

The Netherlands
National Action Plan on

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

2016-2019

A partnership to contribute to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda



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PARTNERSHIP

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**“JOINTLY, WE MUST
RISE TO THE CHALLENGE”**

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

FOREWORD



We, the signatories of the Dutch National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, proudly present our third Action Plan for the period 2016-2019. This plan is an expression of our ongoing partnership and a contribution to the full realisation of the ambitions set out in all the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.¹ Together, we form a platform for cooperation between government and over 50 Dutch civil society organisations and knowledge institutions, with the joint overall objective of:

CONTRIBUTING TO AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS, SO THEY CAN MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, PROTECTION, RELIEF AND RECOVERY.

We seek to help break down harmful gender norms, enhance protection, and give men and women equal leverage in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery. Women are active and crucial agents for change. Including women in peace and security efforts is not only the right thing to do; it also makes these efforts more effective

and leads to sustainable solutions.² Without the inclusion of women, there will be no sustainable peace.

The political ambitions set out by the Security Council are in stark contrast with reality. Without taking account of existing power relations, without fully including both men and women, there will be no peace. Despite the good intentions expressed, the political will shown and the progress made since the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 in 2000, women remain under-represented in peace processes, the security sector, the political arena and the judicial sector, hampering effective, inclusive and sustainable peacemaking. Worldwide, the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict situations has barely improved; in some areas it has even deteriorated.³ Full and meaningful participation by women in peace and security has not yet been achieved. There is still a lot of work to be done. The full realisation of the Security Council's directives on Women, Peace and Security requires greater investment by us all. This National Action Plan aims to help us reach that goal.

To achieve real change, governments, civil society and knowledge institutions need to join forces. That is why ministries, the National Police, knowledge institutions and a wide range of civil society groups have jointly drafted this Dutch National Action Plan. Our partnership consists of a strong network of organisations in the Netherlands and all over the world.

The relationship between Dutch organisations and our partners in conflict and post-conflict situations benefits us all. By strategically coordinating our efforts and activities, we foster greater cohesion and work towards more lasting peace. WO=MEN, representing the civil society organisations and knowledge institutions, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to jointly coordinate all the activities in this third National Action Plan.

This partnership facilitates the development of new ideas and initiatives, drawing on a wide range of resources, and enables us to share work among us in accordance with our different areas of expertise and knowledge. While respecting each other's roles and mandates, we believe that coordination and cooperation between government, knowledge institutions and civil society are mutually beneficial. The inclusive and participatory character of this plan is unique and in itself an excellent illustration of our commitment to realising our shared ambitions.

Local actors and women's rights organisations in conflict and post-conflict environments and civil society worldwide are crucial partners in our efforts. These women and men can challenge the power relations that underpin current inequalities, and find ways to work with institutes and organisations to encourage the structural change needed to achieve gender equality. Their experience, views and ideas on empowerment and equal participation will play a leading role in our efforts. As we have learned from evaluating our previous Action Plans, 'since gender norms are being reshaped at local level, connections with grass-roots initiatives for social change and gender equality become an absolute strategic pre-requisite when promoting gender equality objectives.'⁴ We will work together, taking a conflict-sensitive approach.

While all the signatories share responsibility for this National Action Plan, governments have the primary political duty to implement the various resolutions of the UN Security Council on Women, Peace and Security. Therefore, simultaneously with the adoption of this plan, five Dutch ministers sent a joint policy letter to the Dutch parliament presenting a specific strategy for government action on Women, Peace and Security.

¹) Resolutions 1325 (2000); 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2010); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

²) See: (1) Thania Phaffenholz, Nick Ross, Steven Dixon, Anna-Lena Schluchter, Jacqui True (2015), 'Making Women Count: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on the Quality and Sustainability of Peace Negotiations and Implementation', 2. (2) Radhika Coomaraswamy (2015), 'Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325', New York: UN Women, 46, note 8. (3) Karen McMinn (2015), 'Candid Voices from the Field: Obstacles to a Transformative Women, Peace and Security Agenda and to Women's Meaningful Participation in Building Peace and Security', 8.

³) Coomaraswamy (2015), 14-15.

⁴) IOB (2015), 'Gender, peace and security: Evaluation of the Netherlands and UN Security Council resolution 1325', The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 52-53.

1. PAST AND PRESENT

‘WOMEN ARE KEY ACTORS IN EXERTING INFLUENCE TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE PEACE. WE HAVE TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT TO ENSURING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING, PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACEBUILDING. I APPLAUD WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THE ADOPTION OF 1325.’⁵

Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bert Koenders

The impact of violent conflict on women was first put on the international agenda in the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995. Subsequently, the global women’s movement lobbied extensively for the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

Resolution 1325 marked a turning point in history by embedding women’s rights and gender equality for the first time in the international peace and security agenda. It recognises that women have vital roles to play in achieving peace and security: as peacemakers, community leaders, breadwinners and combatants. The resolution has a transformative purpose: women’s participation can, and should, draw more attention to conflict prevention and encourage non-violent conflict resolution. Its adoption also demonstrated a shift from the previously dominant concept of national security towards a recognition of the importance of human security.

Effective peacemaking, in particular preventing conflict, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, requires that these processes are inclusive at all levels. It also requires all actors involved to adopt a gender perspective when working on matters of peace and security. The resolution recognises the significance of women and calls for a gender perspective in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, refugee camp design, peacekeeping operations, security sector reform and the reconstruction of war-torn societies.

Between 2008 and 2015 the Security Council adopted seven more resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.⁶ These resolutions establish international norms and build upon the international human rights framework.⁷ Taken together, the resolutions constitute the overarching Women, Peace and Security international policy framework. They guide work to promote women’s participation and protect women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict situations by recognising the negative impact of sexual violence on peace and security. The resolutions define sexual violence as a tactic of war and a war crime that must always



be prosecuted in all circumstances, and mandate peacekeeping missions to protect women and children from violence during armed conflict. Their call to action extends from the international to the local level, from intergovernmental bodies to member states and local women’s movements, emphasising the need to address the root causes of armed conflict and the security risks that women face.

