

WPS Consultation: Cover Page

Nature of views: On behalf of organisation

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Date of submission: 14th December 2018

Introduction

Trócaire's submission is informed by our experience of women's empowerment and protection programming with marginalised women and girls in fifteen countries, working in partnership with local women-centred organisations and crisis-affected communities. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to Ireland's Third National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325¹.

There have been a number of significant contextual shifts since the introduction of Ireland's Second NAP on WPS. Shrinking civil society space, rising populism and social polarisation, changing climate, the refugee crisis and a diminishing respect for International Humanitarian Law all present multifaceted challenges. Brexit has also emerged as a source of uncertainty in the future of international politics, peace, migration and finance. The sector has seen an increasing privatisation of aid, NGO accountability has received particular scrutiny, and localisation has gained strong momentum following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

Trócaire is a core member of the Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and a partner to the Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies. In addition to contributing to a joint submission to NAP3 which was wide ranging in terms of responses to the consultation questions, we felt there was a value in developing a more focused contribution specifically addressing a small number of critical issues from our perspective. **It is from this standpoint that we propose the following three recommended focus areas for the NAP:**

- 1.) An explicit focus on protection,**
- 2.) Ensuring marginalised women's participation and representation in decision making, and**
- 3.) Commitment to policy coherence for the WPS Agenda.**

We believe that these three elements are critical to developing a relevant, strategic and effective NAP.

What strategic objectives should be priorities for the Third National Action Plan?

1. An Explicit Focus on Protection

The second NAP consolidated Pillar 3 Protection² and Pillar 4 Relief and Recovery of UNSCR 1325 into one Pillar "Protection, Relief and Recovery." This consolidation risks a reduced emphasis on protection, specifically the delivery of core response services in conflict settings, and a lack of specificity to deliver tangible action on this. **Therefore, a standalone focus on protection within the NAP3 is required to support civil society, and indeed government, accountability to deliver on Ireland's commitments to protection.**

At a time of eroding respect for International Humanitarian Law, **the NAP3 should provide concrete action to realise relevant commitments made by the Government, including explicit commitments to protection.** Despite higher levels of GBV during and after armed conflict³, significant commitments

¹ Hereafter referred to as "NAP3" for brevity.

² Protection, understood as "all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, Refugee Law)"² is, in essence, concerned with the safety, dignity and rights of people affected by a crisis. Definition formally endorsed by the IASC. See IASC (1999), *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons: Inter Agency Standing Committee Policy Paper*, https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/FINALIDPPolicy.pdf

³ Herbert, S. (2014), *Links between gender-based violence and outbreaks of violent conflict*, <http://gsdrc.org/docs/open/hdq1169.pdf>

made under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,⁴ the World Humanitarian Summit⁵ (particularly Ireland's individual commitment to prioritising protection in all of the humanitarian responses that it supports⁶) and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies⁷ (to which Ireland is a Partner) have been slow to translate into meaningful change in the lives of women, girls and GBV survivors in emergency settings. Specifically the core Call to Action commitments to ensure that 'specialized GBV prevention and response services are implemented in each phase of an emergency, from preparedness and crisis onset through transition to development'⁸ and the accompanying key actions should be explicitly reflected in the NAP3. Responses to survivors of gender-based violence (particularly medical and psychosocial support) remain insufficient, and significant policy attention had not resulted in adequate survivor-centred, accessible, multi-disciplinary and needs-based service provision for survivors. The current process led by the GBV AoR of the IASC to develop Minimum Standards for Specialised GBV Prevention and Response in Emergencies is a significant one, requiring sustained support, particularly support (including funding) for **implementation** of these Minimum Standards in all emergencies. In order to achieve this, the NAP3 must articulate an in-depth and nuanced understanding of protection. Protection and the participation of women in the WPS Agenda are essential and complementary; protection can serve to support marginalised women as agents of change, linked in the mission of ensuring full respect for human rights.

The NAP3 must contain commitments to resourcing in the form of financial allocations and technical expertise to fulfil meaningful action on protection. It is currently estimated that 3-4% of all humanitarian spending is channelled to protection interventions funded through bilateral donors and pooled funds. The protection sector is estimated to have received 4.6-7.7% of total fund allocations from the Central Emergency Response Fund between 2011-2016. Furthermore, based on an analysis of Country-Based Pooled Funds from 2014-2016, GBV interventions within the protection funding received at most 30% of protection funding and at most 3% of total pooled funds.⁹ **Technical expertise must be resourced**, both internally (e.g. technical specialists within the CRU and Irish Aid) and externally (e.g. through support to ProCap,¹⁰ GenCap,¹¹ the Rapid Response Corps¹² and the GBV AoR¹³). One idea that could be considered would be a Mobile Technical Unit within DFAT, in order to deploy staff to crisis and emergency situations, bringing with them GBV, protection and women's participation programming expertise. This has been previously proposed by the ICGBV who would also be available to discuss the idea further and to find ways to support the Department in this endeavour.

