REPORT
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WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY/GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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MESSAGE TO READERS

At GWL Voices, our advocacy pushes for the integration of women's voices and participation in all spheres of society, particularly in peace and security, global governance, human rights, gender issues, international peace and security, environmental diplomacy, global health, and sustainable development.

Hence, as a collective voice of women's leadership, backed by the support of our partners, this report reflects our stance on an issue whose time is long overdue.

In the wake of unending global challenges, the full participation of women and girls in the peace and security agenda will result in transformational leadership we all can trust - one the world desperately needs.

We want to thank our partners, GGIN, C4UN, Bahá'í International, and the International Alliance of Women, whose foresight and support have enabled us to carry out this critical work.

Here's to elevating our voices for change and inclusion while advancing the issues we care about most.

#GWL
VOICES
FOR CHANGE & INCLUSION

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps humanity's greatest resource is our own collective capacity, half of which has historically been constrained as a result of gender discrimination. No meaningful social contract is possible without the active and equal participation of women and girls.
Report of the UN Secretary General. Our Common Agenda[1]

Among the many recommendations contained in the UN Secretary General's September 2021 *Our Common Agenda* report, putting 'women and girls at the center of the security agenda' as well as the 'eradication of violence against women and girls' are key components.[2]

While the report addresses several other gender equality issues, including women's economic inclusion, gender-discriminatory laws and gender parity, this C4UN policy brief will focus on violence against women and girls, and women, peace and security (WPS) as part of the New Agenda for Peace. It will first review the context for the development of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, then outline the framework for this "agenda," before looking at the current implementation of WPS and how it relates to *Our Common Agenda*. It will finish with a set of actionable recommendations for governments, civil society and the private sector.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Our Common Agenda was written at an "inflection point in history," as the report itself notes. However, the Women, Peace and Security agenda was born out of a very different 'inflection point in history,' after the end of the Cold War when the multilateral system and its structure and institutions gained ascendency as the competing global superpower hegemony gave way to a new 'international order.'

As the world ushered in the 21st century, there was a renewed optimism about the collective security concept, and in particular, the role of the UN in securing world peace. Much of the

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1   Report of the UN Secretary General. Our Common Agenda. Pg. 31
2   Proposed actions under Commitments 3. (*Promote peace and prevent conflicts*) and 5. (*Place women and girls at the centre*) respectively.

thinking animating this new international order was the concept of 'human security,' which meets at the nexus between military, security and development policies prioritizing the security of individuals (not just the security of the state). Human security frameworks encompass such policy issues as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), the rule of law and international justice, as well as the issue of gender equality and women's human rights.

The failures of the UN missions in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda in the mid-1990s ushered in the concept of the 'protection of civilians,' (POC), which can be viewed as a pared down, 'actionable' version of the human security framework. The POC mandate is now at the core of all UN peacekeeping missions, 'recognizing the impact civilian casualties has on durable peace, reconciliation and development,'[3] and is linked to other protection agendas, supporting and reinforcing them, including WPS and gender-based violence.[4]

THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY FRAMEWORK

The rise of the human security canon in the post-Cold War era gave women's rights activists around the world the tools with which to push forward the women, peace and security agenda onto the international peace and security landscape. As a result of this worldwide advocacy the legal understanding of gender equality and women's participation and protection in public and private life, has been broadened, particularly with regard to post-conflict and transitional countries.

> **Our Common Agenda calls for an exploration of 'how to more effectively address violence holistically in all its forms.**

There are currently ten UN Security Council resolutions that provide the normative framework for the operationalization of WPS.[5] UNSCR 1325 (2000) set the stage by affirming the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict peacebuilding and governance, along four paths - protection, participation, prevention, and relief and recovery. The other nine have contributed to the building of this foundational resolution, and together they 'span a broader range of issues than any other thematic area on the Security Council agenda.'[6]

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3   UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1265 (1999). Para. 4.

4   Handbook on the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping Operations. UN Department of Peace Operations, 2020. Pg. 13.

5   The WPS UN Security Council Resolutions are: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), 2493 (2019). Resolution 2538 (2020) covers all aspects of women in peacekeeping.

6   *Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council.* (2020) NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security: 2019.

