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Closing Gaps: Strengthening the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through Arms Control and Disarmament

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Notes

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About UNIDIR

UNIDIR is a voluntarily funded, autonomous institute within the United Nations. One of the few policy institutes worldwide focusing on disarmament, UNIDIR generates knowledge and promotes dialogue and action on disarmament and security. Based in Geneva, UNIDIR assists the international community to develop the practical, innovative ideas needed to find solutions to critical security problems.

About the Integrated Approaches – Gender and Disarmament Programme

The Integrated Approaches – Gender and Disarmament Programme has a multi-year workplan encompassing original research to generate policy-relevant knowledge on international security initiatives that consider gender equality and youth engagement. We facilitate dialogue, build capacity and produce resource tools to support arms control and disarmament stakeholders in translating awareness of diversity and equality into practical actions.

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
NAP	National Action Plan
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
WAM	Weapons and Ammunition Management
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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Executive summary

In the quarter of a century since the passing of the first Security Council resolution on the issue, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda has brought critical attention to the gendered impacts of war, violence, and insecurity. Addressing these impacts requires the mutual integration of the WPS Agenda with arms control and disarmament measures. A central policy tool in this respect are National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS. As of 2025, almost 200 WPS NAPs have been launched by over 110 States and territories, with many States by now having developed more than one generation of these plans.

Analysis of the 197 WPS NAPs adopted by 106 States and territories between 1 January 2005 and 31 December 2024 shows that:

- ▶ 143 WPS NAPs include at least one mention of a term relevant to arms control or disarmament;
- ▶ 114 WPS NAPs include a mention of arms control and disarmament generally;
- ▶ 62 WPS NAPs mention small arms and light weapons (SALW) and/or weapons and ammunition management (WAM);
- ▶ 39 WPS NAPs mention mines, mine action, cluster munitions, and/or explosive remnants of war;
- ▶ 25 WPS NAPs mention arms control and disarmament processes (including treaties, conventions, and diplomacy);
- ▶ 16 WPS NAPs mention emerging technologies, such as cybersecurity; and
- ▶ 14 WPS NAPs mention weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

In the period considered, the overall trend has been one of an initial high percentage of WPS NAPs including at least one reference in the 2005–2009 period, to a smaller percentage in 2010–2014 and 2015–2019. In the most recent years (2020–2024), the total number of new NAPs decreased, but the share that addresses arms control and disarmament themes has increased. Expert interviews conducted during this research indicate that a number of WPS NAPs currently under development will also include references to arms control and disarmament issues, reinforcing the current trend.

Generally, arms control and disarmament measures tend to get mentioned in the introductory section of a WPS NAP, rather than under proposed actions. If there is a further iteration of the NAP, and arms control and disarmament measures are again mentioned, there is a higher likelihood of there being an associated action, but not always associated with publicly available indicators.

Among the selected weapons-related issues, SALW is the most common in WPS NAPs, followed by landmines, WMD, and emerging technologies. The steady attention to SALW (referenced by 31 per cent of the analysed NAPS from 2020–2024) highlights a sustained recognition of their gendered impacts.

In the WMD category, nuclear weapons and nuclear diplomacy far outnumber references to chemical weapons and biological weapons, which are mentioned only rarely. When it comes to emerging technology, lethal autonomous weapons systems, military artificial intelligence, and uncrewed aerial vehicles are also absent in WPS NAPs.

Interviewees highlighted a globally – and often nationally – challenging political environment for both WPS and arms control/disarmament. Furthermore, challenges persist in making the case for an increased integration of the WPS Agenda and arms control and disarmament. Siloing and the existence of numerous action plans and strategies can create a fragmented policy landscape. Additionally, multiple reporting processes can lead to institutional resistance against plans seen as a further burden.

Key recommendations

Enhancing convergence

While our analysis of 197 WPS NAPs shows a steady, if non-linear, increase in the inclusion of arms control and disarmament measures in these plans, there continues to be gaps between these policy areas. This is especially the case for areas of arms control and disarmament that the WPS Agenda has been less engaged with, such as WMD, lethal autonomous weapons systems, or the gendered impacts of conventional weapons other than SALW and mines/cluster munitions. A key missed opportunity at the conceptual level is highlighting how essential arms control and disarmament are to the overall prevention of armed conflict.

To address these challenges, we propose the following steps:

- ▶ **resourcing** practice-oriented research on gender, arms control, and disarmament, especially in areas where there are gaps in their inclusion in WPS NAPs;
- ▶ **ensuring** that monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms for WPS NAPs capture ‘what works’, and documents established and emerging good practices, including through qualitative data;
- ▶ **fostering** cooperation and exchange between experts working on WPS on the one hand and arms control/disarmament on the other – not only in State agencies but also among practitioners, civil society, think tanks and academia;
- ▶ **broadening** participation in WPS NAP design and implementation, including arms control and disarmament experts, survivors, and members of communities affected by different forms of armed violence; and
- ▶ **coordinating** across action plans and strategies relevant to WPS, arms control and disarmament, such as WPS and SALW NAPs, or mine action strategies.

Countering resistance and lack of resources

Apart from broader political challenges to gender equality and arms control/disarmament, resistance to the integration of the two agendas can also arise from a lack of understanding of their mutual relevance, from integration being seen as an additional implementation burden, and due to a lack of resources or prioritization.

While the above recommendations for enhancing convergence could help to increase understanding of the mutual relevance of the two agendas, a strategic harmonizing of policy instruments in both fields, including of their reporting, monitoring, and evaluation processes, could make implementation less time and resource intensive, reducing institutional resistance and strains on limited funds. Further, additional measures may be needed to reduce resistance, such as gender coaching or supporting gender champions in institutions.

Broadening the scope of WPS

While the focus of WPS is on women and girls, addressing arms proliferation and usage requires greater, but also more nuanced, engagement with men and masculinities, including working with men of different ages, societal positions, and backgrounds. Although there has been an increasing amount of work on masculinities and SALW, the interplay between gender norms and other types of weapons, and their implications for arms control and disarmament, are less studied. Across all areas, there is a need for more research in order to better understand what engagement with men and masculinities should entail in terms of impactful programming.

Furthermore, the differential impacts of armed violence, including the coercive force of the mere presence of weapons, on persons of diverse identities remains under-studied and more often than not unaddressed.



Scene at the UN headquarters in New York, 2019. Credit: UN Photo / Manuel Elías.

1. Introduction

In the quarter of a century since the passing of the first Security Council resolution on the issue, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda¹ has brought critical attention to the gendered impacts of war, violence, and insecurity, and to the need for meaningful, equal participation of women and their leadership in peace and security. One of the key tools with which to achieve the aims of the Agenda are the almost 200 WPS National Action Plans (NAPs) launched by over 110 States and territories by mid-2025, with many having developed more than one generation of these plans. Numerous WPS NAPs have also been developed at the subnational level, as well as by regional organizations.

However, while the WPS Agenda frequently refers to ‘armed conflict’ and ‘armed violence’, it has, at the global level, tended to overlook a key element that drives both: the weapons themselves. WPS NAPs are a key opportunity for remedying this missed opportunity. Better addressing this gap is essential both for meeting the potential of the WPS Agenda, as well as for arms control and disarmament measures to fully respond to the realities faced by women and girls on the ground, both in conflict- and non-conflict-affected societies. In the context of a rapidly shifting, remilitarizing and increasingly polarized global environment, this task has become even more crucial.

¹ The WPS Agenda commonly refers to the policy framework founded upon the Security Council resolutions on the issue, consisting of resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), 2493 (2019) and 2538 (2020). It is also linked to other policy frameworks and instruments, such as General Recommendation 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Within the United Nations system, UN Women has played a key role in providing support to the development and implementation of NAPs, including good practices for integrating emerging issues. The WPS Focal Points Network, for which UN Women serves as secretariat, has also dedicated some of its sessions to disarmament and arms control, with recommendations reflected in joint communiques of the Network.²

In 2020, the UNIDIR publication “Connecting the Dots - Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda” noted the absence of a systematic focus on arms, arms control, and disarmament within WPS frameworks.³ Five years on from that publication, this report explores how arms, arms control, and disarmament have been integrated into WPS frameworks, in particular NAPs, and draws on lessons learned to highlight how such integration can be done better.

The report analyses current efforts, highlights promising practices, and draws lessons from different regions and institutions that have started to bridge the divide between gender, peace, and arms control and disarmament. The report is produced in parallel with a practical Toolkit on how to integrate arms control and disarmament measures into WPS NAPs.⁴

The aim of this report is to take stock of how weapons-related issues – including small arms and light weapons (SALW), landmines, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and emerging technologies, and references to relevant legal frameworks, such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) – have been integrated into WPS NAPs.

The report presents findings from research intended to fill knowledge gaps and to contribute to the implementation of the WPS Agenda at national level, and to help enhance the integration of arms control and disarmament measures in this agenda, given how central these measures are to the four pillars of WPS – the **prevention** of all forms of violence against women and girls and violations of their rights, the **protection** of women and girls and of their rights, full and meaningful **participation** of women in all areas of peace and security, as well as post-conflict and post-crisis **relief and recovery**.

Methodology

This report draws on a literature review, a textual analysis of 197 publicly available WPS NAPs in English, either original or translation, as well as 39 in-person and online interviews with arms control and disarmament and/or WPS experts. The draft report was refined in a validation workshop organized by UNIDIR in Geneva in June 2025, which brought together arms control and disarmament experts.

