

Submission to the Public Consultation for Ireland's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

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CENTRE FOR CRIMINAL
JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Introduction

The Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights (CCJHR) welcomes the opportunity to provide a contribution to the public consultation for Ireland's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The CCJHR was established in 2006 as a research centre within the School of Law, University College Cork (UCC). The CCJHR's objectives are:

- To pursue innovative and interdisciplinary research into crime, justice and human rights and to produce scholarship of excellence in these fields;
- To engage with and contribute to debates on law reform and policy development at national and international levels;
- To develop innovative legal education, capacity building, training and outreach programmes;
- To foster a community of researchers in the field of crime, justice and human rights and to provide opportunities for postgraduate students and new career entrants.¹

This submission was developed following targeted research on Ireland's National Action Plan by postgraduate students within the School of Law.² Reflecting the expertise of the CCJHR, this submission focuses specifically on Pillar 3 (Protection, Relief and Recovery) of the NAP and questions 3 and 7 (namely, how can the NAP reflect commitments in Ireland's policy for international development and how should Ireland better promote knowledge of WPS locally, nationally, regionally and internationally); although some recommendations may also be applicable to other Pillars and questions posed. In particular, this submission identifies three key areas for consideration: funding, accountability and sustainability.

1. Funding

Gender mainstreaming is a useful method for the incorporation of the WPS agenda into Ireland's NAP.³ In regards to contemporary gender mainstreaming, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has argued that the UN Security Council (UNSC) members should '[i]ntegrate gender in all mandates ... and strategic reviews' and 'address [the] gender impacts of sanctions,' while also separately supporting 'gender budgeting.'⁴ In this sense, gender mainstreaming can be considered as a two-pronged approach: i) the issue of gender equality being referred to in all decisions, reports, policies etc; and ii) the allocation of budgets and funding being gender-specific, in this case, WPS specific. Globally, only 10% of NAPs include dedicated budgets.⁵ The second Irish NAP directed financial support of the

¹ For more information on the work of the CCJHR, please visit our website at: www.ucc.ie/en/ccjhr/

² Submission written by: Aparna Radhakrishnan, Cheryl Sembie and Dr Honor Tuohy under the guidance of Dr Dug Cubie.

³ See: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Voices of Experience: An Exploration of the Implementation of UNSCR 1325*, A Report of the Cross-Learning Process of Ireland/Northern Ireland, Timor-Leste and Liberia on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (no date), p.36.

⁴ Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, 'Towards a Feminist Security Council: A Guidance Note for Security Council Members', November 2018, p.23.

⁵ Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, 'Security Council Scorecard on Women, Peace and Security: Lessons Learned from 2010-2016', October 2017.

WPS agenda through funds such as the Stability Fund (€450,000 spent in 2016) and the Reconciliation Fund. These both generally focused on ‘high-profile initiatives’ such as the Global Study and the Global Acceleration Instrument⁶ (\$105,710 spent in 2016).⁷

As the Oversight Group noted in their mid-term report on Ireland’s Second NAP, Ireland is ‘[a] small country with corresponding proportionate funding’ which ‘aimed to target areas in which it can make a difference, for example, taking a lead role in advocating for the effective inclusion of civil society.’⁸ The CCJHR would recommend that the next NAP focuses any funding available even further.

To begin with, it would be useful to look closely at the work already undertaken which considers ‘humanitarian funding through a WPS lens.’⁹ The objectives of the third pillar of the NAP on ‘Protection, Relief and Recovery’ would be promoted by focusing a substantial proportion of the funding available for the next five years on ensuring the participation of women in all humanitarian processes – before, during, and after disasters and other humanitarian crises. This can be achieved through the participation of women in all stages of decision-making regarding the protection of women and girls, the type and method of providing humanitarian relief to women and girls, and recovery programmes for women and girls.¹⁰ This participation could be enabled globally by expanding the current successful domestically-focused Irish Aid Development Education Strategy¹¹ to international partner countries. Therefore, rather than keeping this as a strategy to educate people in Ireland as to how they can create social change, this strategy could also be formally incorporated into the international work of Irish Aid. This would enable people globally, in the midst of all three stages of humanitarian crises (but perhaps especially as a preventative measure) to share in the empowerment of being able to ‘analyse, reflect on and challenge at a local and global level, the root causes and consequences of global hunger, poverty, injustice, inequality and climate change.’¹²

2. Accountability

The CCJHR welcomes the whole-of-government approach taken by the Irish government in implementing the WPS agenda. Moreover, the inclusion of gender and the WPS agenda as a priority for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as a whole, and not just as the task of a particular division or unit, is commendable.

Communicating the goals of the NAPs to stakeholders and government officials has been an important aspect of the first two NAPs. This has helped the State to develop a comprehensive strategy to effectively deliver its efforts to provide relief and recovery assistance to individuals in need. Therefore, Ireland’s Third NAP should continue to focus on strengthening and building links with partners and other

⁶ UN Development Group, ‘Global Acceleration UN Instrument: Financial Reporting on Sources and Uses of Funds’, December 2016.

