WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

IN ASIA PACIFIC, 20 YEARS ON

PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND LESSONS LEARNED
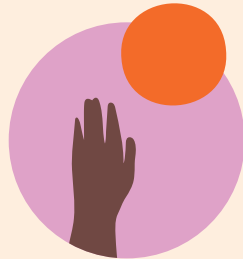

UN WOMEN

Pillars of Progress on Women, Peace and Security in Asia Pacific
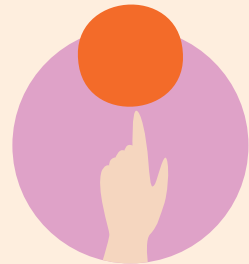
FROM 2000-2020

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.

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]).

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

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

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

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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.

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

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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.

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.

PREVENTION OF CONFLICT

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.**

WHAT'S NEXT

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.

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. UN Women recognizes that peace – as well as recovery efforts – are only sustainable if women are fully included, and that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men. In the Asia Pacific region, we, along with our partners, work to promote women's participation in peace and security processes, and the integration of gender equality perspectives in all aspects of peacebuilding and security efforts across the region.

The publication "Women, Peace and Security in Asia Pacific, 20 Years on: Progress achieved and lessons learned" takes stock of the progress as well as the gaps in implementing WPS in the Asia Pacific region over the last 20 years, and builds upon the lessons learned to move the WPS agenda forward in the years to come.

View the full publication online:
https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/10/women-peace-and-security-in-asia-pacific-20-years-on-progress-achieved-and-lessons-learned