² WPS Focal Points Network (2022). 4th Capital Level Meeting, Joint Communique, 18-19 May 2022, Geneva, Switzerland. https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Joint-Communique_-WPS-Focal-Points-Network-Geneva-Meeting_May-2022-1.pdf; WPS Focal Points Network (2019). Third Annual Capital-level meeting, Joint Communique, 10-11 April 2019, Windhoek, Namibia. <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/third-annual-capital-level-meeting/>

³ Myrttinen, Henri (2020). *Connecting the Dots: Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women Peace and Security Agenda*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/connecting-the-dots/>

⁴ Myrttinen, Henri, Anastaesia Mondesir, and Mariana Terreros Lozano (2025). *Toolkit: Addressing Weapons-Related Risks in Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plans*. UNIDIR, Geneva, Switzerland. <https://unidir.org/ToolkitWPS>

Using a text analysis application, we processed the collected NAPs to identify the use of arms control and disarmament-related terms (see Annex 2 for a detailed list of the keywords). These terms were organized into thematic categories including small arms and light weapons (SALW) and weapons and ammunition management (WAM),⁵ landmines/mine action, WMDs, arms control and disarmament (including diplomacy and specific treaties such as the ATT), and emerging technologies such as autonomous weapons and cybersecurity.

Some of the search terms appeared very seldomly or not at all. For instance, a reference to the First Committee of the General Assembly only appears in Switzerland's 2013 WPS NAP. Other terms did not get any search hits, such as: autonomous weapons; biological weapons; hybrid warfare,⁶ and military AI.

To identify relevant content and inform the qualitative analysis, sentences in NAPs that matched disarmament and arms control keywords were cross-referenced with terms related to **prevention and protection** – such as prevention, combat, prevent, address, protect, early warning, reduce, reduction, assist – as well as **participation-related** language, including participation, meaningful participation, consultation, inclusion, representation, decision-making, leadership, women's leadership, engagement, involve, access, equal access, voice, gender balance, civil society participation, grassroots, local actors, marginalized groups.

References to **masculinities** were also identified through the terms men, boys, masculinities, and gender norms. However, the most common occurrence of the terms men and boys in WPS NAP texts is as a part of the phrase “women, men, girls, and boys” – that phrase was ignored for analysis of the inclusion of male gender norms, unless the sentence in question specifically referred such.

The overall analysis is complemented by in-depth case studies presented in text boxes throughout the report. These, and the highlighting of States' WPS NAPs in the main text, are intended to serve as indicative good practice examples, rather than as an exhaustive listing of all arms control and disarmament-related measures contained in WPS NAPs.

Limitations

As the keyword review captures only explicit references to defined keywords, broader or indirect discussions of disarmament may not always have been captured. While the categorisation of references was applied consistently and checked by reviewers, it remains interpretive and open to alternative readings. The coding is binary: it only captures whether a NAP includes at least one relevant mention (1) or none (0), without reflecting the frequency, emphasis, or depth of coverage. Finally, the dataset does not cover all existing WPS NAPs launched by

⁵ Although WAM does not only refer to SALW stockpiles, given the contextual overlap between how these terms were used in the texts of WPS NAPs, they were analysed together to avoid duplication.

⁶ There is no single, agreed-to definition of hybrid warfare or hybrid threats. For the purposes of this report, we use these term to refer to hostile or threatening activities which cover the mixture of coercive and subversive activity, conventional and unconventional methods (i.e. diplomatic, military, economic, technological, including mis-/disinformation, attempts at socio-political influencing and cyberattacks), which can be used in a coordinated manner by state or non-state actors to achieve specific objectives while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare.

December 31, 2024, as not all of these were publicly available (see Annex 1 for a full list of the WPS NAPs reviewed).

This report is not able to capture the full scope of implementation, informal practices, or contextual nuances that may influence disarmament efforts on the ground. It also does not assess the quality, depth, or effectiveness of integration. The report does not cover informal initiatives, subnational efforts, or the broader political and social dynamics that influence arms control and disarmament work on the ground, unless these are explicitly referenced in the NAPs. It also does not assess the quality, ambition, or impact of arms control and disarmament references within each plan, nor the degree to which referenced activities have been implemented or the impact they have had, as this was beyond the scope of the study. We strongly encourage in-depth research into these topics.

In our analysis, we sought to differentiate as much as possible between a narrative inclusion of arms control or disarmament measures (e.g. mentioning WMD as a global threat in the introduction) and concrete actions specified in a NAP (e.g. a commitment to gender mainstreaming measures in mine action). However, in practice such differentiation often proved difficult due to how and where arms control and disarmament language was incorporated, often blurring the line between narrative and action-oriented language. Nonetheless, the accompanying Toolkit showcases examples of both from WPS NAPs globally.⁷

For those working within or alongside the WPS Agenda, this report provides a valuable baseline for understanding how disarmament themes are being framed at the policy level and where opportunities for further engagement or advocacy may lie. For policymakers, advocates, and researchers, it offers insights into existing gaps, emerging priorities, and opportunities for strengthening the integration of arms control and disarmament into future WPS NAP planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy.

⁷ Myrtilinen, Henri, Anastasia Mondesir, and Mariana Terreros Lozano (2025). *Toolkit: Addressing Weapons-Related Risks in Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plans*. UNIDIR, Geneva, Switzerland. <https://unidir.org/ToolkitWPS>

2. Integration of arms control and disarmament into WPS NAPs

NAPs are one of the key instruments for States to formulate, implement and track the implementation of WPS activities, including those related to disarmament and arms control. The WPS Agenda is often conceptualized as having four interconnected pillars, and many NAPs are structured based on these:

- ▶ The full and meaningful **participation** of women in decision-making processes at all levels and in all aspects of conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding;
- ▶ The **prevention** of gendered harms from occurring, including of any forms of violence against women and girls and of any threats to their rights, notably through strengthened justice and accountability mechanisms, as well as the long-term prevention of conflict;
- ▶ The **protection** of women and girls from all forms of violence and of their rights; and
- ▶ Ensuring that the voices, needs, and concerns of women and girls are considered in post-conflict or post-disaster **relief and recovery**.

Arms control and disarmament measures are relevant to all of the above pillars. Key examples include:

- ▶ Increasing the participation of women in disarmament and arms control diplomacy;
- ▶ Enacting arms control measures to reduce armed violence in communities;
- ▶ Ensuring better protection for women by disqualifying convicted perpetrators of domestic or intimate partner violence from gun ownership;
- ▶ Ensuring the integration of gender perspectives into post-conflict mine action, among other actions.

This section offers an analysis of the integration of arms control- and disarmament-related measures in WPS NAPs. It starts by presenting overall trends, followed by an analysis of arms control and disarmament themes, and then by a regional analysis. Finally, the analysis focuses on the cross-cutting issues of women's participation in arms control and disarmament and funding for work in this sector.

2.1. Overall trends

Many of the first generation WPS NAPs, especially those of donor States, were 'externally' oriented, i.e. focused on what the State was doing in the global arena to advance WPS, for example through diplomacy, participation in peacekeeping or overseas development assistance. Non-donor State WPS NAPs have historically been more 'internally' focused on

activities in country. At present, an increasing number of NAPs combine both internal and external elements, including in the case of many donor States.⁸

External measures have, for example, included donor government support for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, or mine action activities in conflict-affected societies. Internal NAP measures have, for example, included SALW control measures or mine action on the territory of the given State. Measures that address both internal and external goals include fostering women's participation in arms control and disarmament processes and the improved implementation of the gender-relevant provisions of the ATT. The focus on internal measures has also meant the inclusion of more national and subnational actors into the work on WPS, such as national police, border guards, or local civil society.

A further important shift noted by several interviewees, partly reflected in the increased 'internal' orientation of NAPs, was a move away from viewing the WPS Agenda as primarily pertaining to conflict-affected situations to understanding its applicability in peacetime as well, be it in terms of preventing armed conflict and violence or addressing risks and threats faced by women and girls in peacetime.

Increasingly, NAPs reflect transnational security challenges, including for example arms trafficking or technology-facilitated gender-based violence. The shift towards seeing NAPs as applicable to peacetime underscores the importance of the prevention pillar, in which arms control and disarmament measures can and should take a central role.

The inclusion of transnational threats also highlights the importance of regional cooperation and is, in part, reflected in WPS regional action plans, some of which explicitly reference arms control and disarmament measures. This trend highlights the need to coordinate WPS NAPs with other policy instruments too, such as NAPs on gender-based violence prevention and SALW control, or regional arms control and disarmament plans, road maps, and strategies.

In terms of arms control and disarmament issues mentioned in WPS NAPs, the overall trend has been one of an initial high percentage of WPS NAPs including at least one reference in the 2005–2009 period, to a smaller percentage in 2010–2014 and 2015–2019. In the most recent period (2020–2024), the overall number of NAPs decreased, but the share that addresses arms control and disarmament themes has increased (see Figure 1). Thus, while progress has not been linear, and the number of WPS NAPs launched decreased in the most recent period, there has been a relative, if small, increase in terms of including arms control and disarmament in these plans.

