020). In COVID-affected situations of conflict and displacement, the violence is occurring outside of the home as well. In 2020, conflict-related civilian casualties in Afghanistan, for instance, are the same as in 2019 with more than 40 per cent of the victims being women and children (UN Women Afghanistan: 2020; Mehrdad et al: 2020).

Underreporting of gender-based violence and access to justice are a major problem given the civil restrictions during COVID-19. Providing services to victims and survivors in situations where there are few places to report to and amid fear of stigmatization has been integral to the WPS protection pillar. WPS has created institutional mechanisms such as women protection advisors, teams of legal experts, documentation protocols and the monitoring and referral system of the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC). These mechanisms are crucial to build upon during the COVID recovery, especially in Asia Pacific where the legal reform and services responding to gender-based violence are relatively new and still limited in conflict and fragile situations. During COVID,

a number of gender-based violence shelters have either closed, been overwhelmed or become inaccessible (Johnston et al: 2020; UN Women: August 2020).³⁹ In some countries little or no provision has been made for protection, psychosocial support networks or reproductive and maternal health services to be deemed essential services during lockdown periods (UNFPA: 2020). This is despite the joint UN effort to promote the provision of health, police and justice, social services and coordination of these services, often by civil society organizations, for survivors of violence against women and girls during the global pandemic (UN Women et al: 2020). The WPS protection pillar makes these a priority for women's security and for national and global security.

Prevention

The WPS agenda has created a network of women peacebuilders and civil society organizations in the Asia Pacific region who were already working to prevent conflict and violent extremism, and now are responding to the COVID-19 global pandemic. They have access to local institutions that governments and the security sector find difficult to reach, such as homes, neighbourhoods, schools and religious meeting places. They have been able to provide direct aid, as well as organize public information campaigns and health promotion education events to spread awareness about mitigating the impact of the pandemic in communities where the state may provide few services. Women peacebuilders have also been able to raise issues of clean water and sanitation access with governance bodies, as well as threats of sexual violence that have a particular impact on women's security during crises. They have organized women and communities to make masks and sanitisers to protect their families and communities as part of their prevention work.

Relief and recovery

A key aspect of the WPS relief and recovery pillar is the need for gender equality in any plan for socio-economic recovery to ensure the structural foundations for peace. This is crucial in COVID-19 recovery given the discriminatory gender norms informing responses in some countries (Setianto: 2020) and the disproportionate impacts on women workers and migrants who have lost their sources of livelihood. The economic marginalization of both men and women, moreover, is a key factor contributing to domestic violence and a risk factor for other forms of violence against women (World Health Organization: 2013).

The tangible benefits of women peacebuilders' crisis responses need to be recognised and built upon in the recovery period. During the pandemic, the lack of access to clean water and sanitation in fragile communities affected by conflict and displacement has made social distancing and good hygiene practices extremely challenging to implement and has increased the time required to collect water and firewood (Shifting the Power Coalition 2020; Mra 2020a, b; Gordon 2020). Between 3 and 41 per

cent of people's water source was compromised based on rapid mobile phone surveys of nine countries in the region with the largest gender gap in in the Philippines with 29 per cent of women and 13 per cent of men having compromised water source (UN Women 2020a, b). In the Pacific, women civil society activists have been calling for access to all decision-making in cyclone recovery and in the pandemic efforts (STP Coalition: 2020; Pacific Women: 2020). Societies risk losing important knowledge on vulnerabilities that could further destabilize them when there is limited inclusion of women in the local, national and regional COVID taskforces and limited engagement with women's networks to hasten the recovery. Relief and recovery is thus inextricable from commitments to women's meaningful participation.

This critical role of women in COVID-19 recovery, recognized by the UN Secretary-General, is already evident in the Asia Pacific region. However, the resources and support going to women's civil society organizations have decreased rather than increased, with 60 per cent of WPS organisations in the region reporting that they had lost funding during the pandemic (Johnson et al 2020),⁴⁰ precisely when many services are inaccessible and civil society support is most needed. That situation needs to be rectified to meet the needs of the most-affected communities and populations in the region, in situations of displacement, poverty and insecurity.

