

Management Response to Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN-Women's Support to National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security

14 January 2021

OVERALL COMMENTS

UN-Women welcomes the findings and recommendations of the Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN-Women's Support to National Action Plans (NAPs) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which sought to “assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability of UN-Women’s support to the development and implementation processes of WPS NAPs at the global, regional and country levels from 2015 to 2019, as well as to assess the extent to which a human rights approach and GE principles were integrated into this support.” The evaluation’s assessment was informed by a document review, virtual case studies and consultations with UN-Women staff at Headquarters, Regional Offices and Country Offices, partners including governments and civil society organizations, and international organizations. In the period under review, UN-Women’s work on NAPs is reflected in UN-Women’s Strategic Plan 2014-2017 under Impact 4: “Peace and security and humanitarian action are shaped by women leadership and participation” and Strategic Plan 2018-2021 under Outcome 1: “Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action.” UN-Women’s NAP support also strongly aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 16 on just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

UN-Women appreciates this evaluation as the first comprehensive assessment of UN-Women’s support to WPS NAPs at all levels of the Entity’s work. The evaluation recognizes UN-Women as the leading UN agency with expertise in this area and that UN-Women is widely recognized for its NAP coordination and normative roles at both global and country level. The evaluation observes that UN-Women’s NAP support is well-aligned to the most directly relevant global frameworks, while also noting that national ownership is an important feature of UN-Women’s NAP work and that the Entity’s support is strongly aligned and widely seen as relevant to national contexts. The evaluation notes UN-Women’s consistent application of high-impact NAP criteria to guide the Entity’s support to NAPs, with technical assistance, capacity building and advocacy regarded as the Entity’s most effective intervention areas. Importantly, the assessment recognized UN-Women's critical role of bringing together multiple and diverse stakeholders, providing neutral spaces for dialogue, and raising awareness and facilitating the development of a shared NAP agenda.

Twenty years after the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the evaluation allows UN-Women to reflect on main areas of progress, challenges and lessons learned to identify strategies to inform UN-Women’s continued work in this area for more impactful results, particularly in the context of a global pandemic. UN-Women appreciates the evaluation’s finding that the Entity has laid the foundation for transformative change to address gender equality through NAPs and that there is evidence and demand for UN-Women to apply its support more broadly to NAP implementation, which requires meaningful translation at local level and adequate funding. UN-Women also appreciates the evaluation’s recommendation for strengthened internal thematic and organizational coherence in UN-Women’s support to NAPs and for broadened engagement with other UN agencies. UN-Women recognizes that responding to these recommendations will require an integrated approach for this work at headquarters, regional and country level in all thematic areas, and with a coherent strategy to enable systematic reporting and knowledge sharing, and which is also reflected in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and annual work plans. UN-Women also recognizes the specific challenges posed by COVID-19 that will impact support to NAPs and appreciates that the evaluation recognizes the necessity of additional human and financial resources at all levels to fully implement the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 1

UN-Women’s NAP support should connect with and scale up a wider range of global normative frameworks, as well as regional frameworks and processes to increase traction.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

UN-Women accepts this recommendation. This recommendation is particularly relevant given UN-Women’s whole-of-