⁸ For a further discussion, see for example Myrtilinen, Henri, Laura J. Shepherd, and Hannah Wright (2020). *Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region*. OSCE/LSE WPS Centre. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/4/444577.pdf>

FIGURE 1.
Number of WPS NAPS that include at least one reference to arms control and disarmament, by time period

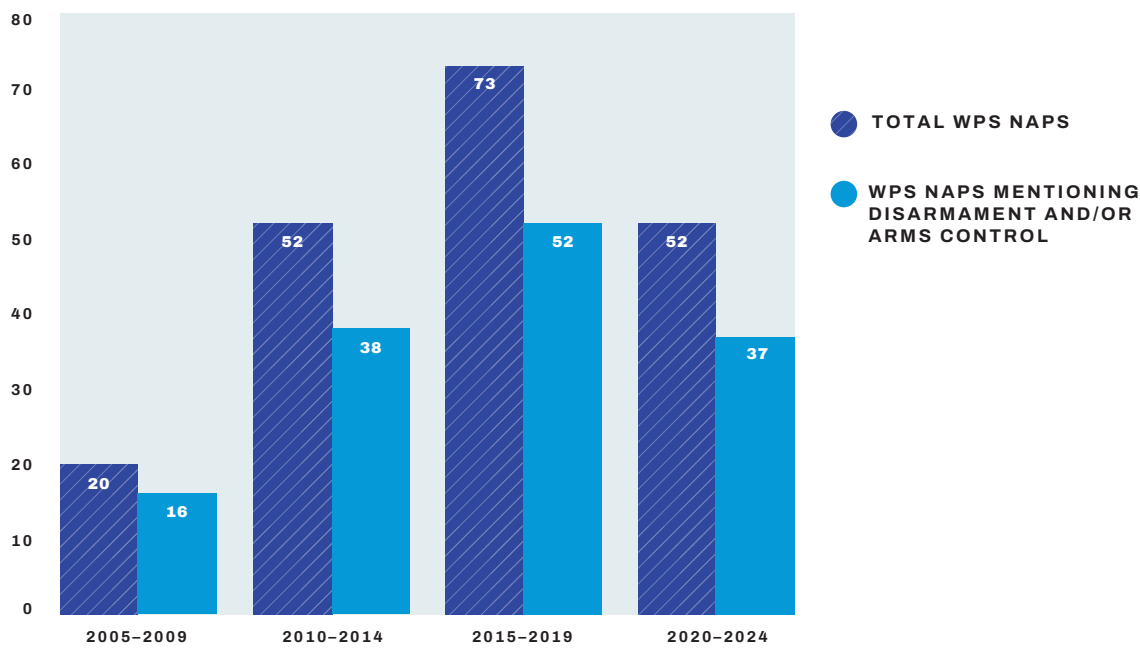
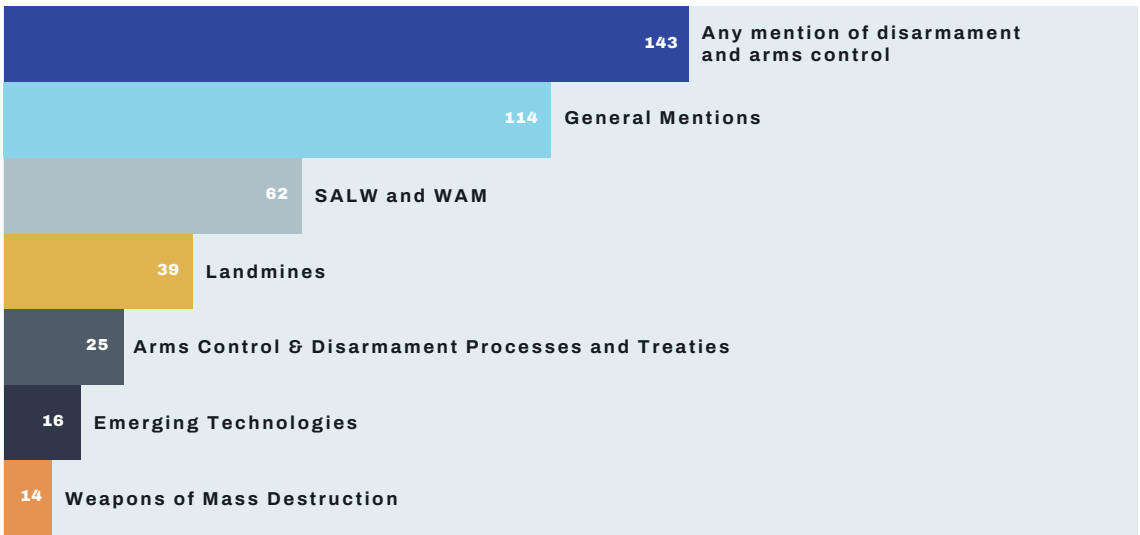


FIGURE 2.
Number of WPS NAPS referencing arms control and disarmament by relevant categories (n=197)



Among the selected issues, SALW is the most common, followed by landmines, arms control and disarmament processes, WMD, and emerging technologies (see Figure 2). The steady attention to SALW (referenced by 31 per cent of the analysed NAPS from 2020–2024) highlights a sustained recognition of their gendered impacts.⁹ The decline in landmine references may suggest a reduction in their perceived relevance as a security issue over the years. However, the increase in the use of mines in armed conflicts such as in Myanmar and Ukraine may come to affect this, perhaps leading to a growing interest and need to include mine action and support to survivors in future WPS NAPS.

The gradual rise in attention to WMD reflects growing awareness of their potential catastrophic impacts on women and communities, emphasizing the intersection of disarmament and gender, especially with respect to nuclear weapons. In the WMD category, references to nuclear weapons and nuclear diplomacy far outnumber references to chemical weapons and biological weapons, which are mentioned only rarely.

Emerging technologies and the gendered dimensions of cybersecurity are increasingly being included in WPS NAPS, though given the wide range of cybersecurity issues, not all of these strictly fall under arms control and disarmament policy, such as gendered mis- and disinformation.¹⁰ Lethal autonomous weapons systems, military artificial intelligence and drones, despite their increased proliferation and gendered risks (e.g. through algorithmic biases) have however notably not been incorporated into WPS NAPS.¹¹

2.2. Analysis by arms control and disarmament themes

Small arms and light weapons

The predominance of SALW in WPS NAPS as compared to other weapons categories is not surprising, as it is the category where the connection to gender is perhaps the most tangible, especially when it comes to firearms. SALW are also the most accessible and widely used weapons, and their widespread presence without adequate controls can fuel cycles of insecurity, exacerbate violence, and undermine efforts to prevent conflict and build peace.

⁹ See for example LeBrun, Emile (2019). *Gender-responsive Small Arms Control: A Practical Guide*. Small Arms Survey. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/resource/gender-responsive-small-arms-control-practical-guide>; Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (2022). “Men and Masculinities in Gender Responsive Small Arms Control”. https://gensac.network/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Men-and-Masculinities_final.pdf; Dönges, Hannah and Aaron Karp (2014). *Women and Gun Ownership*. Research Note No. 45. Small Arms Survey; Farr, Vanessa, Albrecht Schnabel and Henri Myrtilinen (2009). *Sexed Pistols: The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*. United Nations University Press, <https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:2537/ebrary9789280811759.pdf>; and Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) (2018). “Women, Men and the Gendered Nature of Small Arms and Light Weapons”. UNODA. <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/MOSAIC-06.10-2017EV1.0.pdf>

¹⁰ For example, while gendered mis- and disinformation is being used as a tool of hybrid warfare and can lead to real-life armed violence, they are not disarmament or arms control issues in the conventional sense.

¹¹ On gender and LAWS, see for example Mohan, Shimona and Dongyoun Cho (2024). “Factsheet: Gender and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems”. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/gender-and-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems/>; and Farrés Jiménez, Andrea (2022). “Gendering the Legal Review of New Means and Methods of Warfare”. Just Security. <https://www.justsecurity.org/82745/gendering-the-legal-review-of-new-means-and-methods-of-warfare/>

As has been amply demonstrated in numerous studies, the ownership, use and abuse, procurement, transfer, trade, transport, management, disposal, and impacts of civilian and military SALW are all highly gendered.¹² While most weapons systems are predominantly operated by men, compared to other weapons systems, the gendered link between SALW and masculinities is far more socially and culturally entrenched and visible.¹³ The gendered impacts of SALW have also been researched more in past years, including in a landmark study on the role of these weapons in facilitating conflict-related sexual violence.¹⁴

An important dynamic in terms of linking WPS perspectives and SALW-related arms control and disarmament measures is the increasing mutual alignment of these agendas – i.e. integration of SALW in WPS work and integration of gender perspectives in SALW work. At the 2024 Fourth Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms, national statements by participating States included more language than at the previous Review Conference on recognizing the role of illicit firearms in gender-based violence, on survivor-centric approaches, and on taking into account and engaging with the gender-differential impacts of illicit SALW by mainstreaming gender into SALW control and disarmament.¹⁵

While numerous WPS NAPs mention SALW in the narrative sections as security threats, action-oriented mentions include changes to SALW legislation and regulation to incorporate gender perspectives such as in **Ghana (2012)**, **Lebanon (2019)**, and **the Philippines (2009)**; awareness-raising such as in **Chad (2023)**; improving gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis, such as in **Germany (2021)**, **Switzerland (2018)**, and **United Kingdom (2023)**; and increased women's participation in SALW collection such as in **Mali (2019)** and **Sudan (2020)**.

Notably, despite having the highest per capita levels of firearms violence, only few States in the Latin America and the Caribbean region explicitly address SALW in their WPS NAPs, and mostly in conjunction with illicit trafficking, such as in **Argentina (2022)** and **Mexico (2021)**.¹⁶ A notable exception is **Trinidad and Tobago (2025)**, with a strong focus on countering firearms violence, but due to its publication date, it fell outside of the scope of the quantitative analysis.

¹² See for example LeBrun, Emile (2019). *Gender-responsive Small Arms Control: A Practical Guide*. Small Arms Survey. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/resource/gender-responsive-small-arms-control-practical-guide>

¹³ See Baird, Adam (2025). "No man's land? Focusing on men to reduce global armed violence", UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/no-mans-land-focusing-on-men-to-reduce-global-armed-violence/>; and GENSAC (2022). "Men and Masculinities in Gender Responsive Small Arms Control". https://gensac.network/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Men-and-Masculinities_final.pdf

¹⁴ Salama, Hana (2023). Addressing weapons in conflict related sexual violence: the arms control and disarmament toolbox", Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. https://unidir.org/files/2023-06/UNIDIR_Addressing_Weapons_in_Conflict_related_Sexual_Violence.pdf

¹⁵ IANSA (2024). "Gender Inclusion in the Third and Fourth Review Conferences of the UN Programme Review Conferences of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons". <https://iansa.org/gender-inclusion-in-the-third-and-fourth-review-conferences-of-the-un-programme-of-action-on-small-arms-and-light-weapons-december-2024/>

¹⁶ Both the Caribbean and the Central America have adopted regional firearms roadmaps to strengthen arms control frameworks and foster regional cooperation. These roadmaps are structured around various thematic axes aimed at strengthening arms control. The Central America roadmap even includes one axis specifically on violence prevention. However, neither roadmap includes references to gender or to WPS.