2. Increased focus on marginalised women's participation and representation in decision making

⁴ See Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA E.pdf>

⁵ See World Humanitarian Summit: <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/summit>

⁶ Government of Ireland (2017), *Self-Report 2017 on WHS Commitments*, <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/annual-report/15780>

⁷ See Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies: <https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/>

⁸ Call to Action Roadmap 2016-2020, Outcome 4 and Outcome 5 available from www.calltoactiongbv.com.

⁹ COFEM (2017), *Funding: Whose Priorities? Feminist Perspectives on Addressing Violence against Women and Girls*, http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Paper-4-COFEM.final_sept2017.pdf

¹⁰ The Inter-Agency Protection Standby Capacity Project: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/procap>

¹¹ The IASC Gender Standby Capacity Project: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/genacap>

¹² Ireland's Rapid Response Corps: <https://www.irishaid.ie/get-involved/rapid-response-corps/>

¹³ Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (Global Protection Cluster): <http://gbvaor.net/what-is-the-gender-based-violence-area-of-responsibility/>

In the context of shrinking civil society space, it is critical that NAP3 include specific commitments and actions in the following areas;

The **participation of women in peace processes with an intersectional approach**, focusing on the participation of particularly marginalised women and girls, including women and girls formerly associated with armed groups, living with disabilities, those who are or are perceived to be of a minority sexual orientation or gender identity, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and ethnic or religious minorities. Evidence shows that peace processes are more sustainable over time when they include women.¹⁴

The **political participation of women at all levels**, particularly in conflict prevention and resolution, including promoting the use of special measures (for example quotas) at local and national levels, enacting measures to encourage and support women to participate in politics at all levels, and taking measures to address factors that hinder women's political participation, including stigmatisation and harassment, inequitable distribution of domestic and care work, and gender gaps in educational attainment.

Participation in and ownership of the NAP development process is an essential component of ensuring its appropriateness and relevance for women in conflict and post-conflict settings, making sure it is reflective of and responsive to their capacities and needs. **The NAP3 should embrace a committed focus on boosting local participation and local ownership.**

Firstly, this involves **a commitment to partnering and consulting with civil society and women**, particularly women in conflict and post-conflict settings, to ensure that their unique and varied perspectives are represented and form core elements of the NAP. Further investment in inclusive design and implementation processes can support increased ownership of the NAP.

Secondly, localisation as a concept is currently gaining ground and is changing narratives and positions at international and local levels, due to the commitments made as part of the Grand Bargain¹⁵ agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit. Indeed, the Oireachtas Parliamentary Joint Committee for Foreign Affairs and Trade included the localisation commitment in recommendations to the Government for the new White Paper on International Development Policy.¹⁶ It is within this context that **the NAP3 should present a focus on localisation of implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security**, specifically outlining commitments to work with women-led and women-focused organisations to implement WPS commitments.

3. Policy Coherence for the WPS Agenda

[The points contained here should also be considered in response to the question of "How can the Third National Action Plan reflect the commitments in Ireland's Policy for International Development and other relevant government policies and strategies?"]

Policy coherence is an essential element for the successful realisation of the NAP3, and the NAP3 should contain an explicit commitment to progress this with regards the WPS Agenda. The

¹⁴ Stone, L. (2015), *Quantitative Analysis of Women's Participation in Peace Processes*, in *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes*, by M. O'Reilly, A. Ó Súilleabháin, and T. Paffenholz, Annex II. New York: International Peace Institute, <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking-rev.pdf>

¹⁵ See The Grand Bargain: <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

¹⁶ Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defence (2018), *Review of the Irish Aid Programme (32/JCFA&T&D/02)*, https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_foreign_affairs_and_trade_and_defence/reports/2018/2018-02-22_report-review-of-the-irish-aid-programme_en.pdf

development of the NAP3 provides an opportunity to **champion the WPS Agenda across Government in a holistic and mainstreamed manner**. An **all-of-government approach** to the implementation of the NAP3 is essential to have a credible voice in the WPS Agenda, particularly in the context of Ireland's bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council. Beyond the domestic sphere, **Ireland should use its platform to encourage other states to develop NAPs and allocate budgets** for their implementation.

To support a meaningful all-of-government approach, **the NAP3 should commit to undertaking a candid review and revision exercise of relevant policies to ensure coherence and alignment** in Ireland's approach to the WPS Agenda, to reinforce actions already taken and to reiterate commitments previously made. In particular, **the NAP3 should commit to strengthening coherence and alignment with the wider human rights-related policies and commitments of the Government**. This should include, but is not limited to, the Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World¹⁷ (and collaboration with the Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights)¹⁸, the Humanitarian Assistance Policy,¹⁹ and the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.²⁰ Of particular note is the opportunity to **ensure coherence with Ireland's National Plan on Business and Human Rights**, and to ensure that Ireland's approach to the process towards a binding treaty on business and human rights is reflective of the NAP3 and WPS Agenda. As Ireland's new International Development Policy is being established, there is a distinct opportunity to ensure that this policy and the NAP3 work together in coherence to support the WPS Agenda. **Women working in peacebuilding, activism and human rights defence must be supported and protected** through explicit actions contained within the NAP3.