Accepted

<p>government approach to NAPs and women, peace and security more broadly. UN-Women’s work on preventing conflicts, as well as managing and ending conflicts and sustaining peace is reflected in its support to NAPs and ongoing work to strongly integrate humanitarian action, climate change, economic development, education, health, among other thematic areas, in WPS interventions. UN-Women guidance on support to NAPs at headquarters, regional and national level will actively promote engagement with relevant UN agencies and regional organizations to create stronger linkages to a wider range of normative frameworks to inform and define NAP priorities and specific actions for implementation. Noting that NAPs are national documents, UN-Women will also integrate a wider range of normative frameworks at national level, as relevant. The mapping of relevant frameworks will be mostly effective applied on a case-by-case basis that considers the specificities of each NAP and the corresponding national and regional context.</p>				
KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
On a case-by-case basis, map global and regional opportunities for engagement on WPS and NAPs and assess the potential of different global or regional frameworks, structures and processes for advancing RAPS and NAPs.	2022, annually	UN-Women WPSHA section, COs, ROs	Initiated	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2 UN-Women should strengthen the synergy between its normative, coordination and operational roles in support of NAPs to enhance its impact.</p>				
<p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. UN-Women’s work on NAPs is integrally linked to UN Women’s unique mandate and role in women, peace and security, including servicing the Security Council on WPS, as well as coordinating the UN on women, peace and security and providing operational support at country level. UN-Women’s work is guided by the unique political, social and economic realities of any given country and the Entity’s available human and financial resources resulting in a wide range of NAP outcomes and impacts. UN-Women welcomes the reconstructed theory of change for NAP development and implementation outlined in this evaluation, which provides a useful framework for developing an integrated approach to NAP support in a systematic manner and which harnesses the strength of the UN system to deliver on WPS priorities. UN-Women will update current WPS Guidelines for National Implementation to provide guidance and good practice examples on leveraging UN-Women’s triple mandate while providing support to NAPs and regional action plans.</p>			Accepted	
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Update current WPS Guidelines for National Implementation and identify and document good practice examples of an integrated approach to NAP support and how it can be achieved.	2022	WPSHA Section	Not initiated	
RECOMMENDATION 3 UN-Women should devise a strategy to harmonize its external coordination efforts, with a focus on strengthening and linking global, regional and national-level coordination processes.				
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. In its external and internal coordination role on NAPs, UN-Women currently spearheads cross-level knowledge sharing to tackle NAP challenges and to facilitate replication of good practices in different contexts. The annual report of the UN Secretary-General on WPS provides global analysis and recommendations on NAP development and implementation, as does the newly instituted UN-Women Peace and Security annual report. Both reports draw heavily from UN Women’s NAP work at national level with governments and civil society actors, as well as global forums such as the WPS Focal Points Network, for which UN Women serves as Secretariat. At headquarters, UN-Women has hosted Entity-wide webinars to address specific issues such as NAP financing, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. UN-Women will expand avenues for increased knowledge sharing at the regional level that feeds into national and global discourse and analysis. UN-Women will also devise a strategy to enable more systematic reporting and knowledge-sharing from COs and ROs on NAP support and impact of NAPs. UN-Women’s support to NAP implementation is inter-linked with its broader support to WPS. To mobilize funding for NAP implementation, UN-Women will need to work more closely and systematically with focal points of other thematic areas to identify funding priorities and to avoid overlap. This process will also require engagement with and assessment of the relevant government’s priorities for NAP implementation and opportunities for joint fundraising and management. UN-Women’s commitment to the principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) strongly informs the Entity’s support to NAPs. As the evaluation notes, UN-Women, through its NAP work, has been effective in bringing together diverse stakeholders to agree on a common WPS agenda. While noting the leading role of government actors in determining who engages in national policy processes, UN-Women will continue to strongly advocate for a wide inclusion of stakeholders in NAP processes and to strengthen engagement with relevant UN agencies.			Accepted	
KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Identify and share effective approaches to NAPs in different contexts as part of its role as coordinator of global and regional communities of practices.	Ongoing	WPSHA Section, ROs, COs	Initiated	

Channel knowledge and evidence generated from its national-level coordination work to the regional and global level.	Ongoing	WPSHA Section, ROs, COs	Initiated	
Engage a wider range of national stakeholders in NAP processes to deepen participation and ownership and use the Entity's external coordination with development partners to mobilize funding for NAP implementation.	Ongoing	UN-Women WPSHA section and national focal points	Initiated	
Strengthen links and synergies with other actors and processes whose work has relevance for the WPS agenda and NAPs. For example, further strengthening partnership with relevant UN agencies on UNSCR YPS Resolution 2250.	Ongoing	UN-Women WPSHA section	Initiated	
Expand global-level networks and spearhead more dialogue at regional level to strategically feed into global level recommendations, and draw in national-level actors and facilitate multi-level dialogue on NAPs, for example by encouraging participation of national CSOs in activities of the global WPS National Focal Points Network.	Ongoing	UN-Women WPSHA section	Initiated	
RECOMMENDATION 4 UN-Women should continue to expand its current strategies to support WPS NAP development. It should also define a clear and consistent strategy for support to WPS NAP implementation.				
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. In the absence of consistent funding, UN-Women has focused resources on supporting Member States to develop their NAPs and providing technical support to operationalize the coordination, planning, resource mobilization, reporting and monitoring and evaluation of plans. The evaluation notes that the level of UN-Women's human and financial investment on NAPs has led to the desired results. Noting that Member States have primary responsibility to develop and implement NAPs and that lack of financing and funding remains an impediment to NAP impact, UN-Women's targeted and increased support to NAP development and implementation will contribute to and build on the Entity's existing WPS work on conflict prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. UN-Women will further expand on the embedded ToC outlined in the evaluation to assess UN Women's added value to NAP implementation in different contexts and the feasibility of a standardized approach.			Accepted	
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Further expand upon the embedded ToC outlined in this evaluation to assess UN-Women’s added value to NAP implementation in different contexts and the feasibility of a standardized approach.	2021	WPSHA section, ROs	Not initiated	
RECOMMENDATION 5 UN-Women should strengthen its understanding of how to support transformational shifts in gender equality and women’s empowerment and should use this to inform its work on WPS and NAPs.				
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. UN-Women will draw from its Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and ToC to inform its interventions to advance human rights and gender equality in different types of conflict contexts. This recommendation also reflects UN-Women’s ongoing work, as captured in the annual reports of the Secretary-General on WPS, which outline WPS priorities and recommendations that can have transformational impact on communities. Furthermore, as part of the Generation Equality Forum, UN-Women is developing a global Compact on women, peace and security and humanitarian action to identify key actions that can yield the greatest impact in conflict and crisis contexts. UN-Women will benefit from more strategic analysis on how change can be meaningfully monitored and assessed in different conflict contexts as a result of specific interventions.			Accepted	
KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Build upon the embedded ToC outlined in this evaluation to develop a framework for understanding how transformational change in human rights and GE happens in conflict-affected settings, and how UN-Women can support such change as part of its work on NAPs.	Ongoing	WPSHA section	Initiated	
Generate more learning from its own interventions regarding which approaches best advance human rights and GE in different types of conflict contexts.	Ongoing	WPSHA section, ROs, COs	Initiated	
Develop strategies and tools that could be used to assess what types of transformational change are most critical for delivering on the WPS agenda at the country level.	2023	WPSHA section, Regional Directors	Not initiated	
Identify partners to implement work in this area, as well as ways to capture the results and impact of such work.	Ongoing	WPSHA section	Initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 6

WPSHA management should enhance its internal reporting systems related to tracking financial resources and results towards NAPs to better demonstrate and enhance results. It should also strengthen technical leadership to ensure a harmonized approach to WPS NAP support.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

UN-Women accepts this recommendation. Current reporting on NAPs at country and regional level is context-specific and varies with the different reporting requirements of donors. More systematic reporting on NAP support and progress made throughout the year will enable UN-Women to better harness its internal knowledge capital to inform the Entity's NAP and WPS programming and interventions. A broader discussion and guidance on financial coding of NAP interventions in the RMS will enhance tracking. Consolidating and ensuring effective dissemination of this knowledge to inform UN-Women's work requires additional human resources and long-term financial investment. UN-Women's specialists at headquarters can also be engaged to share their policy and programmatic expertise to inform different aspects of a given NAP.

Accepted

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Undertake an assessment of the financial resources required to provide meaningful support to NAP implementation. Based on this assessment, the Entity could take an informed decision about the strategy it should adopt and the investments it should make to support NAP implementation.	2021	WPS management, COs, ROs	Not initiated	
Enhance internal reporting systems to include stronger impact indicators, as well as strengthen understanding of how financial resources are linked to results. Also develop effective systems to store and manage knowledge and invest in building institutional memory so that knowledge and experience on NAPs are captured, retained and can be drawn on in the future.	2023	WPS management, COs, ROs	Not initiated	
Consider maintaining a pool of WPS NAP experts at headquarters with specific Terms of Reference from which expertise could be deployed to support national NAP development and implementation.	2022	WPSHA management	Not initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 7

UN-Women should expand the range of actors and processes that it engages with on WPS NAPs to broaden and deepen national level ownership and integrate its engagement on WPS NAPs with its other areas of work at the national level to support sustainable NAP implementation.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

UN-Women accepts this recommendation. One of UN-Women’s most recognized approaches to NAP support is the ability to build broad based ownership of the process among diverse stakeholders. UN-Women, in consultation and collaboration with government and civil society actors, will expand its work to engage more actors from different sectors in its NAP work. Demonstrating the relevance of NAPs to non-traditional partners is critical for sustaining peace. UN-Women notes that more NAP partners necessitate more coordination and increased capacity and financial resources for governments to effectively manage the process. A decentralized approach through localization provides an avenue for a more efficient and impactful process, while recognizing that this does not eliminate the need for a comprehensive whole-of-government approach.

UN-Women will systematize its analysis of NAPs to identify how UN-Women’s existing strategies and interventions can be linked to the Entity’s support to NAPs.

Accepted

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Expand the range of actors and processes that the Entity engages with to build broader ownership of NAPs. Similarly, strengthen engagement with local-level actors and processes and support localization efforts.	Ongoing	WPSHA section, COs, ROs	Initiated	
Promote the integration of NAPs into other strategies and plans at the country level that UN-Women supports (e.g. national gender strategies or development plans). Also connect NAP work with the Entity’s other areas of work at country level, including linking UN-Women’s GRB programming and NAP work to support the use of GRB to finance NAP implementation; harnessing UN-Women’s existing work with civil society on norms and attitudes to address the attitudinal barriers to meaningful NAP implementation; and using UN-Women’s work on themes such as GBV to help meet NAP goals in these areas.	Ongoing	WPSHA section, COs, ROs	Initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 8

UN-Women should address the immediate need to integrate WPS principles into COVID-19 responses, as well as the longer-term challenge of ensuring that NAPs are used to inform emergency planning.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

UN-Women accepts this recommendation. Women, peace and security principles, which include women’s meaningful leadership and participation, protection from and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence, securing women’s economic livelihood, among others, are reflected in the Entity’s and the UN system’s response to COVID-19. UN-Women, since the onset of the pandemic, has strongly advocated at global, national and regional forums for the continued relevance and implementation of the WPS agenda, particularly during a time when financial resources are stretched. Strengthened analysis and data, which applies to conflict and crisis contexts, is needed to better inform how NAPs can be structured to more effectively address conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

Accepted

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Make urgent, strong and consistent efforts to advocate with national, regional and global actors for the consideration of WPS principles in COVID-19 responses.	Ongoing	WPSHA management, COs, ROs	Initiated	
Develop guidance to link NAPs to emergency policy and legal frameworks and planning processes at national level, in order that actors working on emergencies understand the relevance of NAPs and that emergency plans and processes integrate key NAP priorities and principles.	2022	WPSHA Section, COs, ROs	Not initiated	