Arms Trade Treaty

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) deserves special mention in this discussion, given its inclusion of gender-based violence criteria under article 7(4) when assessing arms exports. Over a dozen WPS NAPs reference the ATT, either in the narrative section or as concrete actions (see the accompanying Toolkit for examples¹⁷), but notably it is mostly arms exporting States rather than arms importing States which mention it.¹⁸

Tracking the degree to which article 7(4) criteria have been used in deciding on export licences is difficult due to the confidential nature of arms export licensing.¹⁹ Nevertheless, in a limited survey conducted by Control Arms, several States Parties indicated that they consider GBV criteria in their risk assessments and one State Party confirmed having denied transfers based on gender considerations.²⁰

Efforts to enhance States Parties' capacities to better implement the provisions of the ATT have included guidance and training from the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation, United Nations agencies, as well as civil society actors, with the proactive support of States Parties, such as Latvia.²¹ At the Fifth Conference of States Parties of the ATT in 2019, States Parties adopted decisions on gender-balanced representation in ATT-related decision-making, on the gendered impact of armed violence in the context of the ATT, and on the implementation of risk assessments related to gender-based violence.²² Notably, a working paper was presented by Mexico, Spain, and the Small Arms Survey to the Ninth Conference of States Parties in 2023 on mitigating the impacts of weapons on persons on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristic.²³

Examples of States referencing the ATT, especially article 7(4), in their WPS NAPs include Argentina (2022), Denmark (2014), Finland (2018), Ireland (2019), and Latvia (2020), with

¹⁷ Myrtilinen, Henri, Anastasia Mondesir, and Mariana Terreros Lozano (2025). *Toolkit: Addressing Weapons-Related Risks in Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plans*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/ToolkitWPS>

¹⁸ Watson, Callum (2024). *Meaningful Partners – Opportunities for Collaboration between Women, Peace and Security, and Small Arms Control at the National Level*, Geneva: Small Arms Survey, p. 10. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-BP-2024-WPS-EN.pdf>

¹⁹ See for example Fabre, Anne-Séverine et al. (2022). "At Whose Risk? Understanding States Parties' Implementation of Arms Trade Treaty Gender-based Violence Provisions". Small Arms Survey. <https://www.smallarms-survey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-ATT-GBV-BP.pdf>

²⁰ Loose, Hine-Wai and Solmirano, Carina (2024). *Monitoring progress on the Implementation of Gender and Gender-based Violence Considerations Adopted by the Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty*, Geneva, Control Arms, p. 9. <https://controlarms.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ENG-Gender-Paper-Final-Abr-2024.pdf>

²¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia (2024). "Latvia is organising a seminar at the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Geneva," 21 August, 2024. <https://www2.mfa.gov.lv/en/geneva/news/71438-latvia-is-organising-a-seminar-at-the-conference-of-states-parties-to-the-arms-trade-treaty-in-geneva>

²² Control Arms (2022). ATT Gender Action Plan Project. <https://controlarms.org/blog/att-gender-action-plan-project/>

²³ "Mitigating the risk of armed violence against people on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) through the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)". Working Paper Presented by Mexico, Spain and the Small Arms Survey to the Ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/Mexico%20Spain%20Small%20Arms%20Survey%20ATT%20CSP9%20SOGIESC%20Working%20Paper/Mexico%20Spain%20Small%20Arms%20Survey%20ATT%20CSP9%20SOGIESC%20Working%20Paper.pdf>

Ireland including specific indicators and Latvia referencing its prior efforts in strengthening the implementation of the treaty in their NAPs.

Mines, cluster munitions, and explosive remnants of war

Landmines are the second most common weapons-related category mentioned in WPS NAPs, and as mine action often also includes addressing cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war, these have been included here as well.

In terms of WPS NAPs, the ones that mention mine action or cluster munitions tend to either refer to these in terms of promoting key policy frameworks (e.g. the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention or the Convention on Cluster Munitions), or supporting and implementing mine action as a donor or as an affected country, as for example in the cases of **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010, 2013, 2017)**, **Sudan (2020)**, and **Viet Nam (2024)**.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010, 2013, 2017)**, mine risk education is a key focus, especially for vulnerable populations such as children, farmers, and mountaineers. However, the State's recovery approach has gone beyond the physical removal of landmines and unexploded ordnance. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** adopted a more inclusive strategy, addressing the mental well-being of affected populations – particularly women and children, who face disproportionate risks.

In terms of the integration of gender perspectives into the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, both have in recent years been supplemented with concrete action plans that are exemplary in the degree to which they integrate gender, including in terms of language on survivor-centric approaches.²⁴ Key provisions in these action plans include an alignment with the WPS Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, tracking the number both of women and of survivor organizations participating in official meetings, and “integrat[ing] and mainstreaming consideration for gender, age, and disability and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities”²⁵ in the design, implementation and reporting of mine action/cluster munitions work.

References to mine action, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war in WPS NAPs include acceding to or implementing the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention or the Convention on Cluster Munitions (**Belgium 2013**, **Lebanon 2019**, and **Switzerland 2011**), increasing women's participation in mine action (**Belgium 2009** and **Ireland 2011**), increasing or improving women's engagement in mine risk education (for example **Georgia 2011**, **Sudan 2020**, and **Ukraine 2020**), improving the integration of gender perspectives into relevant databases such as in **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017)** and **Croatia (2019)**, and funding for gender-responsive humanitarian mine action (**Finland 2023**).

²⁴ For a brief overview of gender in mine action, see UNIDIR and GICHD (2024). “How Do Gender and Diversity Relate to Mine Action?”. <https://unidir.org/publication/how-do-gender-and-diversity-relate-to-mine-action/>

²⁵ Draft Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan 2025-2029 - Submitted by the President of the Fifth Review Conference, APLC/CONF/2024/WP.23/Rev.1, 25-29 November, 2024. https://www.apminebanconvention.org/fileadmin/_APMBC-DOCUMENTS/Meetings/2024/5RC-Draft-Siem-Reap-Angkor-Action-Plan-2025-2029-revised-en.pdf, p. 2

Weapons of Mass Destruction

While arms control and disarmament work on SALW, and, to a lesser degree, mine action and cluster munitions have been integrated to a degree within the WPS Agenda, a 2024 SIPRI essay contends that “the synergies between the WPS agenda and the governance of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) remain largely underexplored, let alone utilized.”²⁶

Although the gendered dimensions of WMD have been well-documented, references to women tend to be limited to enhancing the full and equal participation of women in WMD arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation forums.²⁷ An exception in this regard is the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which explicitly recognises the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapon use on women and girls and includes a provision for gender-sensitive victim assistance.²⁸

While only few WPS NAPs reference WMD, there has been a slight increase in references to WMDs in recent NAPs. When WMD are mentioned, nuclear weapons are by far the most referenced, chemical weapons come up occasionally.²⁹

Canada (2023), Ireland (2019), and the Philippines (2009) approach WMD not just as security threats, but as humanitarian crises. Their policies emphasize the devastating impact these weapons have on civilians, and the particular risks for women, children, and marginalized communities.

Canada (2023) frames these weapons as part of broader security challenges, linking them to issues such as climate security and cyber threats. It highlights the urgent need to address the humanitarian consequences of their use.

The **Philippines**, in its first WPS NAP (2009), focused on the indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons, which affect non-combatants and cause widespread suffering, but WMD were not

²⁶ Wan, Wilfred (2024). Synergies between women, peace and security and the governance of WMD. SIPRI. <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/essay/2024/synergies-between-women-peace-and-security-and-governance-wmd>

²⁷ On the gendered impacts of WMD, see Dalaqua, Renata H. ed. (2024). From the Margins to the Mainstream: Advancing Intersectional Gender Analysis of Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Geneva, Switzerland: UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/from-the-margins-to-the-mainstream-advancing-intersectional-gender-analysis-of-nuclear-non-proliferation-and-disarmament/>; Dalaqua, Renata H. et al., (2019). Missing Links: Understanding Sex- and Gender-Related Impacts of Chemical and Biological Weapons, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). <https://unidir.org/publication/missing-links-understanding-sex-and-gender-related-impacts-chemical-and-biological>; Nichols, Amanda M. and Mary Olson (2024). ‘Gender and Ionizing Radiation: Towards a New Research Agenda Addressing Disproportionate Harm’, Geneva: UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/gender-and-ionizing-radiation-towards-a-new-research-agenda-addressing-disproportionate-harm/>; UNIDIR and IGCDIG (2023). Factsheet: Gender and Biological Weapons. https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/IGC_DIG_Factsheet_Gender-and-Biological-Weapons.pdf; and UNIDIR (2023). Factsheet: Gender and Chemical Weapons. <https://unidir.org/publication/factsheet-gender-and-chemical-weapons/>

²⁸ Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. <https://docs.un.org/en/A/CONF.229/2017/8>

²⁹ For example, Canada (2023) mentions biological and chemical weapons as part of the narrative section on threats, and the Philippines (2009) similarly mentions chemical weapons. Jordan (2017) mentions chemical weapons under a broader section on protection of women from different risks, and Serbia (2010) mentions both chemical and biological weapons under a broader section on women’s participation.



Women first responders participate in chemical emergency training cycle organised by OPCW and Switzerland, 2024. Credit: OPCW.

mentioned in subsequent NAPs. **Ireland (2019)** emphasizes the gendered impact of nuclear weapons, specifically noting how women and girls are disproportionately affected by ionizing radiation and long-term health consequences from exposure.

While WPS NAPs have not comprehensively addressed the gendered dimensions of WMD, gender perspectives have been increasingly raised in WMD-related arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation diplomacy (see also Box 1). A recent example of this integration is the 2025 working paper on WPS submitted to the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was co-sponsored by 24 States Parties.³⁰ At the Fifth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2023, Canada together with 59 State Party sponsors introduced a paper on gender equality and diversity in the context of the Convention, which noted the differential gendered impacts of the use of chemical weapons, highlighted the benefits of diversity in decision-making, and also noted the continued under-representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.³¹

³⁰ Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT /CONF.2026/PC.III/WP.37, 26 April 2025. <https://undocs.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.III/WP.37>

³¹ Gender Equality, Diversity, and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Paper For the Fifth Review Conference. <https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023/05/combinepdf.pdf>

BOX 1.

Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy and the TPNW

Aligned with its feminist foreign policy³² that was adopted in January 2020, and its commitment to both national and international peace and security priorities, Mexico launched a National Action Plan in 2021 to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.³³ The plan establishes 10 strategic objectives, 16 lines of action, and 23 key indicators to systematically monitor and evaluate its progress, aiming for meaningful impact and accountability. The implementation of the NAP is based on inter-institutional coordination among key government agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is the lead ministry for the NAP, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of the Navy, the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection, and the National Women's Institute.

Since the publication of the NAP in 2021, the government has issued two monitoring and evaluation reports documenting Mexico's efforts and progress in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control in multilateral forums. In both 2022 and 2023, Mexico submitted 15 initiatives each year that included references to gender equality, the empowerment of women, and the importance of their substantive participation.

While the NAP does not explicitly mention WMD, the NAP does consistently reference disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control measures relevant to such weapons. Under Mexico's WPS NAP's participation pillar, the plan promotes the active and substantive participation of women in multilateral forums on international peace and security, including disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation. The initiative not only encourages greater female representation in those spaces but also seeks to advance proposals and initiatives on gender equality and women's empowerment within other relevant United Nations frameworks.

The WPS NAP thus provides Mexico's diplomatic missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva with a framework for action. An example of this is Mexico's recent role as the Gender Focal Point for the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) – one of the first international treaties to explicitly acknowledge the gender-differentiated consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

As the Gender Focal Point, Mexico emphasized the importance of full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in nuclear disarmament discussions and advocated for greater recognition of the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, to enhance the understanding of these issues among treaty delegations, the Mexican mission organized two expert-led meetings, fostering deeper engagement on the topic.³⁴

³² Philipson García, Daniela, Dinorah Arceta and Ana Velasco (2023). Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy - A Brief Evaluation. Mexico City: Internacional Feminista. <https://www.women.nl/kb-bestanden/1681218249.pdf>

³³ Government of Mexico. (2021). Plan Nacional de Acción de México para el seguimiento de la Resolución 1325 del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU sobre Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres (Inmujeres).

³⁴ Government of Mexico. (2025). Report of the gender focal point (Mexico). Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 3-7 March 2025, TPNW/MSP/2025/5. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4077293?v=pdf>



Emerging technologies

The past five years have seen a significant increase in the use, proliferation and technological development of emerging dual-use technologies, such as cyber attacks, autonomous weapons, uncrewed aerial vehicles and other drones, and artificial intelligence. However, not all of these threats are addressed in NAPs. Thus far, cybersecurity-related issues are far more likely to be mentioned in NAPs than other issues related to emerging technologies. Lethal autonomous weapons systems are currently not mentioned in any WPS NAPs, while artificial intelligence is only mentioned by **Canada (2023)** and the **Philippines (2023)**.³⁵

In the early years of the WPS Agenda, mentions of terms related to emerging technologies were rare. Throughout the 2015–2020 period, the inclusion of cybersecurity as a domain of warfare remained minimal, with only two plans, from **Ireland (2019)** and **Namibia (2019)**, explicitly acknowledging its relevance. The issue gained prominence in 2020–2024; of the total 17 NAPs which mention cybersecurity or hybrid threats, 8 of these came out after 2023.

NAPs of 14 States refer to cybersecurity threats not merely in terms of digital harm or online violence, but as means of conflict – such as the use of cyber tools for targeting infrastructure or disrupting public information environments. This reflects a growing understanding that cybersecurity is not only a technical issue but a critical component of national and international peace and security frameworks.

³⁵ Canada (2023) references the threat of biases by artificial intelligence and machine learning. Artificial intelligence is mentioned in the Philippines NAP (2023) in conjunction with digital peacebuilding and cybersecurity. It is also mentioned in the subnational Bangsamoro Regional Action Plan on WPS (2023).

Notably, States directly affected or concerned by hybrid warfare – such as **Armenia (2019)**, **Estonia (2020)**, and **Ukraine (2020)** – are among the more proactive in naming cybersecurity as a strategic concern. These members of the Eastern European regional group, often on the frontline of geopolitical tensions, have prioritized cyber resilience in their NAPs, linking it to national defence and crisis preparedness.

Recent NAPs – such as by **Canada (2023)**, the **United Kingdom (2023)**, and the **United States of America (2023)** – explicitly address gendered online violence, including for example the online harassment and targeting of women peacebuilders, activists, and political leaders. These mentions reflect an important step forward in recognizing digital harms as threats to women's safety and participation.

Timor-Leste (2024), meanwhile, addresses the risks that technology-facilitated gender-based violence and gendered mis-/disinformation pose for women and girls, but also the gendered risks of online spaces being used to facilitate human trafficking.³⁶

While the gendered risks relating to emerging technologies are increasingly noted in WPS NAPs, some of these technologies may also provide new tools for achieving WPS goals. Several NAPs highlight how digital tools can empower women, enhance civic engagement, and support peacebuilding efforts. For example, the NAPs of **Finland (2023)** and the **United States (2023)** note how technologies can facilitate early warning systems, improve access to information, and help document evidence of atrocities. **Estonia (2015)** emphasizes the role of information and communications technology and education in empowering women, while **Spain (2017)** calls for reinforcing new technologies as tools to promote women's participation in decision-making related to conflict prevention and resolution.

2.3. Trends in UN Regional Groups

In this section, we analyse the integration of arms control and disarmament-related issues into WPS NAPs over time, broken down by the five UN regional groups:³⁷

- ▶ African Group
- ▶ Asia-Pacific Group³⁸
- ▶ Eastern European Group³⁹
- ▶ Latin American and Caribbean Group
- ▶ Western Europe and Others Group⁴⁰

³⁶ Government of Timor-Leste (2024). National Action Plan: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) On Women, Peace and Security (2024–2028). https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/tl-c636-vi-final-nap1325-020224_english-s.pdf

³⁷ See <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups>

³⁸ For the purposes of this analysis, this includes Palestine.

³⁹ For the purposes of this analysis, this includes Kosovo, and all references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

⁴⁰ While the USA is not a member of any regional group, it attends meetings of the Group of Western European and other States as an observer and is considered to be a member of this group.

FIGURE 3.

Arms control and disarmament themes in WPS NAPs by UN Regional Group

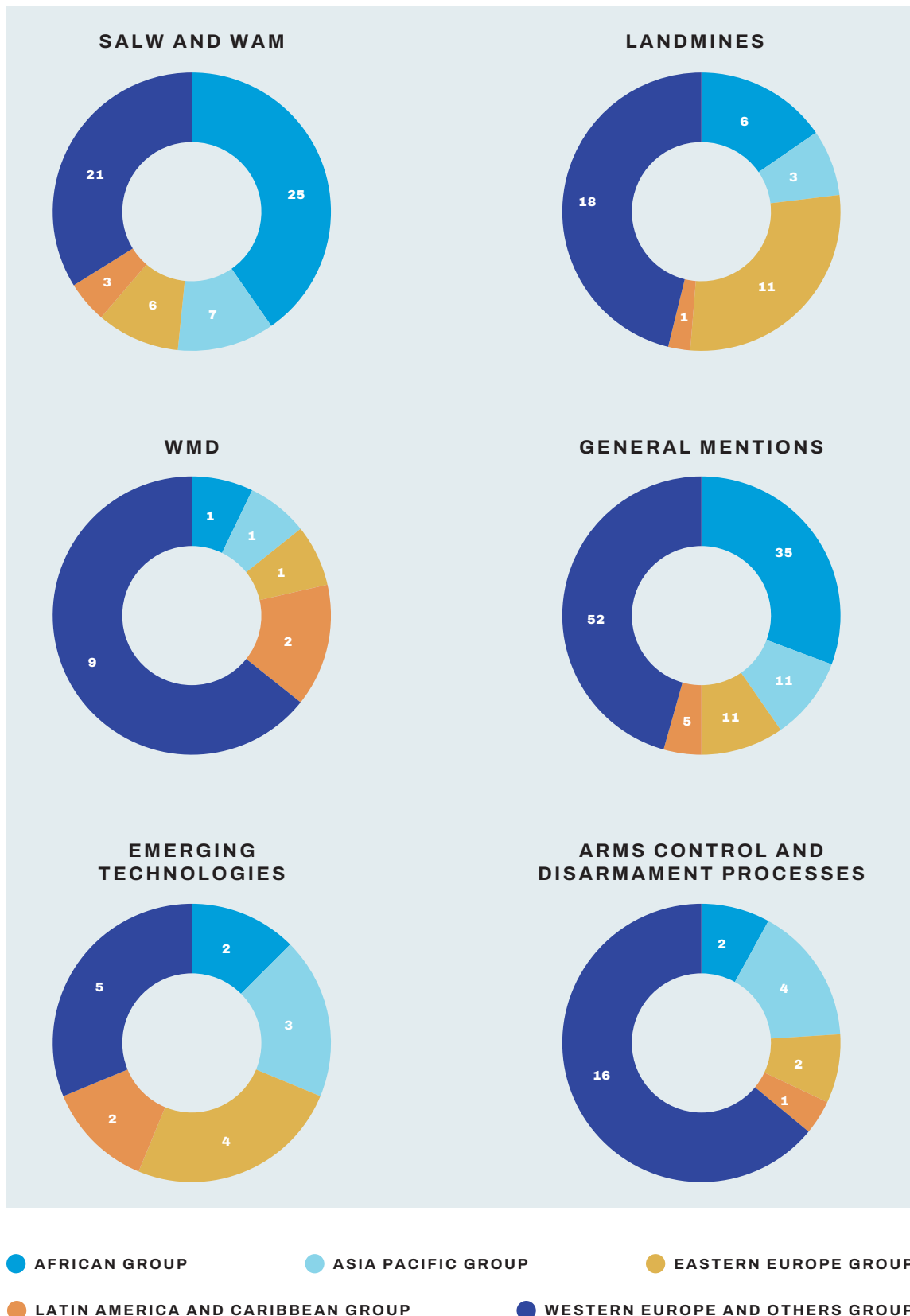


TABLE 1.