In addition, Ireland's Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, 2016-2021 requires significant revision to align with international standards. As an indication, the strategy contains the following paragraph;

*"In cases of persistent domestic abuse, the power and control exercised over the victim has been figuratively described as the perpetrator replacing the soul of the victim with the soul of the perpetrator"*²¹

National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, 2016-2021, p.4 para 6.

Whole of Government alignment with international standards on the issue of gender based violence is critical and there are significant reputational risks associated with a lack of adequate resourcing of technical capacity.

To close the gap between policy commitments and the financial allocations to achieve these commitments in practice, **the NAP3 must be sufficiently resourced, ensuring that it has an allocated budget for implementation and WPS activities**. Furthermore, the NAP3 presents an opportunity to **promote gender-sensitive and gender-responsive budgeting** across all of government, which further

¹⁷ See the Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World: <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/our-work/casestudiesarchive/2015/january/the-global-island/>

¹⁸ See Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights Terms of Reference: <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/int-priorities/humanrights/Human-Rights-Inter-Departmental-Committee---Terms-of-Reference.pdf>

¹⁹ See Ireland's Humanitarian Assistance Policy 2015: <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/20newsandpublications/publicationpdfsenglish/Humanitarian-Assistance-Policy-2015.pdf>

²⁰ See EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/3958/EU%20Guidelines%20on%20Human%20Rights%20Defenders

²¹ <http://www.cosc.ie/en/COSC/Second%20National%20Strategy.pdf/Files/Second%20National%20Strategy.pdf>

support the WPS Agenda. Funding for peacebuilding should include an explicit focus on WPS-specific activities.

The **implementation of the NAP3 should also be technically resourced** in the form of a cross-Departmental senior focal point who could champion the WPS Agenda, and bring together the different elements required to achieve Ireland's NAP3 commitments, including technical expertise (on WPS, gender and protection), managing strategic partnerships and ensuring a coordinated and coherent approach across Government.

Are the existing Pillars the most effective way to structure the NAP?

UNSCR 1325 has four pillars: Prevention, Participation, Protection and Relief and Recovery. In Ireland's first NAP, an additional Pillar 5 on Promotion was included. In the current and proposed new NAP, protection, relief and recovery are merged as Pillar 3 and Promotion retained as Pillar 4. **It is critical that when 'Protection' and 'Relief and Recovery' are merged that their distinct areas of emphasis are retained.** The Protection Pillar refers to specialised protection interventions serving women and girls at risk of sexual and gender-based violence and, at a minimum, would include delivery GBV response services in line with international standards. The Relief and Recovery Pillar focuses on the delivery of wider humanitarian and other efforts *"through a gendered lens,"* that is, ensuring that sectoral responses are gender responsive and do not exacerbate risk. In the Midterm Review of the Second NAP,²² reporting against this pillar was quite limited and **it is clear that measurable outcomes (with indicators) are needed in relation to the protection of women and girls; and gender-responsive relief and recovery measures.** These two areas of focus are quite different and this distinction in focus was very clear in the first NAP, while there was probably a good reason for merging these in the Second NAP, we would suggest that in order to meet minimum standards for protection interventions in conflict and post-conflict settings more dedicated attention and prioritisation is clearly needed. As noted above, we would recommend reinstating 'Protection' and 'Relief and Recovery' as distinct pillars with the aim of improving accountability for our commitments in these areas.

How can the existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the previous National Action Plans be improved?

The M&E system for NAP3 should strive to have a **focused number of specific outcome-level indicators**, accompanied by an elaboration of these indicators – how they are understood, and the data collection tools and methodologies that can be used to gather evidence against these. For these indicators to track progress meaningfully, reliable baselines should be established with robust data.

Data (for baselines, M&E and reporting) **should be robust and sex-disaggregated** at a minimum to be valuable for monitoring implementation and policy review. In line with the introduction of the IASC Gender with Age Marker,²³ it is also recommended that data be disaggregated by age (and disability, where useful, feasible, appropriate and safe to do so), recognising that women are not a homogenous group and age is one element which can affect a woman's experience of conflict.

²² Hinds, B. & Donnelly, D. (2017), Midterm Review of Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/int-priorities/womenpeaceandsecurity/NAP-report-v2.pdf>

²³ See IASC Gender with Age Marker: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/content/iasc-gender-age-marker-gam-2018>

The development of a robust M&E system can be supported by a theory of change approach, as recommended in the Midterm Review, as well as by investing in technical expertise on measurement, research and statistics.