

Tenth Meeting

13th December, 2017, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Iveagh House

Minutes: Formal Meeting

Attendees:

Oversight Group

1. Nora Owen, Independent Chair
2. Louise Synnott, An Garda Síochána
3. Michael Rowan, Independent Expert
4. Noreen Woulfe, Intl Security and Defence Policy Branch, Department of Defence
5. Catherine O'Rourke, Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster
6. Réiseal Ni Chéilleachair, Trócaire
7. Diane Nurse, Social Inclusion Unit, Health Services Executive
8. Eoghan McDermott, Defence Forces
9. Colm Byrne, Oxfam
10. Emer O'Brien, Development Co-operation Divisions, DFAT
11. Laura Leonard, Evaluation and Audit, DFAT
12. Cliona Loughnane, National Women's Council of Ireland
13. Anastasia Crickley, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
14. AnnMarie Quarry, Gender Equality Division, Department of Justice and Equality

Secretariat:

15. Áine Hearn, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
16. Heidi Riley, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
17. William Barrett, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Apologies:

- Sarah McGrath, IUKA, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Rob Kevlihan, Kimmage Development Studies Centre
- Nura Hagi, Mind the Gap
- Ruth Taillon, Centre for Cross Border Studies

1. Adoption of previous meeting's minutes

In opening the meeting, the Chair welcomed the group back to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and summarised the agenda for the day. Approval of the previous minutes were brought before the group and there were no objections.

The Chair brought to the attention of the group the response from Minister Catherine Zappone that highlighted on allocated funds for resources around GBV for migrant women, and also resources for unaccompanied minors. It was noted that the response was comprehensive but it also highlighted disconnect between Túsla and the Department of Justice & Equality in the provision of services to unaccompanied minors.

Unaccompanied Minors

Services for unaccompanied minors falls under the responsibility of Túsla but at the age of 18 the responsible body becomes the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) within the Department of Justice and Equality. Túsla does remain involved in the transition to some extent, for example when an 18 year old is moved to RIA accommodation the decision is made by the Separated Children's Team of Túsla. Túsla also makes any decisions about ongoing care plans for former unaccompanied minors when they move into RIA accommodation. However, the group agreed that there is a clear disconnect in the provision of services for unaccompanied minors transitioning into adulthood. This is a matter for the Oversight Group as it effects young women coming from conflict contexts.

Assistance for those leaving direct provision.

AnnMarie Quarry from the Department of Justice updated the group on assistance provided to persons once they receive the right to remain in the state. She noted that:

- The Department has co-ordinated the preparation of a multi-departmental information booklet for persons who have been granted any type of 'leave to remain' in the State. The booklet contains practical and useful information for residents across housing, finances, healthcare, education as well as TV licences, public transport and so on.
- Following a call for proposals under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund¹, a number of charities and NGOs were awarded funding for projects with the specific aim of providing assistance to those transiting from state provided accommodation to

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- ¹ There are 4 forms of funding related to the integration of refugees and migrants.
 1. **The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)**, administered by the Department of Justice and Equality by the EU Funds Unit. €9m is set aside in the AMIF budget to assist organisations with funding for projects that meet the objectives in the National Programme for AMIF over the period 2014-2020.
 2. **The European Social Fund** is administered by the Department of Justice. In addition to funding the Women Returning to Work fund it also funds the 4 year Integration and Employment of Migrants Project.
 3. **National Integration Funding Programme** is funded by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI). This funding programme dedicates around €600,000 to integration projects.
 4. **Communities Integration Fund** is funded by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration. This is a small grant scheme that administers funds of up to €5,000 to small projects that promote integration.

permanent homes in the community. One of the projects funded is the PATHS project which is a joint venture between the Jesuit Refugee Service and the Peter McVerry Trust. The PATHS project is focusing on assisting residents of The Towers Accommodation Centre in Clondalkin which has the highest number of persons with status primarily due to the current pressures on the rental market in the Dublin area. The Department is also working with housing agencies, local authorities and religious groups to provide assistance to move into permanent accommodation in communities around Ireland.

However, it was reiterated that the housing situation continues to create obstacles for people leaving Direct Provision. As a result it was noted that there are still around 500 people remaining in Direct Provision that have leave to remain.

It was also highlighted that the **Migrant Integration Strategy, A Blueprint for the Future**, adopted by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI), does include reference to the UNSCR 1325 in its introduction. However, it was noted that it is framed very much as an internationally orientated resolution when, in fact, the NAP has relevance to the domestic context, with reference to women within the state that come from conflict contexts. Moreover, although the strategy references the Resolution it does not include any mention of women specifically in its actions. The Secretariat will raise this issue with the OPMI.

The Chair noted that there is a need to continue to push the Department of Justice and Equality to improve standards and policies for migrant women, particularly where there is a tendency to push responsibility to different departments. She noted that pressure from the group has had an impact and thus it is important for the group to remain engaged in this area.

Update from the Social Inclusion Unit at the HSE

- It was noted that the RAI is drafting a new set of Standards for Direct Provision which Diane Nurse has input into. The Secretariat noted that they have also requested to input into the Standards in the New Year.
- On a positive note the Social Inclusion Unit at the HSE has managed to get an extra 1.2 million from the Dormant Accounts Fund and another 1 million from other means. **It was noted that pressure from the OG group has substantially contributed to this achievement.**

Actions to be carried out in response to the discussion.

- **The chair** will write to the relevant Ministers to push for improved inter-departmental approach to services for refugee and asylum seeking women and girls. The chair will include AnnMarie Quarry in her communication to the Department of Justice.
- **The Secretariat** will raise with the OPMI that there should be better incorporation of UNSCR 1325 into the Migrant Integration Strategy, A Blueprint for the Future.
- **The Secretariat** will input into the new Standards for Direct Provision.
- **AnnMarie Quarry** will look into statistics on unaccompanied minors transitioning from Túsla to RIA accommodation.

Update from the Secretariat

- The Secretariat is making efforts to input from a WPS perspective into all relevant briefings in international debates. Input was provided at the Open Debate on Children in Armed Conflict and the Open Debate on Human Trafficking. The Secretariat have been encouraged that input has been incorporated substantially into speeches in international debates.
- The Secretariat has recently inputted into the **National Women's Strategy, 2017-2020**. The input particularly focused on advocating for better integration and provisions for asylum seekers and refugees within Ireland and highlighting the need to recognise the particular needs and experiences of women coming from conflict zones.
- The Secretariat is seeking to take a more coordinated approach to the WPS agenda so as to ensure an all of government approach. The Secretariat will conduct a mapping exercise in order to establish the lead units on specific policy areas. This will allow the Secretariat to identify gaps in policy areas that require a WPS perspective.

Looking Forward to WPS in 2018

- Next year the Secretariat will increase focus on, and feed into, important contemporary issues such as: countering violent extremism, mediation, digital GBV and insecurity, early warning systems and also Youth, Peace and Security.
- The Secretariat is also seeking to engage more with the Irish UN Youth delegates on WPS matters. The Secretariat will discuss the possibility of the female youth delegate, recording a short YouTube clip on UNSCR 1325 as part of engaging with a youth audience on WPS.
- The Secretariat will continue to produce regular newsletters on the work on WPS, which it was agreed was a useful way of keeping members in the loop but also a way of engaging other interested parties outside the group. **Oversight Group members are encouraged to further disseminate the WPS newsletter through their own networks.**
- Ireland will chair the Commission on the Status of Women between the 12th and 23rd March. In conjunction with PMUN the Secretariat will be organizing a side event at CSW on a WPS theme TBC.
- The Secretariat intends to take the lead on two WPS conferences/workshops next year. The themes are to be decided, but the options that have been suggested are: Youth Peace and Security, Mediation, Countering Violent Terrorism or masculinities.

Update on WPS developments in Ireland and abroad

- The new Irish Ambassador to the Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason has been very engaged with the WPS agenda and was well received at the Open Debate on WPS in October.
- Áine reported back from EU Task force and highlighted that it was a productive meeting. She noted that participation in the Taskforce is a good way to remain informed on emerging WPS related networks at the regional and international level and progress on WPS within other member states. For example, discussed at the meeting was the fact that Spain has just adopted its first National Action Plan and that

the Principal Advisor on Gender, Ms Mara Marinaki, who is a Greek national, is pushing for a Greek NAP. The report from the Taskforce is included in the pack.

- Ireland intends to remain engaged with the Network for Gender Focal Points, which is an international information sharing platform, currently led by Germany and with the Secretariat with UN Women. This network intends to open up to CSOs next year.

Civil Society engagement strategy.

- The chair drew to the attention of the group to the feedback from the subgroup on civil society engagement from 14th June 2017.
- It was highlighted that there needs to be better engagement and knowledge sharing on WPS with different groups and sectors, including the youth and community organisations. In addressing this, it was noted that the Secretariat is making efforts in this direction by inputting to into the **Department for Community and Rural Development Strategy**.
- The possibility was raised, of a well-established high profile media event/story that would contribute to raising the profile of WPS in Ireland.
- The possibility of a conference to engage civil society was discussed. It was suggested that such an event could involve academia, given the wealth of gender research taking place in Irish universities. It was discussed that universities could be approached to take the lead on this². However concerns were raised that such a conference would engage people that are already aware of WPS, rather than bringing in new stakeholders and those who policies in the NAP should impact upon.
- One idea put forward was to hold a conference or workshop that is more geared towards community groups and other organizations such as the ICA, the Irish Refugee Council and the National Council of Community based Women's Networks³. This will be discussed further in the New Year.
- The Secretariat intends to improve communications on WPS through social media and also to continue to improve the dissemination of the Newsletter.

Forthcoming Meetings and Events

- A provisional date for the next Oversight Group meeting is the 7th of March, this will be confirmed in the New Year. The theme is also still to be confirmed. Some possible themes are: Civil society engagement or Youth Peace and Security. The Secretariat will confirm this in consultation with the group in the New Year.
- A further suggestion is to organize an event/workshop on the above date that focuses on engaging civil society groups as suggested above. This would be a symbolic date as it is the day before International Women's Day.

Secretariat to the Oversight Group to Ireland's 2nd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
18th December 2017

² Catherine O'Rourke from the University of Ulster has kindly offered to assist in this area.

³ This network is the umbrella organization for 17 different community organizations.