TIME TO ACT

All the resolutions on Women, Peace and Security illustrate normative changes and advancements made during the last 15 years in often challenging contexts. The UN Security Council regularly addresses the issue of Women, Peace and Security. Many countries and regional organisations have adopted National Action Plans, policies and programmes and organised training courses to solidify their commitment to implementing the resolutions. There is international case law on sexual violence as a war crime that international courts and tribunals should prosecute.

There is growing awareness among UN member states and international and regional organisations of the fact that women’s participation increases the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of peace and security efforts. Since 2000, we have seen a growing number of consultations in peace processes with civil society and women’s groups and of related provisions in peace agreements.

However, despite impressive normative advances, implementation and results in conflict and post-conflict environments must be improved. While recognising the importance of raising awareness and reaching consensus, we believe we should not get bogged down in debates and discussions on the importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The Dutch National Action Plan partners commit to taking part in more concrete activities at country level through tailor-made programmes, in addition to diplomacy and sharing of experience at regional and international level. We seek to remedy the systematic lack of implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

1.1 WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY – THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Current conflicts are characterised by upsurges of violence in which human rights and humanitarian law are violated – often at the hands of a growing number of non-state armed actors as well as illicit groups operating on the periphery of armed conflicts without qualifying as parties to them.⁸ Conflicts often have multiple complex drivers and are influenced by cross-border and transnational developments. Among other factors, geopolitical complexity, extreme violence and the use and reach of new technologies have triggered a need for new approaches to conflict resolution. Several reviews and studies conducted in 2015 highlight the need for more attention to prevention and peace maintenance and a focus on the root causes of conflict in order to avoid relapse, escalation and protracted crises.⁹ This means understanding root causes like societal and cultural inequalities and gender norms and altering the dynamics of conflict-prone societies. Understanding the influence of other factors – like environmental challenges, Ebola and other epidemics, and climate change – is also crucial.

THE IMPACT OF WAR AND ARMED CONFLICT ON GENDER RELATIONS

War and armed conflicts affect men and women differently and transform gender roles in society. While often many men leave their communities for combat, women tend to become their families' breadwinners and heads of household.¹⁰ Women's participation in the labour market in times of conflict is 'commonly characterised by low-paid, low-skilled jobs, self-employment in the informal sector or unpaid family (farm) labour'.¹¹ When conflicts come to an end, most gender roles change (back) again, while other roles do not alter. These gender dynamics during and after conflict often entail wider societal change that puts traditions in question. This can create opportunities for change.

As mentioned above, conflict leads to human rights violations. The way it impacts on women and men differs and can lead to increased gender inequality. Violence, and



‘WAR AND ARMED CONFLICTS AFFECT MEN AND WOMEN DIFFERENTLY AND TRANSFORM GENDER ROLES IN SOCIETY’

specifically sexual violence, is used as a weapon of war to disrupt societies and terrorise vulnerable groups, including women and ethnic and religious groups. Men and women who challenge existing gender norms, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and men who are unwilling to take part in violence, are exposed to threats. Survivors often have limited access to health care, education and safety. Alleged perpetrators of war crimes are rarely prosecuted due to a lack of resources, knowledge, institutional capacity or political will. To complicate matters even further, many perpetrators are survivors of earlier sexual violence or were forced at gunpoint to rape family members.

By mid-2015, according to reports, the number of refugees was approaching its highest level in 20 years.¹² The number of refugees has been increasing steadily for four years now. By the end of 2014, according to UNHCR, '59.5 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations'.¹³ About half of the world's refugees are estimated to be female.¹⁴ Displaced women and girls are often exposed to exploitation, abduction, sexual violence and other dangers to their physical, mental and reproductive health. Displacement and statelessness reinforce existing gender inequalities; discriminatory norms and lack of documentation prevent women from seeking asylum and having access to their rights, services and assistance.¹⁵ UN Women has confirmed that 'women's rights to education, health, land and productive assets and to participation, decision-making and leadership in village or community matters are strongly linked to women's security'.¹⁶ All too often, the voices of displaced women are not heard and their needs and interests are not represented in decision-making processes that affect their dire situation. Displaced women are often not recognised as survivors or potential beneficiaries. They should also be seen as important leaders, partners and advocates in relief and recovery efforts.

RADICALISATION, VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

Another current challenge is the rise of radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism. Violent extremist groups deliberately target women's rights, roles and physical integrity in conflict and post-conflict societies. Their extremist ideologies, which are often religiously and politically motivated, are used to justify these actions.

At the same time, women are perceived as important stakeholders and allies in preventing radicalisation and countering violent extremism and terrorism.¹⁷ Women have different roles to play in private and public space. In local communities, women can contribute to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of alternative, peaceful narratives and initiatives to counter violent extremism, by promoting inclusion, dialogue and social cohesion. Women are also important 'early warners' who can help predict escalating violence and possible terrorist attacks, due to their knowledge and access to

information in communities. As activists, teachers, peacekeepers, community leaders, politicians and role models, women can enhance human security and help prevent and counter violent extremism.

However, counterterrorism and activities aimed at countering violent extremism that are conducted in tandem with local women's organisations can jeopardise women's safety.¹⁸ Women are not a homogeneous group; they can themselves be 'terrorists, sympathisers, mobilisers, and perpetrators'.¹⁹ A comprehensive understanding of gender roles in violent extremism and terrorism can enhance social inclusion and the effects of alternative narratives and activities.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND SECURITY AFFAIRS

The use of gender sensitive language in peace agreements has slightly increased since 2000. This language is mainly used in relation to women, however, and very rarely concerns gender roles. The number of women, women's groups and gender experts participating in peacemaking efforts has also increased, as has the number of senior female leaders at the UN. Yet women's roles in many conflict-affected situations are often temporary, symbolic and limited by cultural norms.²⁰ In addition, many negotiations focus solely on the traditional military and political parties to conflict and on high-level political processes, where women remain under-represented, especially in positions of authority.



**SELF HELP WOMEN
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION**



The level of women's participation in security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and other peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts, including peacekeeping missions and peace negotiations, remains very low. Many approaches to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration reaffirm gender stereotypes and confirm the perception of women as victims, potentially undermining the empowering leadership roles that women can play and reducing the space for men to reconsider the gender norms that prescribe certain behaviour.²¹ Furthermore, there are still barriers, such as negative images and security risks due to cooperation with security forces, to women's organisations working with the security sector. Greater participation by women in the security sector will require a fundamental shift in perceptions on peace processes and gender roles.