Number of WPS NAPs that include arms control and disarmament, by UN Regional Group

SALW AND WAM	LANDMINES	WMD	ACD* PROCESSES	EMERGING TECH	GENERAL MENTIONS
NAPs from African Group (n= 52)					
25	6	1	2	2	35
NAPs from Asia Pacific Group (n= 30)					
7	3	1	4	3	11
NAPs from Eastern Europe Group (n= 34)					
6	11	1	2	4	11
NAPs from Latin America and Caribbean Group (n= 11)					
3	1	2	1	2	5
NAPs from Western Europe and Others Group (n= 70)					
21	18	9	16	5	52

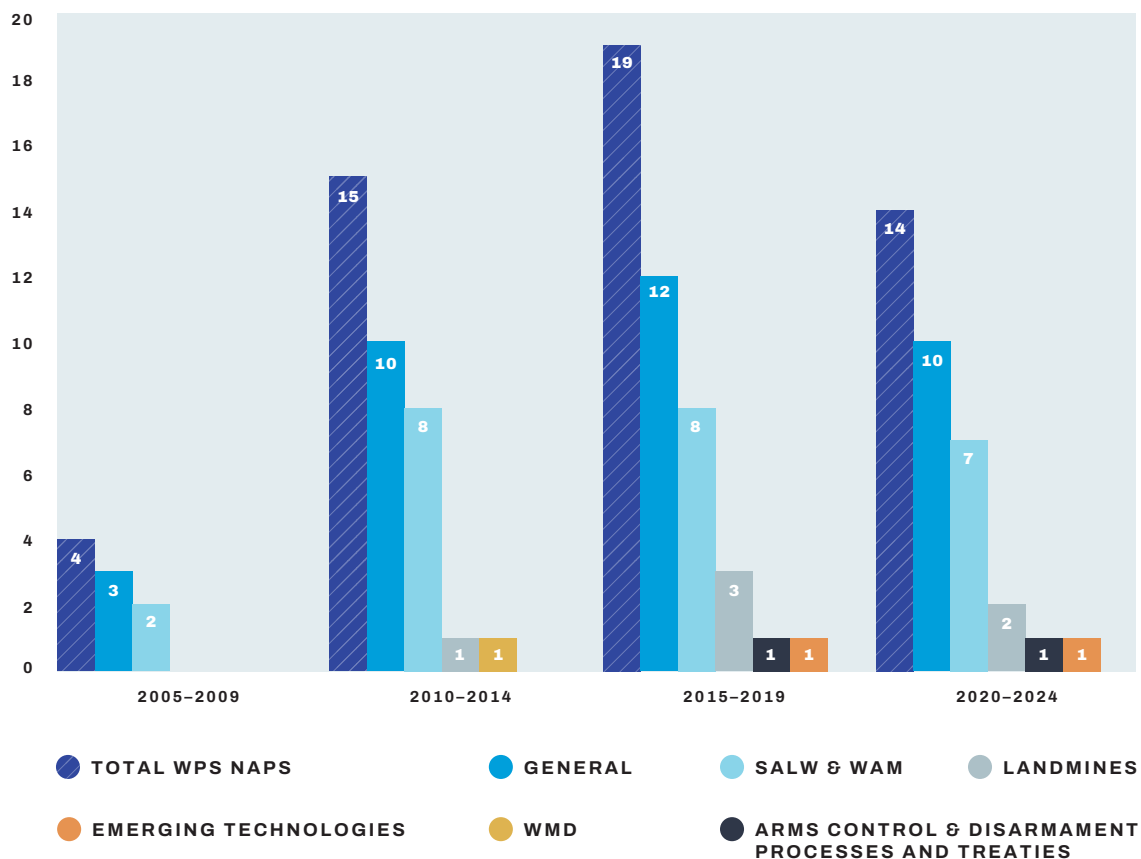
* ACD = Arms control and disarmament



African group

FIGURE 4.

African Group: Number of WPS NAPs that include arms control and disarmament issues by category and time period



Between 2008 and 2024, African States' WPS NAPs show a clear but changing focus on disarmament. This change happens in three stages. From 2008 to 2010, the focus was mostly on SALW in recovery from conflict, like in the NAPs of **Côte d'Ivoire (2008)**, **Liberia (2009)**, and **Uganda (2008)**.

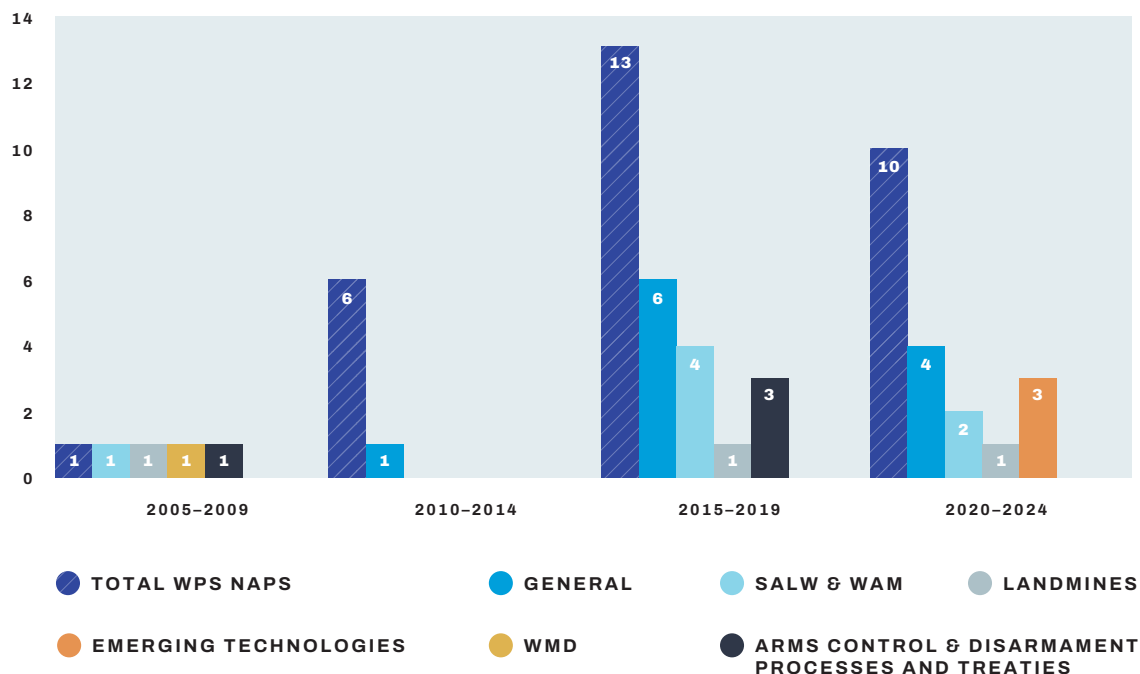
The 2011–2014 phase saw a thematic widening, with more frequent inclusion of SALW and, sporadically, broader disarmament and arms control references. Notably, **Senegal (2011)** addresses SALW through civil society initiatives, such as the *Mouvement contre les armes légères en Afrique de l'Ouest (MALAO)*, tackling landmine contamination in regions such as Casamance, and promoting gender-sensitive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration through measures like data collection on ex-combatant women.

Between 2015 and 2019, disarmament and arms control gained more traction and the scope of engagement expanded. WPS NAPs from **Kenya (2016)**, **Nigeria (2017)**, and **South Sudan (2015)** included structured references to disarmament, arms control, weapons and ammunition management (WAM), and SALW, combining concrete actions – such as women's participation, justice and accountability measures, and weapons regulation – with analysis of how arms proliferation drives local conflicts. Some States – **Senegal (2020)**, **South Africa (2020)**, and **Zimbabwe (2023)** – have sustained or deepened prior engagement from their previous WPS NAPs.

Asia-Pacific Group

FIGURE 5.

Asia-Pacific Group: Number of WPS NAPs that include arms control and disarmament issues by category and time period



Our analysis showed an uneven integration of weapon-related issues across Asia-Pacific WPS NAPs over the four examined periods. The **Philippines (2009, 2017, 2023)** and **Japan (2015, 2019)** stand out as consistent actors, actively addressing multiple arms control themes in their plans. **Afghanistan (2015)**, **Lebanon (2019)**, and **Solomon Islands (2017)**, which have only had one WPS NAP each, included references to some arms control and disarmament issues, reflecting past legacies or current impacts of armed conflict at the time of the NAPs' drafting. In contrast, some States – e.g. **Iraq (2014, 2020)**, **Kyrgyzstan (2013, 2018)**, **Nepal (2011, 2022)**, and the **Republic of Korea (2014, 2018, 2021)** – show minimal or no reference to weapon-related themes across their NAPs.