Recommendations

Urgent and COVID-19-related:

- **Enable women's meaningful participation in COVID-19 decision-making and** showcase women leaders and women-led CSOs who are effectively responding to the pandemic in the region. Now is the time to promote greater gender inclusion in decision making when those decisions impact all communities and may impact diverse women unequally, undermining their capacities to contribute to post-COVID-19 recovery.
- **Require rapid gender analyses on COVID-19 impacts from the ground** to inform inclusive governance especially in situations where equal and diverse representation is not yet achieved.
- **Protect women's rights and reduce SGBV in the context of COVID-19:**
 - ▾ Use the SRSG-SVC reporting mechanisms to document conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence crimes and hold parties accountable. *Do not wait until after the pandemic.*
 - ▾ Support governments to implement existing domestic violence laws and protections, especially the provision of safe shelter for victims or survivors and their families.
 - ▾ Provide safe, gender-sensitive quarantine quarters for women and children, in particular for female domestic and migrant workers who are particularly affected in the context of the pandemic.
 - ▾ Strengthen access to justice for survivors of conflict, including sexual and gender-based violence and women with disabilities. This should include increasing the recruitment and retention of women in law enforcement and justice institutions and establishing dedicated women's desks to support increased reporting. Also, in transition and post-conflict settings, *do not allow* amnesty for perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence, recognizing that a culture of impunity for such crimes breeds long-term gender inequality with possible impact on the recurrence of conflict and conflict grievances.
- The remaining five states in the Asia Pacific region who have not **adopted legislation to eradicate sexual and gender-based violence should urgently do so as a matter of priority.**
- **Provide emergency donor responses to funding WPS grassroots organizations and women human rights defenders** who are encountering difficulties accessing communities in the context of COVID-19 and remote working with increased threats to their safety.
- **Ensure that the gender-responsive recovery for COVID-19 is a structural recovery by** using loans to governments from development banks and multilateral institutions that

are *conditional* on appropriate COVID-19 responses to gender-based violence and that support gender equality.

- **Set targets for gender-responsive financing to support active employment programmes** and entrepreneurship training for the groups of women and minority groups that are most affected by the pandemic.
- **Undertake a gender analysis of new and existing national public policies and programmes (particularly economic policy responses)**, as well as gender-responsive budgeting, including identifying and addressing gender equality gaps, and integrating a gender perspective throughout processes and supporting gender-responsive procurement.

PARTICIPATION

- **Ensure women's equal and meaningful representation in peace talks** where there is momentum for resolving conflict through gender quotas, gender-sensitive provisions and mainstreaming in peace agreements, and formal mechanisms for women's participation in implementing and monitoring compliance with such agreements, including confidence building measures, such as ceasefires.
- **Commit to achieving gender parity in legislatures by 2030**, in line with WPS commitments to enhance the participation of women in decision-making, to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality by 2030, and uphold article 7 of CEDAW on women in political and public life, including through amendments to electoral codes, and the introduction of temporary special measures, as required, having regard to geographic coverage and diversity of representation of women.
- **Undertake gender and conflict analysis, in collaboration with women-led civil society organizations**, and with the support of UN Women having regard to its expertise, in relation to fragile and conflict-affected states, in order to increase women's participation and mitigate gendered risks, and having regard to women from diverse backgrounds, such as women with disabilities, Indigenous women, women from ethnic and religious minorities, and others.
- **Establish a formal mechanism to facilitate regular consultations between women-led civil society organizations, including youth organizations, and all government ministries**, including providing for women-led civil society to have joint civilian oversight of security sector policies and activities, and rapidly elevate gender-based early warnings of intercommunal violence often predicated by interpersonal violence and hostile misogyny and hate speech towards women.

PROTECTION

- **Strengthen online and offline protections for women human rights defenders**, including journalists, activists, dissidents, and others, recognizing the link between online threats and intimidation and physical attacks on persons, including establishing dedicated women's cybercrime divisions within national police forces and regional entities, such as ASEANPOL.
- Include a **dedicated budget line in national budgets to fully subsidize; childcare; and services related to gender-based violence, women's sexual and reproductive health,**

which are to be considered essential services, thereby creating an enabling environment for women's participation in public life.