"PUTTING WOMEN AND GIRLS AT THE CENTRE OF SECURITY POLICY": THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WPS IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR COMMON AGENDA

As OCA makes clear, gender equality is central to the new agenda for peace, placing women and girls 'at the heart of peace and security.' The report builds on the existing women, peace and security agenda and its principles of prevention, demilitarization and equality, linking interpersonal violence and insecurity, women's equal participation in peacemaking and in all security decision-making, as key components of 'how peace and security are defined, negotiated and sustained.'[7] Progress has been uneven to date. Below are some examples of the various ways that the Women, Peace and Security agenda has moved forward.

Drivers of Progress

All UN peacekeeping and political missions now have Gender Advisor and/or Gender Officer posts. They help ensure that WPS issues are mainstreamed and integrated within mission planning and project delivery. Overall, Mission gender advisors are responsible for supporting the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. This can encompass developing strategies and programs to address women's political participation, gender justice, women's economic empowerment, and gender-based violence amongst other issues.

Most UN Agencies operating in the field also have gender advisors or focal points as well. Within the Global Cluster System, the Gender-based Violence sub-cluster, led by UNFPA, provides a multi-sectoral coordination and response mechanism with which to address issues with regard to violence against women and girls on the ground.

There are also Women Protection Advisors, WPAs, deployed to the field that focus on conflict-related sexual violence, (CRSV). WPAs engage with the parties to conflict to obtain commitments on addressing CRSV and implementing them, feed into DDR and SSR processes, as well as respond to individual cases of CRSV.

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https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/resource/mapping-women-peace-and-security-in-the-un-security-council-2019/

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The Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, which is an official Security Council working Group, was established in 2016. It focuses on strengthening the oversight and coordination of the implementation of WPS mechanisms and activities, inputting into Security Council debates and resolutions, and advocates for women's participation and leadership within the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding infrastructure and pushes for robust WPS mandates from the Security Council. It is a key forum in which the leadership of peace operations can push for women's enhanced engagement in their respective contexts. The contribution to women, peace and security by the IEG can be seen in the significant jump in Security Council resolutions that included explicit references to WPS after the IEG was formed.

The Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations launched by Canada in 2017 is seen as a concrete way to achieve better gender parity and representation in UN peacekeeping missions by providing financial and technical support to troop- and police-contributing countries in order to enhance the meaningful participation of uniformed women. The Initiative also develops projects designed to incentivize the deployment of women military and police in peace operations as well as to promote gender equality in the security sector.

> **The rise of the human security canon in the post-Cold War era gave women's rights activists around the world the tools with which to push forward the women, peace and security agenda onto the international peace and security landscape. As a result of this worldwide advocacy the legal understanding of gender equality and women's participation and protection in public and private life, has been broadened, particularly with regard to post-conflict and transitional countries.**

Under the Initiative, A "*Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations*" (MOWIP) barrier assessment methodology was developed to better understand the challenges facing women deploying to UN peace operations, and how countries can increase opportunities for women in deployments. Thus far, Canada, Germany, Ghana, Senegal, Uruguay, and Zambia have all undertaken the MOWIP assessment.[8]

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8   Canadian Department of National Defence News Release. Aug. 31, 2022: https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2022/08/department-of-national-defence-and-canadian-armed-forces-release-elsie-initiative-barrier-assessment-identifying-barriers-for-women-in-un-peace-ope.html

One of the most important contributions to the operationalization of the WPS agenda are domestic National Action Plans (NAPs) on Women, Peace and Security. As a follow up to the commitments made in UNSCR 1325, the Security Council in 2005 called on member states to develop domestic Action Plans. NAPs are country-level strategies that lay out the commitments of an individual state to implement the four pillars of UNSCR 1325, charting the course of action for localizing action on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This includes outlining the objectives and activities that countries will take, both on a domestic and international level, in order to secure the rights of women and girls in conflict settings; prevent armed conflict and violence, including against women and girls; and ensure the meaningful participation of women in peace and security.

Currently 103 countries have NAPs, representing 53 percent of UN members states. There are also 11 Regional Action Plans (RAP) in place, including the League of Arab States and the European Union, as well as multilateral organizations such as NATO.[9] In some countries, the development of NAPs has been undertaken in parallel with Local Action Plans in particular cities or regions of a country, such as Ukraine. Many National Action Plans also provide directives for government agencies and bodies to develop their own plans for mainstreaming WPS across their work.

> **One of the most important contributions to the operationalization of the WPS agenda are domestic National Action Plans (NAPs) on Women, Peace and Security.**

While 1325 National Action Plans are becoming commonplace tools for mainstreaming women, peace and security, the advent of national feminist foreign policies are much newer developments. Sweden was the first country to apply a feminist lens to their international affairs and assistance policies, beginning in 2014. Since then Canada, Mexico, France, Luxembourg and Germany have either developed comprehensive feminist foreign policies or incorporated feminist policies into their international assistance.[10]

A feminist foreign policy 'means applying a systematic gender equality perspective throughout the whole foreign policy agenda.'[11] It demands that governments re-think the meaning of security and 'the role countries can play in building a safer, healthier, and more peaceful world.' Central to the concept of feminist foreign policy is the design of policies that promote gender equality, ensuring that women in multilateral decision-making spaces, the de-escalation of conflict, and focusing on disarmament, demilitarisation, and peacebuilding efforts that centre the experiences of women.

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9   Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF): https://1325naps.peacewomen.org
10 Ibid: https://1325naps.peacewomen.org
11 Ibid.

Both NAPs and Feminist Foreign Policies represent a significant leap forward on the domestic front in ensuring that women and girls are an integral part of the social contract postulated by *Our Common Agenda.*

Obstacles of Progress

Despite the 'robust normative framework of the WPS agenda', there continues to be many impediments to its full implementation. As the UN Secretary General notes in his 2021 annual report on Women, Peace and Security[12]:

- Women represent only 23 percent of delegates in peace processes involving the UN;

- Currently, less than 30 percent of peace agreements have gender provisions in them;

- By the end of 2020, only 5.2 percent of military troops in peace operations were women, which is below the 6.5 per cent target set by the UN for that year;

- Within the humanitarian sphere, sectors that address gender-based violence received only 33 percent of requested funding, compared with the average funding of 61 percent for UN appeals overall;

- Aid to local women's rights organizations in conflict-affected countries is below one percent of total bilateral assistance;

- In recent resolutions renewing peacekeeping mandates, the Security Council added gender considerations to the reform of security and defence forces in only 4 out of 11 country-specific situations.[13]

The reasons for the lack of progress include the following:

Various analyses of UN peacekeeping missions have shown that gender is not systematically integrated across peace operations, and that the specific experiences, rights, and needs of women and girls in conflict situations are neither included in analysis and assessments, nor inform strategies for the design of missions or program development, which in turn leads to a lack of resources for WPS initiatives.[14] The lack of a gender perspective has set up a competing dynamic between expectations laid out in security council resolutions and mission mandates and the capacities of the missions.

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12   The 2022 report will be released in October.
13   Women, Peace and Security. Report of the UN Secretary-General. *UN Security Council.* S/2021/827 Sept. 27, 2021. Para 5.
14   The 2015 Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) is the most prominent one to highlight this issue.

Specialized posts such as gender advisors and women's protection advisors are often the last to be filled, in part because of the specific skills needed to carry out the duties, and the first to be dropped when there are budget cuts. Some Gender Advisors have direct access to the SRSG and thus are able to provide direct strategic advice to senior leadership; others report much further down the chain. As well, within the military and police components of the mission, gender advisors or focal points are not always full-time staffed positions and those holding these posts do not necessarily have the expertise in gender, but simply have it tacked on to their other duties.

As peacekeepers become more targeted, more emphasis and expense has been given over to their protection. This 'bunkerization' mentality has led to reduced interaction with the local population, making it even more challenging to effectively implement WPS strategies.

While early advocates framed WPS as an anti-militarization agenda, one that focused on 'women and peace', there has been a shift towards 'women and security,' with a focus on making wars safer for women rather than challenging the security paradigm that emphasizes state security and counter-terrorism. As such, women's participation in national militaries and multilateral peacekeeping missions has now moved to the foreground as a WPS priority.

> **The lack of a gender perspective has set up a competing dynamic between expectations laid out in security council resolutions and mission mandates and the capacities of the missions.**

In addition, stringent counter-terrorism laws and regulations that are in place to prevent money from being channelled to terrorist groups have impacted the ability of local women's groups to access aid and development assistance.

While the focus on sexual violence in conflict that has emerged over the last few years is a very welcome development, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) has, to a certain extent, surpassed other women's protection issues to become a primary focus. This means that other forms of gender-based violence, including early and forced marriage, 'honor' killings, and sex trafficking, as well as attacks on women in public life, lack of access to health services and education do not receive as much attention.

While National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security can be effective tools for governments, many NAPs are aspirational rather than actionable. For example, only 31 NAPs include a budget for implementation. The lack of a uniform framework for the NAP, with each country determining their own indicators and areas of focus, as well as a lack of budget allocation, makes it hard to determine whether national governments are following through on their WPS commitments.

ACTIONS FOR MOVING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA FORWARD WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR COMMON AGENDA

Despite these challenges, Our Common Agenda offers an opportunity to 'turbocharge' not only the 2030 Agenda but the way in which Women, Peace and Security issues are considered and incorporated in the international arena in the 21st century.

Below are a set of concrete actions for governments, civil society and the private sector to consider in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives that enhance the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. They are designed to form an integral part of the proposed new Agenda for Peace as recommended in *Our Common Agenda*.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

As already noted, Our Common Agenda builds on the existing women, peace and security agenda by placing 'women and girls at the centre of the security agenda.'[15] The normative framework for this are the ten UN Security Council WPS resolutions.[16] The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, (1995), stemming from the Fourth World Conference on Women set the stage for WPS resolutions a few years earlier with its 'Strategic Objective and Action E,' which addresses the impact of women and armed conflict.[17]

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15 Commitment 5. Report of the UN Secretary General. *Our Common Agenda.*

16 The WPS UN Security Council Resolutions are: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), 2493 (2019). Collectively, they affirm the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict peacebuilding and governance, along four paths - protection, participation, prevention, and relief and recovery. several focus specifically on conflict related sexual violence. Although Resolution 2538 (2020) is not considered one of the ten WPS resolutions, it covers all aspects of women in peacekeeping.

17 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.* United Nations. Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Action E states that the attainment of 'local, national, regional and global peace is inextricably linked with the advancement of women.' Para 18. Pg. 3. A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1.

Our Common Agenda also calls for the 'eradication of violence against women and girls,' making the link between 'interpersonal violence and security,' as well as highlighting new forms of violence against women and girls. the and the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence**.[18]

Since 1979, UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, (CEDAW), has been the legal basis for the advancement of the rights of women and girls.[19] But it is the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* that is still considered the most comprehensive global policy framework and blueprint for action on gender equality. Many of the recommendations contained in this brief, which are based on recommendations made by current initiatives, stem from this seminal document.

STRENGTHENING THE RESPONSIVENESS TO WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY, AND TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN OUR COMMON AGENDA

The challenges of gender mainstreaming within the humanitarian-development continuum

Our Common Agenda positions gender equality as a cross-cutting issue.[20] However, as pointed out in a recent position paper on OCA by several high level UN appointees, "the undefined structure, policy, and responsibilities of the UN system on gender, including the humanitarian coordination system, poses a challenge when implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy."[21]

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18 Known as the Istanbul Convention, (1993), there are 37 signatory countries.

19 The *Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action* stemming from the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, pushed this further with its declaration that "the human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights." *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.*. Art. 18. Pg. 4. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/vienna.pdf

20 The other cross-cutting issues identified in *Our Common Agenda* are: security, climate change, health, development and human rights. Pg. 31.

21 Position of the UN special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, and the Working Group on the discrimination against women and girls on the UN Secretary-General's Report, Our Common Agenda. (*Position Paper*). Pg. 3.

This in turn has led to a patchwork and piecemeal application of gender issues in conflict and post-conflict settings. Problems include both overlapping and competing agendas and personnel, as well as significant gaps in terms of roles and responsibilities with regard to a gender mandate. As the *Position Paper* notes: "Efforts to improve gender mainstreaming in interventions that lie along the humanitarian-development continuum are challenged by structural limitations of the compositions of the UN Country Teams and the Humanitarian Country Teams."[22]

Part of this institutional 'fuzziness' can be attributed to a lack of 'clear and achievable mandates.' Mandates can be made 'deliberately vague' as a result of the 'political compromise' that is needed in order to secure Security Council agreement for a mission.[23] Doctrinal differences between the military, police and civilian components of the UN system as well as the different goals and interests between the UN Secretariat, troop-contributing countries, host states, relief organizations can murky the waters further with regard to how gender may be mainstreamed in humanitarian and development settings.

Key Actions for Implementation:

■ Centre women in the design and execution of humanitarian aid, recovery, peacebuilding and development efforts by: developing standardized trainings and resources for gender-responsive humanitarian action; prioritizing gender-sensitive budgets, including gender analysis in all humanitarian appeals, and significantly increasing funding to local women's rights and women-led organizations.[24]

■ Institutionalize the participation of civil society and the private sector all humanitarian aid, recovery and peacebuilding and development efforts by providing opportunities for official representation in relevant national and international platforms.[25]

■ Develop databases to collect sex-disaggregated data which would help provide concrete evidence of the impacts of humanitarian emergencies on conflict-affected women and on peace and security.[26]

22 *Position Paper*. Pg. 2.

23 Adamczyk, S. (2019). *Twenty Years of Protection of Civilians at the UN Security Council*. Humanitarian Policy Group Policy Brief No. 74, pp. 1–13. Overseas Development Institute. Pg. 5

24 WPS-HA Framework. Pp. 4-7.

25 *Global Leaders Call for Urgent Action on Gender Equality*. 2022 Global Women Leaders Summit. (GWL 2022 Statement). #Overdue4equity, The Rockefeller Foundation, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Global-Women-Leaders-Statement-and-Call-for-Gender-Equity-Reforms-combined.pdf. Pg. 5.

26 *"Equality for Women. Peace for All."* Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022. Global Network of Women Peacebuilders. (GNWP Strategic Plan). Pg. 19. https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-GNWP-StratPlan_9june_main.pdf

Fragmentation of the WPS agenda

UN studies have shown that gender is not being systematically integrated across peace operations, and that the specific experiences, rights, and needs of women and girls in conflict situations are neither included in analysis and assessments, nor inform concrete strategies for the design of missions.[27] In addition, the challenges of gender mainstreaming often means there is 'limited coordination and information-sharing' between the various issues that compose international interventions.

Part of the issue is that with the growth of specialized positions, including both gender and women's protection advisors and officers within the humanitarian coordination system, this has had the adverse effect of encouraging the sidelining of these issues in missions rather than their integration. Having specialized expertise on hand allows for other mission staff to assume that the gender advisor or women's protection officer will take care of 'women's issues,' leading to even more pronounced silos.[28]

> **Central to the concept of feminist foreign policy is the design of policies that promote gender equality, ensuring that women in multilateral decision-making spaces, the de-escalation of conflict, and focusing on disarmament, demilitarisation, and peacebuilding efforts that centre the experiences of women.**

As the 2022 Statement from the Global Women's Leaders Summit points out: "gender mainstreaming efforts, while important, are limited by insufficient knowledge across staff and lack of training, and responsibilities are too often relegated to a siloed gender focal point instead of organizational leadership."[29] The statement goes on to note that, "discussions on peacebuilding and humanitarian action often do not reflect the perspectives of local women and civil society, and realities on the ground."[30] This is made more challenging due to the fact that funding often fails to reach women-led organizations, particularly at the grassroots level due in part to 'complicated grant applications or onerous reporting requirements.'[31]

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27 The most prominent of these is the 2015 *Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People.* (HIPPO). A/70/95 – S/2015/446.

28 Mader, K. (2020). *Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council.* NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. Pg. 6

29 *GWL 2022 Statement.* Pg. 5.

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*

Key Actions for Implementation:

- Prioritize the development UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans by: a) designing programs in collaboration with women and women's organizations that reflect current conflict dynamics and address changing realities on the ground; b) providing concrete plans, policies, and targets to increase the number of women in leadership roles, particularly in the security sector, as well as in peacekeeping operations, and peacebuilding and humanitarian organizations; c) allocating sufficient funding and other resources for the implementation of the NAP;[32] d) promoting the localization of UNSCR 1325.[33]

- Adopt specific commitments and targets to advance inclusion and leadership of women, local women's organizations and networks at country level humanitarian decision-making processes, and at the global level across field missions, UN Country Teams and Humanitarian Country Teams.[34]

- Provide direct assistance to local women's organizations, including through UN-led peacebuilding mechanisms such as the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, UN Women Global Facility, as well as through pledging conferences in order to mobilize resources, and standardize protocols to address the barriers for women's, including at the local level, to successfully apply for, and utilize funds,[35] participate in global policy convenings, build networks and share expertise.[36]

Emphasis on Security rather than Peace

While Our Common Agenda acknowledges the need to have a "better understanding of the underlying drivers and systems of influence that are sustaining conflict," and stresses the importance of "investing in prevention and peacebuilding," there remains an emphasis on 'reducing strategic risks' related to disarmament and non-proliferation of both conventional and nuclear weapons, as well as addressing and adapting to new security risks, including terrorism and cyberattacks, particularly on civilian infrastructure.[37]

These issues, while necessary for global survival, do not examine the underlying assumptions

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32 *GWL 2022 Statement.* Pg. 5.

33 The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders has set as a target, "to make the localization of UNSCR 1325 standard practice in 10 additional countries," noting that localization "has been cited by the UN Secretary-General as a key implementation strategy on WPS in his reports to the Security Council." *GNWP Strategic Plan*. Pg. 13.

34 Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact Framework. (*WPS-HA Framework*). Pg. 14. https://wpshacompact.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/WPS-HA-Compact_Framework-EN-Web.pdf

35 This is the first Action under "Financing the WPS Agenda and Gender Equality in Humanitarian Programming" in the *WPS-HA Framework*. As the Framework points out: "In 2019, women's organizations and institutions in fragile contexts received USD 190 million, which represents only close to 1% of gender equality-focused aid to fragile contexts." Pp. 6-7.

36 *GWL 2022 Statement.* Pg. 5.

37 *Our Common Agenda.* Pg. 60

of this security paradigm and the impact that this has on humanity's ability to develop and thrive in peace and prosperity with more and more state resources consumed by the need to provide 'security.'

Although OCA does point to the need to "reduce excessive military budgets, ensure adequate social spending, tailor development assistance to address root causes of conflict, link disarmament to development opportunities,"[38] a clear roadmap to achieving this needs to be established. Early advocates framed WPS as an anti-militarization agenda, one that focused on 'women and peace.' However, since 9/11 there has been a shift towards 'women and security,' with a focus on making wars safer for women rather than challenging the new security paradigm that emphasizes state security and counter-terrorism. As such, women's participation in national militaries and multilateral peacekeeping missions has now moved to the foreground as a WPS priority.[39]

Key Actions for Implementation:

- Allocate at least 15 percent of peacebuilding funds to programs that advance gender equality as a principal objective and ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all programming and policy platforms as well and increase investment in pooled funding mechanisms to support national action plans;[40]

- Establish a fund to ensure that civil society, particularly women's organizations, have access to resources to participate in global policy convenings, build networks and share expertise, as well as create and coordinate tracking mechanisms for gender-focused funding;[41]

- Ensure that gender equity is integrated into foreign policy, development and security assistance, backed by adequate resources.[42]

Linking gender-based violence and the WPS agenda

Our Common Agenda calls for an exploration of 'how to more effectively address violence holistically in all its forms.' The report also recognizes that health needs to be addressed as a public good. These contexts are necessary for eradicating violence against women and girls as called for by OCA. However, it is also critical to understand the integral link between gender-based violence and conflict: the violence against women and girls that takes place

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38 *Our Common Agenda.* Pg. 60.

39 Levine, C. & Kouvo, S. (2020). *Gender, human rights and security.* in The Gender and Security Agenda. De Jonge Ouderaat, C.; Brown, M.E. Routledge Studies in Gender and Security. Pg. 203

40 *WPS-HA Framework.* Pg. 6.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *GWL 2022 Statement.* Pg. 5. At least six countries have either developed comprehensive feminist foreign policies or incorporated feminist policies into their international development work: Sweden, Canada, Mexico, France, Luxembourg and Germany.

during times of conflict is 'connected to and derives from the same causes as violence that takes place in times of peace.'[43] This is key to ensuring that the issue of violence against girls and women is not siloed as a 'women's matter', but rather regarded as a public health issue fundamentally linked to the 'prosperity and development' of the state.[44]

As the report itself points out, "increases in some forms of violence, particularly against women and girls tend to be an early warning sign of diminishing law and order and rising insecurity that may catalyse into broader conflict."[45] However, this has not yet translated into action. For example, according to the latest Secretary-General's annual report on Women, Peace and Security, initiatives to address GBV only received 33 percent of requested humanitarian funding as "compared with average funding of 61 percent for UN appeals funding."[46]

> **Over the past few decades, there has been an increasing recognition that the most durable solutions to prevent and resolve conflict and to build sustainable peace are those that are gender-responsive.**

Key Actions for Implementation:

- Develop legislation that expands the definition of gender-based violence as well as speaks to the linkages between the roots causes of violence against women and girls that occurs in times of peace and that occurs during conflict; [47]

- Make available adequate resources to ensure that the issue of violence against women and girls is addressed in a holistic manner that address the underlying causes of gender-based violence and provide more long-term interventions, ensuring that survivors have access to the full range of gender-responsive and survivor-centered services and care;[48]

- Ensure that women and girls are at the center of the design, implementation and evaluation of gender-based violence prevention and response efforts.[49]

43 *Our Common Agenda.* Pg. 27.
44 *Position Paper.* Pp. 1-2
45 *Our Common Agenda.* Pp. 27 & 60
46 UN Secretary-General Report. *Women, Peace and Security.* (2021). Pg. 2.
47 *Position Paper.* Pg. 2 & *WPS-HA Framework.* Pg.4.
48 *Ibid.*
49 *WPS-HA Framework.* Pg. 5.

Gender-based Online Harassment and Bullying

Our Common Agenda speaks to the need to include women and girls in addressing online harassment, recognizing that much of the hate speech and bullying taking place online is gender-based. Gender stereotyping, discrimination and violence have become the norm with social media. As the Position Paper, notes, 'disinformation is being used as a deliberate strategy by those pushing back against attempts to bring in stronger measures of gender equality. A combination of tactics is being employed that involves disinformation and harmful stereotypes in order to keep women and girls in a state of oppression.'[50] This 'infodemic' is even more endemic in conflict-affected states, where a lack of access to information that provides countering viewpoints to the disinformation.

> **Women's participation in national militaries and multilateral peacekeeping missions has now moved to the foreground as a WPS priority.**

Not only does this online gender divide exacerbate "gender bias and male default thinking, it has pushed many women out of the public conversation."[51] In conflict-affected and authoritarian states especially, this technology, along with digital surveillance, have helped governments control populations and influence behaviour, often to the detriment of women and girls.[52]

While OCA calls for the protection of online space and the strengthening of its governance through a multi-stakeholder approach, (UN, national governments, private sector and civil society), in terms of a 'Global Digital Compact,' "there is a need to expand the description of the problems and violations that women encounter online, naming them gender-based violence, which includes but is not limited to harassment."[53]

Key Actions for Implementation:

- Develop legislation to include new forms of gender-based violence with regard to online harassment, misinformation, and harmful stereotyping, as well as the recognition of other forms of gender-based violence including psychological forms of violence. [54]

- The Global Digital Compact "should prioritize commitments that establish new internet and social media standards with women leaders, activists, and private sector actors."[55]

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50 *Position Paper.* Pg. 6.
51 *Our Common Agenda.* Pg. 63.
52 *WPS-HA Framework.* Pg. 9.
53 *Position Paper.* Pg. 4.
54 *Ibid.*
55 *GWL 2022 Statement.* Pg. 5.

CONCLUSION

Over the past few decades, there has been an increasing recognition that the most durable solutions to prevent and resolve conflict and to build sustainable peace are those that are gender-responsive. Yet, despite the need for gender analyses to effectively address the root causes of conflict, as well as the need to ensure that women's voices are fully integrated in peace efforts and humanitarian action, women's considerations remain overwhelmingly excluded from these efforts.[56]

It will need significant political will as well as substantial resources in order to bring a 'gendered approach to funding, policy and programming decisions' in the implementation of OCA commitments. Shifting the global status-quo with regard to women, peace and security, and gender-based violence will require buy-in and commitment from across every sector. [57]

RESOURCES

- Global Acceleration Plan. Generation Equality Forum. https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/UNW%20-%20GAP%20Report%20-%20EN.pdf

- Global Leaders Call for Urgent Action on Gender Equity. #Overdue4Equity, The Rockefeller Foundation, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. Sept. 2022: https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/report/global-women-leaders-call-for-urgent-action-on-gender-equity/

- Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) Strategic Plan 2018 2022: https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/member-resource/gnwp-strategic-plan-2018-2022/

- Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact Framework: https://wpshacompact.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/WPS-HA-Compact_Framework-EN-Web.pdf

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56 *WPS-HA Framework.* Pp. 2/3.
57 *GWL 2022 Statement. i.*

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