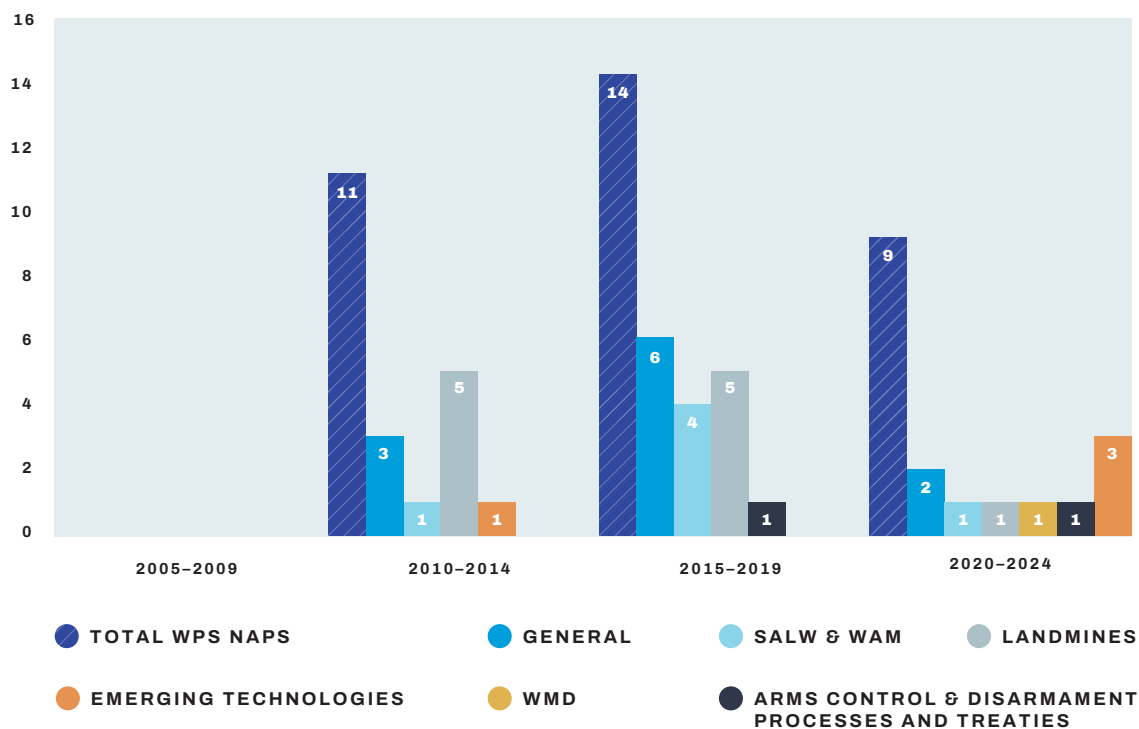
A notable trend is the higher level of thematic integration among South-East Asian States. For example, **Indonesia (2014)**, the **Philippines (2009, 2017, 2023)**, and **Timor-Leste (2024)** have foregrounded arms control and disarmament issues in their plans. In addition, although not included in this above analysis as it is a regional, rather than a national plan, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security of 2022 has a strong cybersecurity focus and also references mine action.⁴¹

⁴¹ ASEAN (2022). ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security. <https://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/32-ASEAN-Regional-Plan-of-Action-on-Women-Peace-and-Security.pdf>

Eastern Europe Group

FIGURE 6.

Eastern Europe Group: Number of WPS NAPs that include arms control and disarmament issues by category and time period



Over the period from 2010 to 2024, Eastern European States have demonstrated gradual yet uneven progress in how weapon-related issues are addressed within their NAPs. In the initial phase, spanning from 2010 to 2014, the focus was predominantly on immediate and tangible concerns arising from past conflicts (e.g. explosive remnants of war and the proliferation of firearms). **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010, 2013)**, **Croatia (2011)**, and **Serbia (2010)** placed significant emphasis on mine action. Meanwhile, topics such as WMD, or arms control and disarmament diplomacy, received limited attention, as the priority remained to address direct security threats impacting civilian safety.

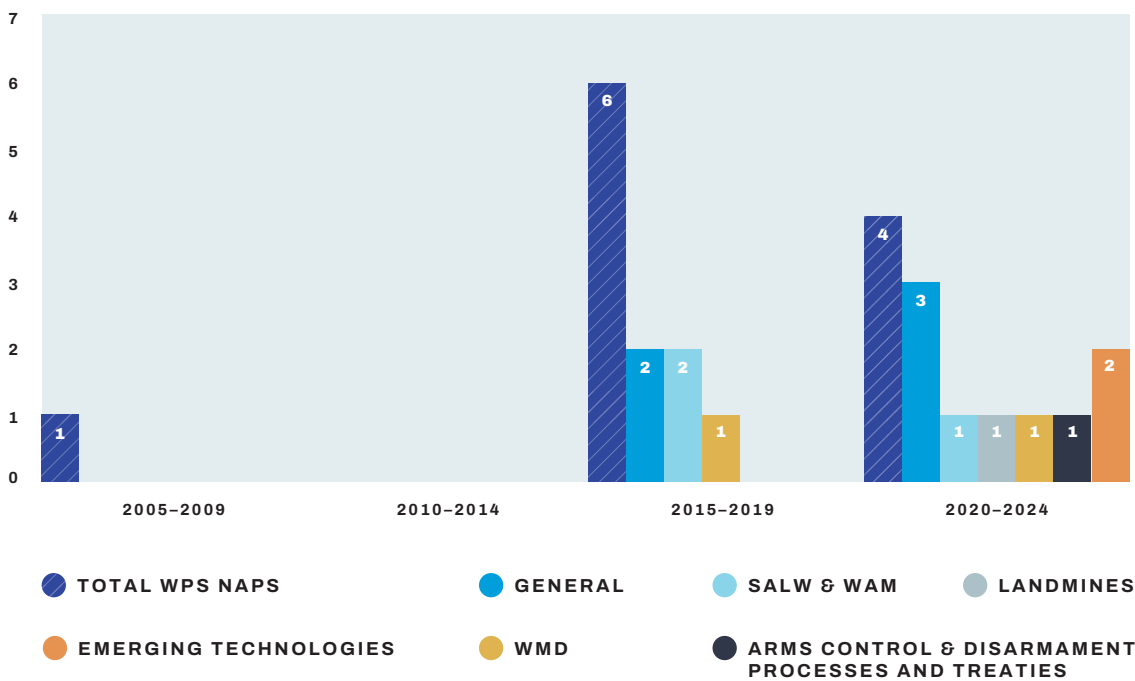
Moving into the 2015 to 2020 period, there is evidence of a cautious broadening in approach. While SALW and landmines continued to be critical elements for States with ongoing or recent security challenges, several States began to incorporate broader elements into their NAPs. For instance, the **Czech Republic (2017)**, **Latvia (2020)** and **Poland (2018)** introduced components relating to arms control and disarmament diplomacy, including the ATT. However, integration of WMD remained limited.

States affected by past conflicts or directly affected by war, such as **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017)** and **Ukraine (2016, 2020)**, have tended to maintain their focus on SALW and/or landmines, underscoring the enduring nature of these challenges.

Despite the growing global emphasis on the potential security risks of emerging technologies, this category is less prominent in Eastern European NAPs. However, the issue appears to have gained traction from 2020 onward, with **Armenia (2022)**, **Estonia (2020)**, and **Ukraine (2020)** indicating a shift towards greater inclusion of emerging technologies, though a significant policy gap remains in addressing contemporary threats such as cyber warfare and autonomous weapons.

Latin American and Caribbean Group

FIGURE 7.
Latin American and Caribbean Group: Number of WPS NAPs that include arms control and disarmament issues by category and time period



Among States in the Latin American and Caribbean regional group, integration of weapon-related issues into NAPs shows a slow but clear progression over time. Early plans, for example from **Chile (2009)**, largely ignored weapon-related concerns. By the 2015–2020 period, larger States such as **Argentina (2015)** and **Brazil (2017)** began incorporating general mentions of arms control and disarmament as well as SALW, reflecting concerns about armed violence and illicit arms challenges. **Guatemala (2017)** also addressed SALW, suggesting regional concerns about armed crime.

From 2020 onward, the scope broadened: **Argentina (2022)** included landmines arms control and disarmament diplomacy (including the ATT), while **Mexico (2021)** added WMD alongside SALW. Emerging technologies are not addressed in most plans, except for the recent cases of **Argentina (2022)** and **Uruguay (2021)**. **Trinidad and Tobago (2025)** was not included in this



A candle tribute by women's organisations in favour of gender equality in Colombia, Bogotá, 2024. Credit: UN Photo / Santiago Puentes Viana.

analysis as the final version of the NAP was not yet available, but interviewees highlighted the plan's focus on firearms violence.⁴²

On the other hand, according to expert interviews, **Colombia (2024)**, the official translation of which was also not yet available for the textual analysis of this report, did not address SALW, despite this being raised as an issue in the consultation and design process.⁴³ This can be an indication of the prioritization process that goes on during the drafting of a NAP, when other priorities can assume more prominence in the peace and security domain.

Overall, the region's approach remains uneven – driven mostly by States facing significant fire-arms-related violence – yet it increasingly embraces a wider range of arms control and disarmament issues beyond small arms.