PREVENTION

- **Promote the celebration of women peacemakers as well as the remembrance of women affected by conflict** in the region. This can include public and government sponsored commemorations, as well as support for grassroots and civil society efforts through media such as the arts.
- **Support the sustainability of women-led civil society and women-focused non-governmental groups**, including youth groups, through multi-year core funding, with additional funding for projects, thereby creating an enabling environment for entities to focus on project implementation and create transformational change underpinned by principles of gender equality.
- **Promote women's nuanced role in the prevention of violent extremism**, including through supporting their community leadership coupled with socio-economic support in addition to recognizing their influence within the family.
- **Recognize the leadership and abilities of young women to prevent conflict**, promote peace and respond to the challenges of their communities with equal abilities as more established women activists and organizations. **Youth will define the next 20 years of WPS in the region.**
- Where women's civil society organizations and women-focused non-governmental groups are relatively new and emerging in hostile political settings, **support them with flexible funding**, paired with a reduction of the current administrative burden to receive this funding, such as the requirement of three years of audited accounts to be eligible for funding, together with greater technical support to assist them to transition to established and competitive entities. Support to youth-, indigenous- and LGBTI-led and -focused organizations is particularly important.
- **Reallocate 10 per cent of security-sector budgets to social cohesion and community engagement programmes led by women**, recognizing that women are often the first to notice and informally respond to radicalization towards violence. Ensure that support to women for P/CVE engagement is in addition to – not subtracted from – pre-existing support for their WPS contributions.

RELIEF AND RECOVERY

- **Integrate a gender and protection lens and mechanism into disaster risk reduction and preparedness frameworks and responses.**
- **Urgently fund women civil society organizations working with the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of populations in support of providing relief to communities** that are inaccessible to mainstream relief providers and unable to access public relief programmes, such as displaced populations, women in conflict with state policies, LGBTQI people, women with disabilities, youth, and others.
- **Commit to allocating a minimum of 30 per cent of official development assistance to advancing gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected countries**, with the remaining 70 per cent requiring the mainstreaming of gender considerations throughout, regardless of the principal objective.

- **Identify areas of priority concern for women when developing economic stimulus and relief and recovery packages**, including cash grants to women from marginalized communities and for female-headed households to prevent the normalizing of negative coping mechanisms, such as child, early and forced marriage, radicalization by violent extremist organizations, and recruitment by trafficking and migrant-smuggling networks, which have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

POLICY AND COORDINATION

- **Strengthen qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis on incidence of sexual and gender-based violence to better understand the patterns and the drivers of this violence in different settings, including conflict and fragile settings.**
- **Mandate national statistics organizations to disaggregate all data by sex, and to include women and men's time use into relevant national surveys and calculations of gross domestic product**, to recognize the contribution and value of women's unpaid work while supporting and redistributing this work through national and community social infrastructure and the promotion of gender equality.
- **Establish regional action plans on women, peace and security** within regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific with the view to increasing coordinated and complementary compliance with commitments, and to address the uneven acceleration of the Women, Peace and Security agenda throughout the region.
- **Support a cross-regional network of women mediators to share learning and good practices**, to undertake joint advocacy, and collaborate on building peace and creating a gender equal future in Asia Pacific.
- **Renew commitment to key WPS and peacebuilding principles, especially NAPs-WPS** in countries in which they have expired, or are yet to be adopted. Ensure that NAPs-WPS have ownership at the highest levels of government, have budget allocations from all responsible line ministries, are effectively monitored and reported on, and have continuous inclusion and engagement of women civil society.
- **Re-engage with gender-responsive transitional justice priorities**, including supporting women's role in dealing with the past, promoting inter-generational dialogues and memorialization among survivors, and upholding laws and norms on ensuring that formal accountability mechanisms are established and impunity for violations during conflict is not tolerated.

Lessons-Learned in Asia Pacific Across the Four Pillars of WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

PARTICIPATION

There are sustained peace processes in the region that represent models of how to advance women's **meaningful participation** and transformation in ethnic, religious and culturally diverse settings (e.g. Comprehensive Agreement for the Bangsamoro [Phillippines]).

The need to address structural barriers to women's participation in peace and security has been prioritised.

Subtle, **culturally-sensitive strategies** have been used **to build trust** while advancing gender inclusion.

The value of women's participation in delivering security in the Asia Pacific region **has been demonstrated** in the context of crises.

The importance of building inclusive alliances – among NGOs and with male champions etc. – is demonstrated in the region.

PROTECTION

Limited awareness of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence results from both underreporting and the societal stigmatization.

Where awareness of SGBV is low, there is lower reporting and the need for even greater gender-sensitivity in protection responses.

The WPS framework has enabled practitioners to identify and respond to the groups most vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, including women of ethnic or religious minority status, politically-active women and women human right's defenders.

PREVENTION OF CONFLICT

Humanitarian responses to disasters can promote peacebuilding and greater awareness and responsiveness to gender-based violence in contexts where there have been major constraints on these activities.

Gender-responsive protection is as crucial in IDP camps and during migration journeys as it is in active conflict zones.

Only when women's conflict prevention capacity is recognised and supported can it be fully utilised and effective in stopping violent conflicts and promoting a culture of peace.

Women's conflict prevention efforts may be more effective than that of traditional security providers because they do not stop when the conflict or violence is officially ended but carry over from communal conflicts to the prevention of violent extremism.

The gender dynamics associated with recruitment and support for violent extremism are beginning to be explored in the Asia Pacific region and have the potential to inform more effective approaches to preventing and countering terrorism.

Women in the security sector can enhance the prevention of conflict and need to be supported.

RELIEF AND RECOVERY

Gender-responsive planning and preparedness for disaster, climate change and pandemics have necessarily been a major focus of WPS in Asia and the Pacific given the frequency of non-conflict crises and their confluence with conflict.

Early warning and preparedness initiatives already exist at the community level in the Asia Pacific region, however, **national and regional frameworks have enabled government and civil society partnerships that have increased the scale and reach of these initiatives.**

Women are frequently on the frontline of crisis response, committed to remaining in-country for recovery and reconstruction and bridging the humanitarian relief-long term development divide.

In areas where democratic spaces are limited by authoritarian rule or discriminatory gender norms, **women's networks have been able** to use the spaces designated for climate response and disaster risk reduction **to promote public deliberation on peace, security and sustainable development.**

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Endnotes

1. This paper uses the UN Women definition of the Asia Pacific region, which consists of the following countries and territories: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Multi-Country Office, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Maldives, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam.
2. The research evidence shows that the presence of women at the highest levels of peace negotiations makes it 20 per cent more likely that a peace agreement will be concluded and last at least two years, and 35 per cent more likely that it will endure for at least 15 years.
3. Current foreign ministers in Australia and Indonesia, and a former foreign secretary of India are noted WPS champions. Australia has also established the position of a global ambassador for gender equality to promote WPS as well as women's status abroad and in foreign policy. (Rao: 2018).
4. In 2014, Sweden was the first country to stake out a feminist foreign policy, arguing that the pursuit of gender equality is not only a goal in itself but also a means of achieving other goals such as peace, security and sustainable development. Sweden's feminist foreign policy has advanced principles of women's rights, women's equal representation and women's equal access to resources, which have influenced the country's choices of policy and alliances.
5. See also the UN Secretary-General 2019 annual report
6. The Regional Symposium on Implementing the WPS Agenda in ASEAN on 22-23 August 2019 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia was hosted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Cambodia in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, ACW, ACWC and with support from ASEAN-USAID PROSPECT and UN Women.
7. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation aims to "[w]ork towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" (ASEAN: 2015a). The ASEAN Women's Peace Registry (AWPR) is operationalized under the ASEAN-Institute for Peace and Reconciliation.
8. See Indonesia's National Action Plan for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children during Social Conflicts in 2014-2019 (RAN P3A-KS) passed as Presidential Decree (PerPres) No. 18 2014,
<http://peacewomen.org/action-plan/national-action-plan-indonesia>
9. See Australian Defence Minister Linda Reynolds's 2020 speech on WPS where she stated that "gender equality and women's empowerment in Defence are critical to our nation's security and to our global security. Part of this is an understanding of the particular challenges facing women and girls all around the world. We know they experience the worst in conflict. Their experience is devastatingly unique and disproportionate. If Australia is truly to be the world leader on women, peace and security that I know – and I'm sure all of you in this room know that it can be, it's a journey that has to begin here at home" (Reynolds: 2020).

10. See also Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne speeches on WPS (Payne: 2019; 2020).
11. South Korea held the first international conference on Action with Women and Peace on July 2-3, 2019. (Kyung-wha: 2019).
12. For instance, women leaders such as Alma Evangelista, executive director of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), participated in the peace negotiations between the Philippines government and the MILF in the 1990s, which culminated in the 1996 Final Peace Agreement.
13. See the US Council on Foreign Relations database (Council of Foreign Relations: 2019).
14. N-peace laureates must be residents of the Philippines, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, or Pakistan at the time of being nominated, have demonstrated capacity in mobilizing people and resources for peacebuilding, and worked on furthering the cause of peace, gender equality, equal participation, and empowerment of women, in the areas of participation, conflict resolution, protection and/or relief and recovery following the pillars of the WPS agenda.
15. For the list of awardees by year, contribution and country 2011-2018 see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N-Peace_Awards, for the 2019 awardees see <http://n-peace.net/>
16. See the members at <https://asean-aipr.org/asean-women-peace-registry/>, accessed September 10, 2020
17. See the members at <https://www.c-r.org/programme/women-mediators-across-commonwealth/wmc-members>, accessed September 10, 2020.
18. For prevalence data by country and subregion see <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>
19. "Oceania" here refers to the Pacific Islands only and does not include Australia and New Zealand.
20. Violence against women prevalence data is available for intimate partner physical and sexual violence across a lifetime and in the last 12 months from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>
21. The 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) defines *sexual and gender-based crimes* to include rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, and other forms of sexual violence. Gender-based crimes may also fall under the Court's jurisdiction if they constitute acts of genocide or other acts of crimes against humanity or war crimes (Office of the ICC Prosecutor: 2014: 5).
22. Proportion of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 years experiencing intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months.
23. Availability of data has been assessed from the global SDG database
24. This assessment is based on reporting under SDG 5.3.1 available here <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/> for three sub-regions, Oceania, South-Eastern Asia, and Southern Asia (there is no data available for Eastern Asia), which cover UN Women's Asia Pacific regional scope. For the definition of regions see <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups/>

25. *Ibid.*
26. <https://dataunodc.un.org/sdgs>
27. Tier 1 consists of countries whose governments fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards. Tier 2 consists of countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards. Tier 2.5 (watch list) consist of countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, AND where a) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year; c) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year. Tier 3 consists of countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.
28. Countries included in this list: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalem, Cambodia, China, Korea, (Democratic People's Republic of), Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Vietnam.
29. See <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/07/national-action-plan-on-preventing-and-counteracting-violent-extremism-in-the-philippines>
30. See CAB Annex –Article 12 Section on Revenue Generation and Wealth Sharing.
31. In terms of the direct participation of women, three of six in the government panel that signed the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) were women. Two women have since become the presidential advisers on the peace processes, a cabinet-rank position. In terms of the gender-inclusion outcomes of the CAB, the 2013 Annex on Powersharing allocated reserved seats for women in the Parliament and Council of Leaders of the Bangsamoro autonomous government and 2018 Bangsamoro Organic Law further stipulates these measures.
32. The Paung Sie Facility. PSF's Gender, Peace and Security window is located at: <http://www.paungsiefacility.org/>
33. The second Pacific Feminist Forum conference was held in Suva in May 2019 <http://www.fwrp.org.fj/news/events/pacific-feminist-forum/2nd-pacific-feminist-forum-2019>
34. According to the UN Secretary-General reports on conflict-related sexual violence, the term “refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict” (UN Secretary-General: 2019: 3).

35. OHCHR reported in February 2017 that more than 50 of the 100 women and girls interviewed described having been subjected to rape, gang rape, or other forms of sexual violence, apparently employed systematically to humiliate and terrorize their community.
36. The prevalence rate of physical and sexual violence for ever-partnered women in South-East Asia was 37.7 per cent, the second highest in the world after Africa (WHO: 2013). Similarly, the region recorded the second-highest prevalence rate of intimate-partner violence, at 41.73 per cent, after Central Sub-Saharan Africa (WHO 2013: 47). A UN study found men's perpetration of intimate-partner physical and sexual violence extremely common, with rates of 26 to 80 per cent across sites, and women's experience of partner victimization at 25 to 68 per cent: on average a 30–57 per cent prevalence rate (Fulu et al: 2013: 27). Among women respondents, between 10 and 59 per cent reported rape by a nonpartner (Fulu et al. 2013: 39). According to the UN study, the majority of men perpetrating rape—between 72 and 97 per cent across the nine sites—did not experience any legal consequences (Fulu et al: 2013: 3).
37. There is little or no data disaggregating the gender and age of IDPs. However, the numbers are estimated to be similar to those in the population, with some indication that they are weighted toward women and children, given that men may stay to fight or secure land. (Albuja et al: 2014)
38. Peace villages have been endorsed by Indonesian President Jokowi during his visit at one of the villages, and have the opportunity to be scaled up as part of the upcoming Indonesia NAP on PVE (UN Women: 2019).
39. In April 2020, just 14 per cent of women's civil society organizations reported that they were providing shelter for victims of domestic or other types of gender-based violence (UN Women: 2020).
40. UN Women's Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund's (2020) global rapid survey in April 2020 of women's CSO partners found that partners sought to reallocate funding to adapt their projects to COVID-19 and one third of partners said their organisation could be at risk due to COVID-19.