⁷ Brona Hinds and Debbie Donnelly, ‘Midterm Review of Ireland’s second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015-2018)’, March 2017.

⁸ *ibid* 29.

⁹ *ibid* 34.

¹⁰ This incorporates the second pillar related to the ‘Empowerment, Participation and Representation of Women in Decision Making’. In terms of the incorporation of the WPS agenda into Irish national policy, arguably all four pillars are indivisible.

¹¹ Irish Aid, ‘Irish Aid Development Strategy 2017-2023: Strengthening Ireland’s Contribution to a Sustainable and Just World Through Development Education’ 2016.

¹² *ibid* 6.

stakeholders for promoting the WPS agenda. Frequent meetings with representatives of affected States, other donor States, civil society and NGOs can help deliver strong actions to protect women and children from violence during conflicts and disasters.

A key component of the whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder approach is the need for transparency and accountability in the funding mechanisms and the sustainability of programmes undertaken in support of WPS. While it is commendable that the Government made specific commitments under each of the four Pillars in the Second NAP, the CCJHR would recommend that more detailed commitments, with related targets and indicators, are included in the Third NAP.¹³ For example, while the commitment to ‘work to eliminate the scourge of sexual violence in conflict’¹⁴ presents a high level objective, there is a need for much more detailed initial commitments, with clearly set out targets and indicators to guide the policy and programming under each commitment. Likewise, an annual report detailing how funds are allocated to achieve each commitment would help build transparency in the work of its WPS agenda.

More specifically, Ireland has supported a range of measures to tackle sexual and gender-based violence and harmful behaviour committed by UN staff, such as the need to establish accountability mechanisms and sanctions for UN personnel, including peacekeepers, who break the code of conduct and undermine the values of the UN.¹⁵ It is hoped that the Third NAP will reiterate Ireland’s commitment and policy in this regard.

3. Sustainability

Ireland’s Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programmes have consistently received recognition for their effectiveness and inclusive approach,¹⁶ and the Irish Government is a strong supporter of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The CCJHR therefore welcomes the fact that gender equality (SDG5) is a priority area of Ireland’s foreign policy, and that Ireland highlights the right of all girls in every country to receive a quality education, the centrality of women’s participation in decision-making at all levels, and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, especially female genital mutilation. In addition, it is commendable that over 46% of Ireland’s bilateral ODA is focused on addressing gender equality and women’s empowerment.¹⁷

However, despite the broader focus on the Sustainable Development Goals, it is noticeable that there are no explicit commitments regarding the sustainability of specific programmes undertaken in the context of WPS. Consistent and reliable sources of funding are essential for local stakeholders and NGOs, for example for programmes addressing the prevention of and response to gender-based violence. This is especially true since abuses such as gender-based violence have serious negative impacts on the health, well-being and livelihoods of millions of women and girls, which in turn need to be met by States, civil society and NGOs. However, it is also recognised that funding cannot and should not be indefinite.

¹³ As noted in the Mid-Term Review of the Second NAP, see: Hinds and Donnelly (n.7), p.12.

¹⁴ Government of Ireland, *Ireland’s Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2015-2018*, p.11.

¹⁵ DFAT, *Voices of Experience* (n.3) pp.35-38.

¹⁶ See for example: OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews, *The Development Assistance Committee: Enabling effective development – Ireland 2014*.

¹⁷ UN Women, *IRELAND – Progress Report following the Global Leader’s Meeting on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, September 2015* (September 2016), available at: www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/initiatives/stepitup/commitments-speeches/ireland-stepitup-commitment-followup-20160914-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4708

Therefore, there is a need to more explicitly set out the balance of core versus project funding, and the importance of multi-year funding opportunities for local actors. Linked to this is the need to clearly establish the process for the ending of Irish funding for specific projects, with sustainability assessments and support for obtaining other sources of national and international funding to ensure that effective organisations and programmes covering WPS can continue to operate even in the absence of Irish funding.

4. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing analysis, which primarily focused on Pillar 3 and questions 3 and 7, we would summarise our key points for consideration in Ireland's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security as:

Funding

- Continue to include a dedicated budget for specific WPS programmes and initiatives within Irish Aid's overall budget, alongside gender mainstreaming across all Government Departments.
- To focus a substantial proportion of the funding available for the next five years on ensuring the participation of women in all humanitarian processes.

Accountability

- To focus on strengthening and building links with partners and other stakeholders for promoting the WPS strategy.
- More detailed initial commitments under each Pillar, with clearly set out targets and indicators for each.
- An annual report detailing how funds are allocated to achieve each commitment.
- The reiteration of Ireland's commitment and policy regarding the need to establish accountability mechanisms and sanctions for UN personnel, including peacekeepers, who break the code of conduct and undermine the values of the UN.

Sustainability

- The need to more explicitly set out the balance of core versus project funding, and the importance of multi-year funding opportunities for local actors.
- The need to clearly establish the process for the ending of Irish funding for specific projects, with sustainability assessments and support for obtaining other sources of national and international funding.