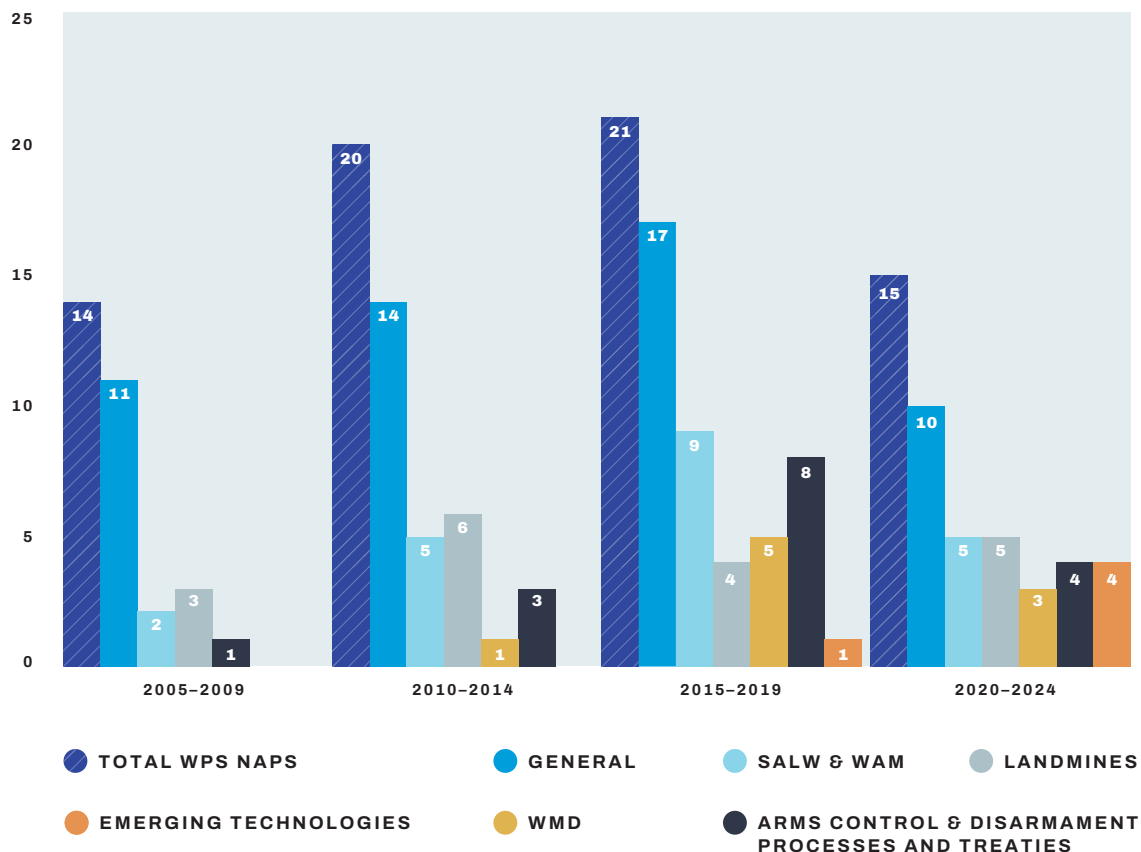
⁴² Expert interviews conducted by authors, March–April 2025.

⁴³ Expert interviews conducted by authors, March–April 2025.

Western Europe and Others Group

FIGURE 8.

Western Europe and Others Group: Number of WPS NAPs that include arms control and disarmament issues by category and time period



The Western European and Others group consistently demonstrates strong engagement with disarmament and arms control issues across all time periods. Early plans from 2005 to 2009 emphasized SALW and landmines. **Denmark (2008)**, **Norway (2006)**, **Sweden (2006, 2009)**, and the **United Kingdom (2006)** actively integrated SALW issues early on, while **Belgium (2009)** and **Switzerland (2007)** also addressed landmines and disarmament diplomacy by the end of this period. Notably, during this initial period, most WPS NAPs of this region tended to be outward-looking, focused on activities undertaken outside of the national territory.

Between 2010 and 2019, the scope of attention broadened. Disarmament diplomacy becomes increasingly prominent, especially in **Belgium (2013)**, **France (2010, 2015)**, **Ireland (2011, 2013, 2019)**, and **Switzerland (2013, 2018)**. During these years, States of the group began to address WMD more explicitly, although engagement has remained limited compared to other weapon-related categories. **Switzerland (2013, 2018)** stands out with a comprehensive approach, addressing SALW, landmines, WMD, and disarmament diplomacy.

Emerging technologies and WMD began to receive sporadic but growing attention towards the late 2010s, marking a shift in security challenges. From 2020 onward, there is a clear trend toward integrated and updated action plans. **Canada (2023)**, **Finland (2023)**, the **United Kingdom (2023)**, and the **United States of America (2023)** include all major weapon

categories – SALW, landmines, WMD, and emerging technologies – alongside disarmament diplomacy. In the same period, **Cyprus (2020, 2021)** and **France (2021)**, show reduced engagement with arms control and disarmament measures.

2.4. Cross-Cutting Issues

Participation

In terms of the pillars of the WPS Agenda, increasing women's meaningful participation in disarmament and arms control measures, be it in diplomacy, advocacy, SALW control measures, or mine action, has been a central cross-cutting approach. The Secretary-General's Disarmament Agenda has stressed the need for women's equal participation in disarmament and arms control under Actions 36 and 37.⁴⁴ Several WPS NAPs, for example by **Ireland (2019)** and **South Africa (2020)**, explicitly stress the need for more gender equality in these fields.

Despite important advances made through gender and diversity initiatives, including on the part of individual States and through the United Nations system, men remain over-represented in arms control and disarmament initiatives. In this context, trainings and capacity-building tailored specifically for women can have a transformational effect in both increasing their expertise and, importantly, allowing them to be seen as experts on these issues, often contrary to stereotype. Think tanks, civil society organizations, as well as other peacebuilding- or security-focused organizations can be important partners in this respect.

While some progress has been made in increasing women's participation in policy discussions, gender parity remains elusive in technical roles. A 2021 UNIDIR study on weapons and ammunition management highlights some of the barriers and challenges for women, which also apply in other areas of arms control and disarmament. These barriers include the overall perception of more technical and more men-dominated areas of work as 'masculine', which connects to women in the field struggling to overcome gender stereotyping, discriminatory attitudes and policies, lack of adequate infrastructure for women and being afforded unequal access to training opportunities.⁴⁵

Women have also expressed their struggle to gain acceptance from male colleagues, especially in the early stages of their careers. However, while traditionally much of the staff involved in WAM has been drawn from equally men-dominated military or security sector institutions, policy and technical roles (the latter especially in mine action) are now increasingly being performed by civilians who have received technical training, which has opened up new possibilities for women to join the field.

In the area of WAM, the 2023 Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management seeks to address the barriers to women's participation, providing measures that could be integrated into WPS NAPs, including women's increased participation in WAM

⁴⁴ UNODA (2018). *Securing Our Common Future – An Agenda for Disarmament*, New York: UNODA. <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/>

⁴⁵ Salama, Hana and Emma Bjertén-Günther (2021). *Women Managing Weapons – Perspectives for Increasing Women's Meaningful Participation in Weapons and Ammunition Management*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/women-managing-weapons>

and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into WAM measures.⁴⁶ Similarly, mine action, despite decades of investment in gender mainstreaming, continues to be men-dominated.⁴⁷

In **Ukraine**, the need for personnel has opened doors for women to enter traditionally men-dominated demining work. While this is a positive development, there is a concern that once the conflict ends, the return of demobilized combatants could re-establish former leadership structures, potentially relegating women's roles to temporary positions rather than establishing them as permanent leaders.

The participation of women in the security and defence sectors, particularly in arms control and disarmament efforts, is also an area in which WPS NAPs often have related indicators (see also discussion in the Toolkit⁴⁸). Many of these are quantitative; **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017)** and **Ireland (2019)** track indicators such as the number of women in leadership roles within these sectors; **Chad (2023)**, **Mali (2019)** and **Sudan (2020)**, for example, report on the number of women engaged in SALW-related activities, or the proportion of seized weapons that have been successfully traced.

Funding and resourcing

Funding for WPS NAPs-related activities is often a central challenge, including for integrated arms control and disarmament measures. However, several WPS NAPs do explicitly include funding for arms control and disarmament measures, such as **Finland's NAP (2023)**, which references funding for humanitarian mine action, and **Slovakia's NAP (2021)** which specifies financial support for the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) through gender equality projects.

Norway (2019) mentions a more mainstreamed monitoring using a gender marker of funds for peace and reconciliation, security sector reform, and global security and disarmament. **Ireland (2019)** has been notable for including funding for gender, arms control, and disarmament research (see Box 2).

⁴⁶ UNODA (2023). Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, New York: UNODA. https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Brochure_Global-Framework-for-Ammunition.pdf. For more detail on the integration of gender perspectives, see GENSAC (2025). Inclusive Ammunition Management: A Practical Guide for Gender and Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation in the Global Framework for Through-Life Conventional Ammunition Management. <https://gensac.network/2025/06/15/inclusive-ammunition-management/> and Panama, Small Arms Survey and UNIDIR (2022). Gender Mainstreaming Ammunition Through-Life Management - Working Paper Submitted to the Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition. <https://documents.unoda.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Working-Paper-Gender-Mainstreaming-Ammunition-Through-Life-Management.pdf>

⁴⁷ See also UNIDIR (2024). "How do Gender and Diversity Relate to Mine Action?" https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/UNIDIR_Explainer_How_do_gender_and_diversity_relate_to_mine_action.pdf; and Santoire, Bénédicte (2025). New Directions for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention: Connecting Victim Assistance with the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/new-directions-for-the-anti-personnel-mine-ban-convention-connecting-victim-assistance-with-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda/>

⁴⁸ Myrntinen, Henri, Anastasia Mondesir, and Mariana Terreros Lozano (2025). Toolkit: Addressing Weapons-Related Risks in Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plans. UNIDIR, Geneva, Switzerland. <https://unidir.org/ToolkitWPS>

BOX 2.

Ireland's Support for Research

Throughout its four WPS NAPs (2011, 2015, 2019, 2025), Ireland has consistently addressed the role of gender issues in various aspects of arms control and disarmament. A key element of Ireland's work in this regard has been supporting efforts to build and improve the evidence base by supporting research.

In its third WPS NAP (2019–2024), Ireland identified a number of gender-focused arms control and disarmament research outcomes and activities to guide implementation and monitoring. This has for example included supporting research into “the impact[s] of harmful social norms, including masculinities and discriminatory gender norms on gender equality” and masculinities in the Defence Forces under Strategic Outcome 1.3.⁴⁹

More broadly, the second pillar of the third Irish WPS NAP on women's meaningful participation, includes both measures to support women's participation in research on these issues and “contribut[ing] to the evidence base and analysis supported to understand the disproportionate impact of use of weapons on women and girls.”⁵⁰

As part of the implementation of the 2019 NAP, Ireland engaged with International Organizations, civil society and academia, funding research activities on gender, disarmament and arms control. This included support to UNIDIR's work on gender and disarmament, as well as supporting other organizations such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Norwegian People's Aid, the International Network on Conflict and Fragility of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, among others. Ireland also commissioned internal research by the Defence Forces on its own military masculinities.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ireland (2019). *Ireland's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2024*. