

Eighth Meeting

10th May 2017, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Iveagh House

Minutes: Thematic Meeting

Discussion on Response to Recommendations of the Midterm Review Report

The Chair drew attention to the document prepared by the Secretariat outlining a proposed response to the Midterm Review Recommendations with some responses from implementing bodies included and passed to the Secretariat to lead the discussion. It was noted that in preparing the response, the Secretariat began with the assumption that all of the recommendations would be accepted. The recommendations were then grouped according to a proposed timeframe for implementation; that is, immediate, medium term or long term, and responsibility for implementation assigned to specific actors.

To open, the Group was asked to consider whether all of the Midterm Review Recommendations should be formally accepted. It was brought to the Group's attention that, while some of the recommendations referred to specific commitments under the NAP, many went beyond the specific commitments and actions listed under the NAP and instead involved the broader implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Ireland's domestic and foreign policies. The Secretariat proposed that a formal response to the recommendations on the Oversight Group's webpage should welcome the conclusions of the Midterm Review Report, acknowledge the recommendations as constructive and helpful for informing discussions about the future of the WPS agenda in Ireland, but only commit to the implementation of those which relate to the NAP directly. The Group approved of this approach.

Secondly, the group was asked if it was satisfied with the timeframes and specific actions assigned to the implementation of each recommendation. The response as proposed was approved by the group with two small changes. Recommendation 14 will be moved from the immediate to medium term and recommendation 8 will be moved from the medium to immediate term. Where responsibility for the implementation of a recommendation has been assigned to a particular implementing body, it is expected that the body will proceed independently and report back to the Oversight Group on progress. It was clarified that "medium term" indicated that implementation may begin in the short term capacity depending but would not necessarily be completed within the timeframe of the current NAP.

Finally, the group was asked to suggest specific actions to implement those recommendations referring specifically to the Oversight Group itself:

In regard to *Recommendation 12*, it was felt that Oversight Group members were already meeting the suggested actions but that these efforts were not being effectively recorded. It was suggested that promotion and awareness activities undertaken should be fed back to the Secretariat for acknowledgement. The Communications Strategy could also be further developed to better coordinate the efforts of all Group members in this area. The Secretariat should continue to seek meetings with the Joint Oireachtas Committees. Further, the monthly WPS updates email could be reformatted to be more digestible for Oversight Group members to circulate to their networks.

Oversight Group of Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015-2018)

Again it was felt that engagement with civil society organisations by the Oversight Group as covered by *Recommendation 8* was already taking place but not in a strategic way. It was suggested that closer working with the ICGBV co-ordinator would be advantageous; however it was agreed that adding new members to the Oversight group at this time should be avoided but that careful thought should be given to the composition of the Group for the 3rd NAP. A subgroup will be created to develop a strategic plan for engagement with civil society. The Secretariat will contact those who expressed a willingness to sit on this subgroup to arrange a first meeting. The Secretariat will also circulate a copy of the Midterm Review Report to all those involved in the initial consultations for the 2nd NAP.

It was agreed that specific actions to implement Recommendations 10, 11 and 18 could be reviewed during the design stage of the 3rd NAP.

It was agreed that the response document would be finalised in light of the discussion and published on the Oversight Group webpage.

Discussion on Response to Recommendations of Analysis of Indicators Report

Again the Chair passed to the Secretariat to lead the discussion. The intention to primarily use the Analysis of Indicators Report to inform the process of designing a new suite of indicators for the 3rd NAP was noted. Agreement was reached to accept the specific recommendations on page 4 of the Indicators Report. The specific units responsible will be asked to reconsider the language used in these indicators in advance of the next NAP Progress Report.

In the most recently collated Updates Reports and in light of the recommendations of the independent consultants, implementing bodies were asked to identify baselines for each of their assigned indicators and also given the opportunity to report on their WPS actions not otherwise captured by the existing indicators. It was acknowledged that the process of identifying baselines had proved very problematic and impossible in many cases. The Oversight Group was asked whether it was satisfied with the baselines provided and acknowledged that reporting for the remainder of the current NAP would continue to involve both qualitative and quantitative reporting; or if it considered that further efforts were needed.

It was suggested that there was a need to dedicate increased resources to capacity building in the area of monitoring and evaluation as part of a wider initiative for better government. It was suggested that the Oversight Group should seek to link in to any such cross-departmental process. This also presented an opportunity to improve policy coherence and strategic planning on WPS implementation government-wide.

It was agreed that the Final Review of the National Action Plan should take into consideration the findings of the Analysis of Indicators Report and feed these directly into the design process for the next NAP. Changes to reporting for the remainder of the 2nd NAP would focus on more comprehensive reporting of activities beyond those specifically captured by the indicators; rather than changing the indicators themselves. It was acknowledged that, given the short timeframe of each NAP, choosing appropriate outcome-focused indicators and implementing an impactful Theory of Change would be challenging. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that an effective monitoring system was largely based on trust between oversight and implementing bodies and that this was growing with each iteration of the NAP. It was acknowledged that to fully utilise the good work of the independent consultants, improving the collection of disaggregated data should be prioritised.

Closing

Oversight Group of Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015-2018)

The civil society submission by GAPS UK to the consultation for the next UK NAP on Women, Peace and Security was brought to the attention of the group for its comments on the Northern Ireland context.

The Chair will write to the Gender Equality Unit of the DJE to select an individual to replace the COSC representative on the Group. It was generally agreed that this is necessary to reflect the changed nature of the NAP and the Oversight Group's work.

Action Points

- Secretariat to publish the Oversight Group's response to the Midterm Review Report recommendations on the webpage.
- Chair to write to the Minister of Health and Minister of Justice and Equality and Tusla-the Child and Family Agency on shortcomings in the Direct Provision system and Irish Refugee Protection Programme.
- Chair to write to Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade in regard to Saudi Arabia's election to the CSW.
- Chair to write to Gender Equality Unit of the DJE regarding substitution of the Cosc representative on the Oversight Group, on the advice of the current member.
- Secretariat to develop concept note for the Q3 meeting and circulate to the Oversight group for comments.
- Secretariat to arrange first meeting of the subgroup formed to develop a strategic plan for engagement with civil society.

Secretariat to the Oversight Group to the 2nd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

11th May 2017