Research shows that women's perspectives and gender responsive approaches, which address the gendered vulnerabilities of both women and men and the interdependencies between them, are indispensable elements of all phases of peace negotiations and consultations. Women's effective participation in peace negotiations increases the probability of peace agreements enduring at least two years by 20% and the probability of peace agreements enduring 15 years by 35%.²² Women can contribute to the development of inclusive security institutions and have an important role to play in community security and oversight.²³

SHRINKING SPACE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

The space for civic engagement and civil society actors is shrinking worldwide, particularly in environments affected by conflict. In voicing critical perspectives, doing their work and moving freely, women's rights activists, female politicians, human rights defenders and journalists may be confronted with threats, incarceration, violence and in some cases even death. The rise of conservative and extremist groups, militarised responses to insurgencies, and conflicts in fragile states require a better understanding of the nexus between development and security.

In times of conflict, laws that protect freedom of association are often infringed or ignored. Civil society organisations experience unwarranted intrusion or interference in their affairs by both state and non-state actors, which limits their ability to pursue a broad range of self-defined objectives and take a bottom-up approach. It also limits NGOs' participation in inclusive forums conducting dialogues about conflict resolution and peacebuilding. When defining and adopting new counterterrorism measures, states should be aware that such measures can hamstring the operations of civil society organisations, for instance by hindering legitimate bank transfers to finance their work. At a time when funding for women's organisations is already limited, these restrictions narrow the manoeuvring room of organisations that are able and willing to help achieve our common goals.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that there are still structural barriers to the full and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security. A multifaceted approach by governmental and non-governmental actors is needed to address these structural barriers. In chapter 2 we describe our planned contributions to doing so. In the next section we review the lessons learned from the previous two National Action Plans.

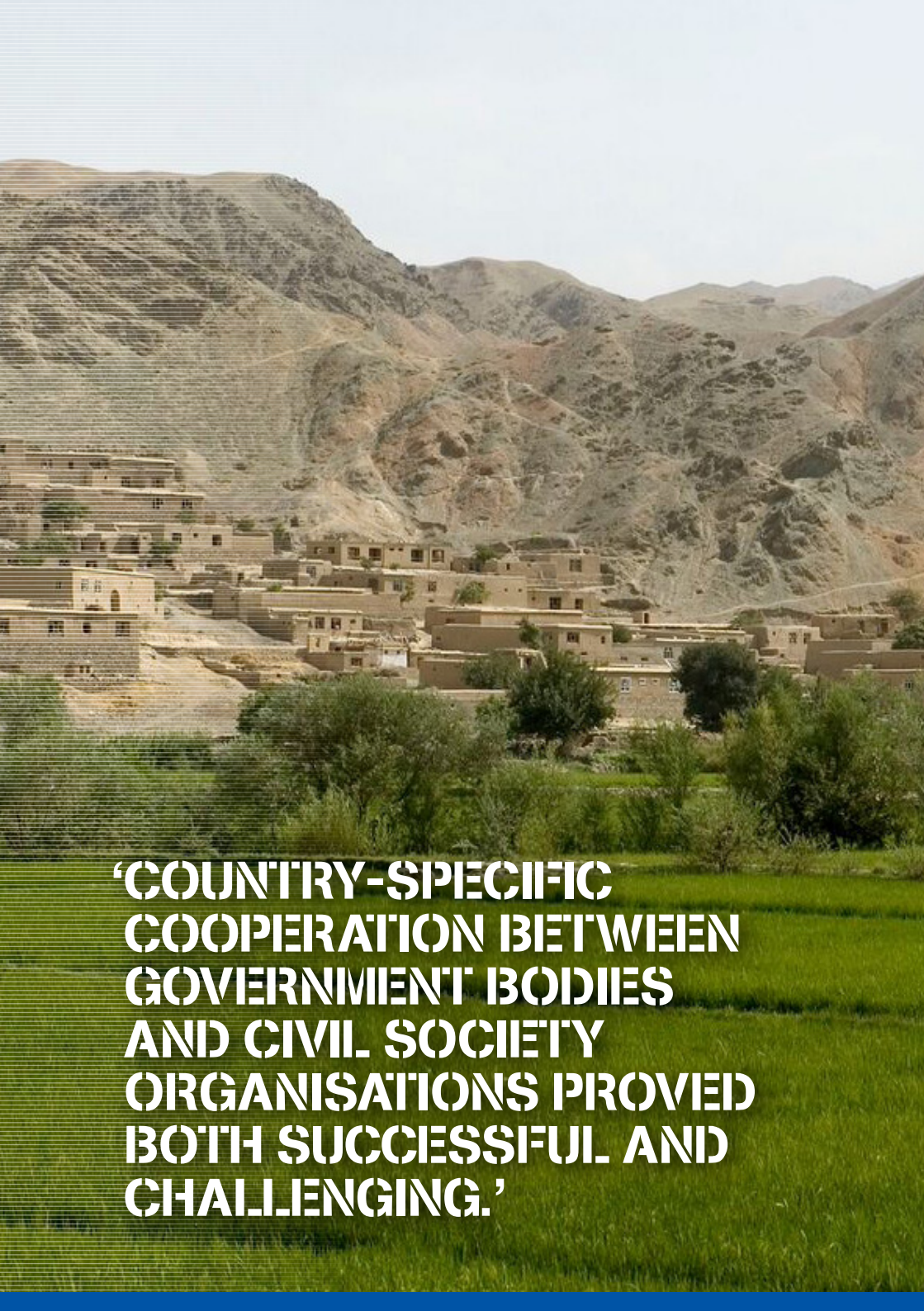
1.2. PREVIOUS ACTION PLANS: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

The current challenges facing the Women, Peace and Security agenda require a coordinated and joint response by governments and civil society worldwide. The Dutch government and more than 50 partners – civil society organisations and knowledge institutions – have jointly implemented two previous National Action Plans. These plans have been evaluated by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which published the evaluation report 'Gender, Peace and Security' in 2015.²⁴ This report assesses the progress made in putting the relevant UN Security Council resolutions into practice, notably by examining the two Action Plans that were agreed in 2007 and 2011 and the activities undertaken by the signatories. The lessons learned presented in this chapter are taken from this report and various other evaluations.

THEMATIC AND COUNTRY-FOCUSED COOPERATION

The first National Action Plan was rather broad and did not prioritise specific interventions or countries. The second Action Plan focused on women's political participation and female leadership. Geographically, the plan selected six focus countries (Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan) and the Middle East and North Africa region. To finance the implementation of the second Action Plan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated a budget of €4 million a year for the period 2012–2015 for support to joint projects undertaken by an alliance of signatories in each country. Organisations that signed up for this task received a modest budget for activities covered by the second Action Plan. In each country group, signatories have met, exchanged knowledge and experience, and drafted joint proposals for country-specific activities. Several projects have been implemented in cooperation with the embassies concerned. The fund 'Small Seeds for Big Baobabs' was created to finance smaller-scale interventions in the focus countries. Focus country programmes under the second Action Plan are being implemented through 2017.

This country-specific cooperation between government bodies and civil society organisations proved both successful and challenging. It brought together organisations



**‘COUNTRY-SPECIFIC
COOPERATION BETWEEN
GOVERNMENT BODIES
AND CIVIL SOCIETY
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BOTH SUCCESSFUL AND
CHALLENGING.’**

with different kinds of skills and knowledge, with the aim of stepping up strategic cooperation on Women, Peace and Security in both the Netherlands and the focus countries. According to the IOB, however, the country groups focused mainly on the activities and the division of funds, and far less on strategic cooperation.²⁵ The partnerships should not be reduced to donor-implementer relationships, with the ministry as donor and civil society organisations as implementers.

The country groups are a key platform for cooperation, and we will continue and step up our collaboration in these groups. Nevertheless, our ambitions should extend beyond joint projects. Therefore, we will strengthen our cooperation by developing and implementing joint country strategies, including not only joint projects but also information-sharing and advocacy. In 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs intends to issue a call for proposals in support of the future development and implementation of programmes promoting women’s meaningful participation in peace and security.

GENDER ANALYSIS

Under the second National Action Plan, joint country programmes were drawn up and implemented. The IOB evaluation recommends that country-specific strategies should be based on a gender-specific analysis, looking at men’s and women’s different roles and underlying power relations in times of conflict. Political exclusion and social and physical abuse cannot be effectively addressed if we only focus on women.²⁶ We need to understand the context and the conflict-specific notions and ideals behind both men’s and women’s behaviour and roles if we want to contribute to gender equality. We will therefore conduct broader gender analyses and include perspectives on masculinity in our country strategies.²⁷

Men’s roles and the grey area between formal and non-formal authority in conflict and post-conflict settings need to be taken into account to help create an enabling environment for women’s meaningful participation. Gender inequality can be a catalyst and early warning sign of conflict, and is often a manifestation and consequence of violent conflict. The more patriarchal a society, the more men are taught that their masculinity entitles them to power, with dominance, control and violence being justified as means of obtaining or retaining power.

GRASSROOTS

In the periods covered by our previous two Action Plans, we worked extensively with grassroots organisations in conflict and post-conflict countries. Local women’s rights organisations in conflict and post-conflict environments represent agents of change that can challenge the power relations underpinning gender inequalities. Gender norms are



often shaped and reshaped at local level and can be influenced by local, national and international actors. Therefore, connections with grassroots initiatives for social change and gender equality are a strategic prerequisite to promoting gender equality.²⁸ The IOB evaluation of our second Action Plan confirms this, and recommends we maintain our strong emphasis on the role of local women's rights organisations. Supporting these organisations is crucial when pursuing an agenda of sociopolitical change in conflict-affected environments.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Evaluations of the two previous Action Plans have shown the need for a sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The development and application of a successful M&E system, with clear and tangible objectives and targets that enable signatories to measure progress has proven challenging, however. The Action Plans' emphasis on partnership makes the challenge even more formidable. The second Action Plan introduced an M&E matrix aimed at monitoring the results of our activities each year. However, this system

turned out not to be feasible for the coordinating partners WO=MEN and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We learned from the IOB evaluation that 'the NAPs have not provided guidance ... on how to translate the resolution's objectives into actions that are responsive to contextual gender realities'.²⁹ Developing and applying a suitable monitoring and evaluation system will allow signatories to measure their impact in the focus countries.

CONCLUSION

The lessons learned from the previous two National Action Plans, together with the insights gained from our analysis of current challenges, will be the guiding principles for our joint efforts going forward. The next chapter will describe in detail our approach over the next four years.

⁵⁾ Bert Koenders, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, at the conference 'Women: Powerful Agents for Change', Amsterdam, 16 February 2015.

⁶⁾ UNSCRs 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

⁷⁾ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation no. 30, <http://www.ohchr.org/documents/hrbodies/cedaw/gcomments/cedaw.c.cg.30.pdf>.

⁸⁾ Cecilie Hellesveit (2015), 'Tribes, Thugs, Terrorists and the Law: Can Non-Conventional Violence be Regulated?' Oslo: NOREF Report, 3.

⁹⁾ For instance: Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2015); Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (2015), A/70/95-S/2015/446; Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security (2015), S/2015/716; 20-year Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (2015), E/CN.6/2015/3; 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and preparations for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

¹⁰⁾ Charlotte Lindsey (2001), 'Women Facing War: ICRC Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women', Geneva: International Red Cross, 29-30.

¹¹⁾ Patricia Justino (2012), 'Women Working for Recovery: The Impact of Female Employment on Family and Community Welfare after Conflict', New York: UN Women, 10.

¹²⁾ UNHCR (2015), 'Mid-year Trends 2015', Geneva: UNHCR, 4.

¹³⁾ UNHCR (2015), 'World at War: UNHCR Global Trends Forced Displacements in 2014', Geneva: UNHCR, 2.

¹⁴⁾ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁵⁾ Coomaraswamy (2015), 69.

¹⁶⁾ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁾ UN Security Council resolution 2242 confirms the importance of women's role and participation in countering violent extremism and terrorism.

¹⁸⁾ More information about the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in countering violent extremism can be found at: GCTF, Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism, <http://www.thegctf.org>, esp. Good Practice 17.

¹⁹⁾ GCTF (2014), OSCE-GCTF International Workshop on Supporting Civil Society Initiatives to Empower Women's Roles in Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: Recommendations, Istanbul, 13-14 May, 1-2.

²⁰⁾ Coomaraswamy (2015), 15.

²¹⁾ Marie O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin and Thania Paffenholz (2015), 'Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes', 12.

²²⁾ Based on a forthcoming publication by Laurel Stone, whose summary findings were cited in Ibid., 41-42.

²³⁾ Ibid., 179-180.

²⁴⁾ IOB (2015).

²⁵⁾ Ibid., 123.

²⁶⁾ Ibid., 125.

²⁷⁾ Women Peacemakers Program (n.d.), 'Policy Brief: Incorporating a Masculinities Perspective in UNSCR 1325 Implementation'.

²⁸⁾ Angelika Arutyunova and Cindy Clark (2014), 'Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots: The Status of Financing for Women's Rights Organizing and Gender Equality', Toronto: Association for Women's Rights in Development, 30.

²⁹⁾ IOB (2015), 125.

2.

THE WAY FORWARD

SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND

Impact & Vision SECURITY FOR EVERYONE

OVERALL OBJECTIVE →

Together we contribute to an enabling environment for women's participation and empowerment in conflict and post-conflict environments, so they can meaningfully participate in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, protection, relief and recovery

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES



ENHANCED PROTECTION



DECREASE OF HARMFUL GENDER NORMS



EQUAL LEVERAGE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, RELIEF AND RECOVERY



Increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation of women in security and justice sector development

Increased understanding of gender based violence and the protection of women

Improved (implementation of) policies and regulations on gender based violence and the protection of women

Increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources to contribute to gender equality

Increased understanding of gender equality and gender norms

Increased involvement of men and boys in the implementation of laws and regulations that contribute to gender equality

Women are agents of change and have increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

Increased political will and increased awareness, knowledge and skills for (existing) inclusive and non-violent conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

Local non-violent strategies and approaches of conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery are increasingly re-enforced and incorporated in policies and regulations
Improved (implementation) of policies and regulations for the participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

CAPACITY & RESOURCES

ATTITUDES & BELIEFS

LAW & POLICY

COOPERATION

INCREASED LINKAGES BETWEEN LOCAL, NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

INCREASED INVOLVEMENT OF MEN AND BOYS AS CRUCIAL ACTORS

TYPES OF

INTERVENTIONS



We share information and knowledge (*Information sharing*)



We develop and implement programmes (*Programmes*)



We influence all levels in local and (inter) national organisations (*Advocacy*)

‘WHAT’S HAPPENED IN PEACE AND SECURITY IS THAT WE’VE COMPLETELY NEGLECTED HALF OF THE POPULATION, AND SO, WE THEN BECOME SURPRISED THAT PEACE ISN’T SUSTAINABLE... AND THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SOMETHING SUSTAINABLE IS TO MAKE IT INDIGENOUS, TO MAKE IT A CULTURAL CHANGE.’³⁰

In partnership, we have formulated a joint response to the current challenges facing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In this chapter we describe our joint objectives and outputs, and trace the pathways of change that we believe are necessary to advance the role of women in peace and security. A visualisation of this theory of change can be found on the previous page.

2.1. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

We start from the basic premise of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325: that women’s participation in conflict resolution and peace and reconstruction processes at all levels of decision-making has a positive impact on sustainable peace. However, as concluded from the previous chapter, there are still structural barriers to women’s full and



meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security. Most of these obstacles are linked to existing norms, values, laws and institutions that perpetuate gender inequalities. Structural transformation of these norms, values, laws and institutions is a prerequisite for sustainable progress in protecting women’s rights and achieving gender equality. To achieve this transformation, a multifaceted approach by governmental and non-governmental actors is needed, so that we can help create an enabling environment for women’s participation in peace and security.

That is why the signatories of the Dutch National Action Plan will work towards the following overall objective:

CONTRIBUTE TO AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS, SO THEY CAN MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, PROTECTION, RELIEF AND RECOVERY.

2.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND PATHWAYS OF CHANGE

The previous chapter listed the current challenges to women’s meaningful participation. It emphasised the brutality and risks that women in fragile and conflict environments face, such as psychological and sexual violence. Protecting women is therefore one of the specific objectives of our third National Action Plan. Chapter 1 also highlighted the need to subvert harmful underlying gender norms in order to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Another important conclusion was that women’s leverage and agency should be enhanced on all issues of peace and security. Women are agents of change and should be able to fully participate in peace processes and contribute to sustainable peace.

To help create an enabling environment, we have defined the following three specific goals:

- 1) Better protect women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations from violence and violations of their rights;
- 2) Subvert harmful underlying gender norms, which are obstacles to sustainable peace;
- 3) Ensure that women have equal leverage in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery at all levels, and that their efforts are acknowledged and supported.



**‘IT OFTEN DEMANDS
SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND
SKILLS AND ACCESS TO
SUFFICIENT RESOURCES.’**

Progress towards these specific goals will be achieved through three parallel approaches, or ‘pathways of change’. Our three pathways of change constitute the main structure for our interventions and are closely interrelated. In all of these interventions it is essential to involve all actors that are relevant to the specific context of the conflict, such as governments, non-governmental organisations and civil society. Gender analysis is of crucial importance in identifying the relevant stakeholders for each activity.

1. Facilitate [capacity building](#) and provide [resources](#) to support the empowerment and participation of women and men who strive for gender-sensitive approaches to peace processes.

Participating in peace negotiations and engaging with national and international actors to increase women’s participation often demand specific knowledge and skills and access to sufficient resources. It is important that all relevant actors in conflict and post-conflict environments have the capacity and skills needed to overcome major obstacles in those environments. By strengthening the capacity of women and men who are promoting gender-sensitive approaches to peace processes, the signatories aim to help create an enabling environment for women’s meaningful participation.

2. Understand and positively influence [attitudes and beliefs](#) that maintain and perpetuate the exclusion of women.

All human societies and cultures have gender norms that prescribe women’s and men’s behaviour and determine people’s beliefs about gender roles in society. Such norms can disadvantage women and can be used to legitimate institutionalised unequal treatment. Norms, attitudes and beliefs are not fixed but vary with cultures, however, and can change over time. Understanding and challenging norms, attitudes and beliefs is essential for women’s inclusion and structural change.

3. Influence the development and implementation of [laws and policies](#) that weaken obstacles to women’s participation and protection.

International human rights law and international humanitarian law form part of the normative legal framework needed to promote the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda at international, regional, national and local level. Often, however, these laws are not applied and impunity prevails. During and immediately after conflicts the rule of law is often disrupted, non-functional and/or non-existent. Institutions, legislation, gender and other policies, legal provisions and even constitutions have to be adopted or recast. Influencing the development and implementation of laws and policies that weaken obstacles to women’s participation is the last pathway of change.

2.3. OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

The pathways of change, overall objective and specific goals of our third National Action Plan can be translated into a set of outputs. Each of the activities to be carried out in several focus countries aim to produce one or more of these outputs, thereby contributing to our overall objective. The activities can be divided into three types of interventions; (1) knowledge sharing, (2) advocacy and (3) joint programming. The relation between the outputs and the activities is explained in detail in this section. The signatories will develop country strategies and select a specific focus from the following activities.

2.3.1. BETTER PROTECT WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS AGAINST VIOLENCE AND VIOLATIONS OF THEIR RIGHTS

As part of the specific goal on better protection, this Action Plan defines three different outputs to which the signatories will contribute.

Output 1: Increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation by women in security and justice sector development

The first output emphasises that the protection of women and girls can be improved by providing increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for women's equal leverage in the security and justice sector development. The actors that will be targeted are relevant justice, defence and government bodies and women's organisations in the Netherlands and the focus countries.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Inform government actors in the Netherlands and the focus countries about context-specific best practices and barriers to women's meaningful participation	Civil society organisations (CSOs), knowledge institutions and their local CSO partners
Connect justice and defence actors in the focus countries with Dutch defence actors to exchange context-specific best practices and knowledge on the barriers to women's meaningful participation	CSOs, knowledge institutions and local CSO partners, Ministry of Defence
Support training courses on protecting women for police and other security sector actors in the focus countries	CSOs, police, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Security and Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Include women's CSOs in the implementation of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Rule of Law (RoL) programmes in the focus countries	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners
Advocate gender-sensitive SSR and women's participation in it	All signatories
Encourage the inclusion of gender expertise in Dutch civilian and military contributions to international missions	All signatories

Output 2: Increased understanding of gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it

The second output will be produced by activities that will eventually increase understanding of gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it at all levels. Signatories aim to conduct research and share the outcomes with specific target groups, such as government actors and the broader public, through social media campaigns and public events.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Conduct context-specific research on gender-based violence	Knowledge institutions, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners
Share knowledge on gender-based violence with policymakers	Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Exchange knowledge on context-specific gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it	Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Security and Justice, police
Support women human rights defenders (WHRD)	CSOs
Organise and facilitate public events in the Netherlands and focus countries on conflict-related and context-specific gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it	CSOs, knowledge institutions and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Conduct online campaigns in the focus countries on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it	Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Output 3: Improved (implementation of) policies and regulations on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it

Exchanging knowledge on policies and legislation will help signatories work strategically towards the development and implementation of policies and regulations. These activities and interventions will be coordinated through the country strategies and will target governments and civil society in the focus countries.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Exchange knowledge on policies and regulations on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it with local CSO partners in the focus countries	CSOs, knowledge institutions and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Encourage (the implementation of) legislation in the focus countries on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it	All signatories
Coordinate signatories' interventions on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it through a country strategy	All signatories

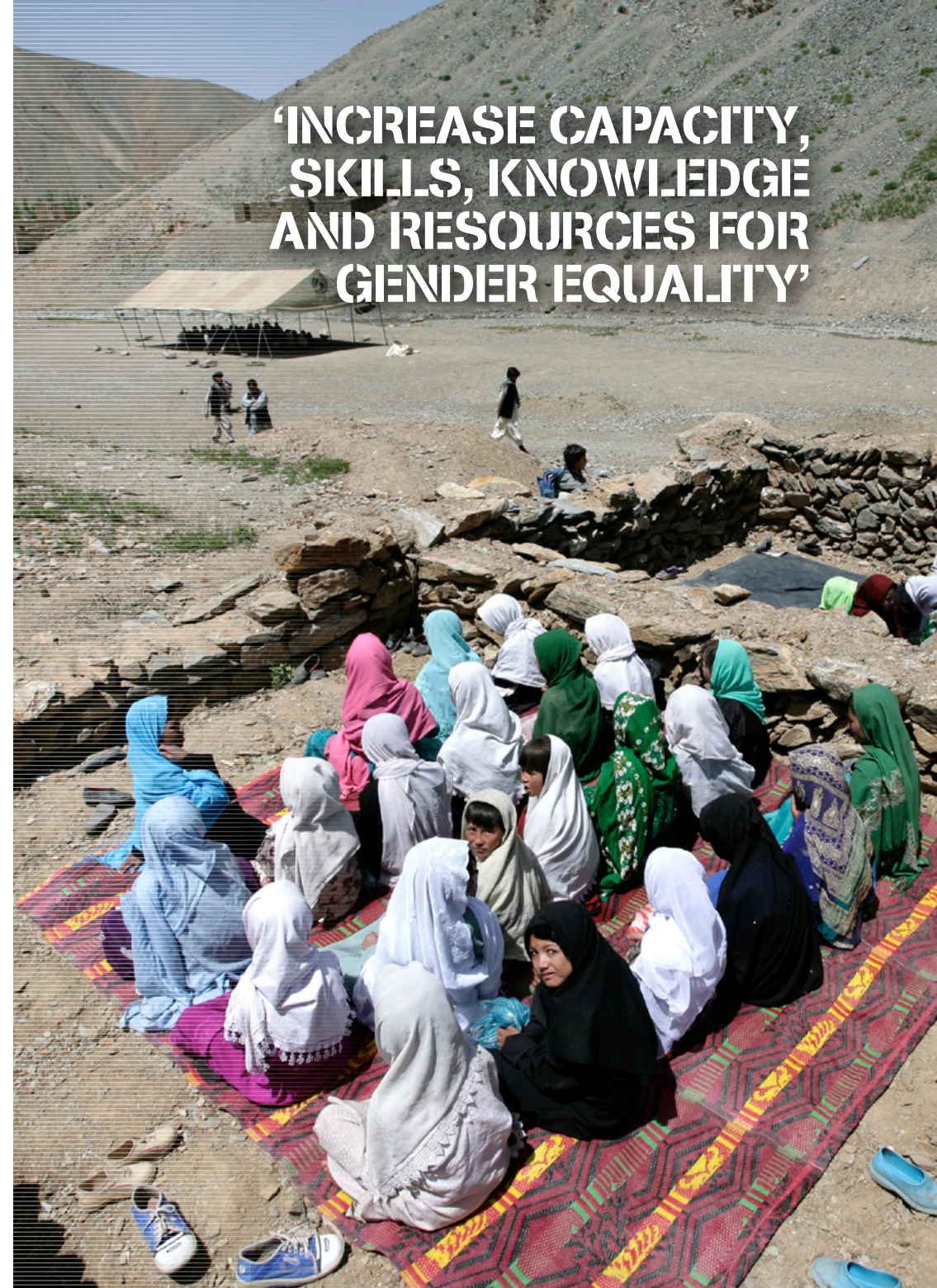
2.3.2. SUBVERT HARMFUL UNDERLYING GENDER NORMS, WHICH ARE OBSTACLES TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE

As part of the specific goal on subverting harmful gender norms, this Action Plan defines three different outputs to which the signatories will contribute.

Output 1: Increased capacity, skills, knowledge and resources for gender equality

The first output will be produced by activities that increase capacity, skills, knowledge and resources for gender equality. Signatories will gather data and promote and disseminate research on how harmful gender norms lead to gender inequality in peace and security contexts. They will exchange this knowledge with their local CSO partners and use gender-specific conflict analysis to examine harmful gender norms.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Exchange best practices and knowledge on subverting harmful gender norms	All signatories
Gather data, promote and disseminate research on the impact of harmful gender norms on peace and security	All signatories
Conduct gender-specific conflict analysis in the focus countries	Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners



Output 2: Increased understanding of gender equality and gender norms

The activities described under output 2 will increase people's understanding of gender equality and gender norms. Signatories will exchange knowledge on the variety of gender roles and norms and ways of avoiding gender stereotyping. The Action Plan website will be redesigned and used as a platform for exchanging knowledge and best practices on gender equality and gender norms.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Facilitate knowledge sharing between signatories from civil society, their local CSO partners and policymakers on gender equality and gender norms	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners
Facilitate knowledge sharing on the variety of gender roles and ways of avoiding gender stereotyping	All signatories
Redesign the Action Plan website to enable exchange of knowledge and best practices on gender equality and gender norms	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners
Develop and facilitate pre-deployment training courses on gender equality and context-specific gender norms	All signatories
Share knowledge and expertise on gender equality and gender norms with civilian experts (civilian capacity) ³¹	All signatories
Integrate a thorough analysis of gender equality, gender norms and masculinities into all programmes	All signatories
Plan and facilitate public events in the focus countries to showcase local expertise on gender equality and gender norms	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners

Output 3: Increased involvement of men and boys in implementing legislation that contributes to gender equality

Harmful gender norms can only be subverted if men and boys are involved in implementing legislation that contributes to gender equality. Signatories will support male role models who are contributing to gender equality and the subversion of harmful gender norms.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Encourage the use of a masculinity perspective in the implementation of legislation in the focus countries	Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners
Include men and boys in developing and implementing legislative programmes	All signatories
Support male role models who contribute to gender equality and subvert harmful gender norms	All signatories



2.3.3. ENSURE THAT WOMEN HAVE EQUAL LEVERAGE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, RELIEF AND RECOVERY AT ALL LEVELS, AND THAT THEIR EFFORTS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED AND SUPPORTED

As part of the specific goal on equal leverage, this Action Plan defines three different outputs to which the signatories will contribute.

Output 1: Increased capacity, skills, knowledge and resources for women’s meaningful participation as agents of change in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery.

The described activities will increase women’s capacity, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation. Signatories will facilitate exchange by connecting human rights defenders and local women’s rights organisations to political decision-making processes. Signatories will also establish a common database of Women, Peace and Security experts.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Exchange knowledge and experience on women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery	All signatories
Include the voices and perspectives of women’s organisations and women human rights defenders in pre-deployment training courses ³²	Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, police, civil society and their local CSO partners
Establish and/or contribute to a common database of Women, Peace and Security experts	All signatories
Use capacity building programmes to introduce local CSO partners, such as women’s organisations and women human rights defenders, to political decision-making processes	Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Coordinate diplomatic and advocacy efforts for women’s meaningful participation in the country strategies	All signatories
Contribute to the visibility of role models working on the local implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda	All signatories



Output 2: Increased political will, awareness, knowledge and skills for inclusive and non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

The activities described in this output will increase political will, awareness, knowledge and skills for inclusive and non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery. Non-violent local approaches are central to all the activities described. Civil society will gather the knowledge and lessons learned and share these with governments and security sector experts. They will be encouraged to follow good examples of non-violent local approaches in their policies and decisions.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Gather information on local inclusive and non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery	CSOs, their local CSO partners and knowledge institutions
Exchange knowledge and best practices on non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery	All signatories
Raise awareness in focus country governments of the importance (and cost-effectiveness) of non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery	CSOs, their local CSO partners, knowledge institutions

Output 3.1: Stronger local non-violent strategies for and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery, which are incorporated into policies and legislation

Signatories will inspire and encourage governments and other relevant actors to incorporate local non-violent strategies for and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery into their policies and legislation. Measures and policies against violent extremism and terrorism will be developed in ways that avoid undermining gender equality and women’s organisations in focus countries. Signatories will also showcase successful and effective local non-violent strategies for and approaches to counterterrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE).

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Share examples and good practices with governments on including non-violent local strategies in laws and policies	CSOs, their local CSO partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Raise awareness of the usefulness for laws and policies of local non-violent strategies for and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery	CSOs, their local CSO partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Monitor and address CVE and counterterrorist policies to avoid undermining gender equality and women’s organisations in the focus countries	CSOs, their local CSO partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Encourage the integration of local non-violent strategies for and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery into peace agreements and new laws and policies	All signatories
Contribute to the visibility of role models working on the local implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda	All signatories

Output 3.2: Improved (implementation of) policies and legislation promoting women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

Women’s participation can be stepped up by developing and implementing the right policies and legislation. Signatories will advocate improving policies and legislation at national and international level.

ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SIGNATORIES
Exchange information and best practices on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions	All signatories
Exchange experiences and views on (the implementation of) policies and legislation that will increase women’s participation in the focus countries	All signatories
Press for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions through diplomacy and advocacy in the focus countries and multilateral organisations like the EU and UN	All signatories



³⁰⁾ Coomaraswamy (2015), 24.

³¹⁾ Civilian capacity facilitates the secondment of Dutch experts to UN peacekeeping operations, EU CSDP missions and UN and other organisations in conflict areas and/or fragile states.

³²⁾ These training courses are aimed at preparing civilian and military personnel for international peacekeeping missions.

3. OUR APPROACH

3.1 PARTNERSHIP, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A multi-stakeholder partnership can only be forged by linking all actors to one another at different levels so that their efforts complement and reinforce each other. Starting from our different mandates and organisations, we will jointly contribute to attaining the goals of this National Action Plan.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The signatories from civil society are development, peace, human rights and diaspora organisations that operate at local, regional, national and international level. They are connected with civil society all over the world and have a long tradition of international solidarity in defence of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Civil society signatories and their local partners are well positioned to act at grassroots level, where they can conduct and facilitate information sharing, dialogues, lobbying and advocacy. The capacity building programmes that civil society develops and facilitates help create an enabling social and political environment for women's participation in peace and security. In its watchdog role, civil society can hold parties accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities under UNSC resolution 1325 and the follow-up resolutions. They can document and report human rights violations and cases of sexual and gender-based violence during conflicts, and press governments and the UN to improve policies and frameworks for the effective implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

GOVERNMENT

The government in its turn is well equipped to operate at national, regional and global level by engaging in gender diplomacy at the UN, at missions and in its partnerships with governments and civil society in conflict and post-conflict countries. The government has distinct responsibilities and is carrying out distinct activities, described in its Women, Peace and Security strategy³³ under the various resolutions. It is for example obliged to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in its peace and security policies, and should ensure that its own policy frameworks recognise women's special needs in conflict-affected environments and contribute to women's equal participation in peace and security processes. The government, in particular the police and the Ministry of Defence, also addresses gender in Security Sector Reform training courses and programmes, in close cooperation with civil society. Dutch embassies can play a key role in implementing joint Action Plan efforts. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will allocate an annual budget for the implementation of this National Action Plan.



**'CIVIL SOCIETY
SIGNATORIES AND THEIR
LOCAL PARTNERS ARE
WELL POSITIONED TO ACT
AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL.'**

KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTIONS

Knowledge institutions are indispensable in filling gaps in knowledge of gender and conflict. They play a key role in our joint learning efforts by, for example, conducting policy evaluations, collecting and presenting best practices, and increasing our understanding of how gender norms and relations interact with the dynamics of conflict and other forms of inequality. They can also contribute to the development and implementation of the country strategies, as discussed below in this chapter.



PLEDGES

Cooperation is not our final goal, but a means to achieve our overall objective while respecting each other's distinctive roles and mandates. In order to understand these roles and mandates, each signatory will publish an individual pledge on this Action Plan, setting out the organisation's vision, its intended contribution to the joint activities, and its role(s) in the partnership. These elements will be further elaborated in the country strategies. In the first meetings in 2016 we will discuss how best to work together and develop proposals.

3.2 FOCUS COUNTRIES

Our lessons learned show that our work on Women, Peace and Security should have a country-specific focus in order to have a greater impact. Social change and gender equality cannot be achieved through a single programme or activity with a short time span; it requires a long-term strategy and commitment from all signatories. We will therefore continue our work in most of the focus countries selected in our second National Action Plan. We have identified eight countries that meet most of the following criteria: (1) countries in conflict or fragile states, (2) countries that are the focus of a Dutch policy, (3) countries in which signatories have sufficient capacity, local partners and a relevant track record, and (4) countries in which the Netherlands participates in a multilateral civil and/or military mission.

The Action Plan signatories will focus on:

**AFGHANISTAN, COLOMBIA, THE DRC, IRAQ, LIBYA,
SOUTH SUDAN, SYRIA AND YEMEN**

3.3. COUNTRY GROUPS

These focus countries will be at the heart of our partnership. Signatories and suitable external actors will meet at least every two months in country groups: context-specific forums in which signatories will share their perspectives on the situation from their different backgrounds, working with partner networks, embassies and staff in the region. The gender experts, country experts, policymakers and activists in these groups will develop a strategic plan with specific, quantifiable activities. Existing and new country groups will be formed or reconstituted during the first month after the launch of this plan.



Each country group will conduct a gender-specific conflict analysis. This analysis will identify men's and women's needs and roles, the root causes of conflict and gender inequality, and the country's traditional and current power balances. Grassroots communities will be involved in developing the analysis, which will be adjusted over time to reflect the rapidly changing political landscape in many of the focus countries. These analyses will enable us to better assess the country's conflict and gender dynamics and will guide the design and implementation of our activities, as set out in the country strategies. The country strategies will be an integral part of this Action Plan, contributing to the meaningful participation and empowerment of women.

3.4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Measuring, analysing and monitoring the impact of our National Action Plans have proven to be a challenging but important responsibility. To evaluate the impact of the activities in our focus countries, we will develop a context-specific monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

system based on specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART) indicators. This will include the number of meetings conducted in the Netherlands and focus countries; the exchange of information; the number of joint training courses conducted by the signatories; the number of organisations involved in developing the proposals, and their contribution to implementing final projects. The Action Plan's two coordinating partners, the Dutch Gender Platform WO=MEN and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will design a functioning M&E system based on the country strategies and theory of change.

By continuing this partnership, the Action Plan signatories will further contribute to creating an enabling environment for the effective and meaningful participation and empowerment of women, in all facets of peace and security processes in conflict and post-conflict environments.

³³⁾ The government's policy letter on Women, Peace and Security will be published on 8 March 2016.

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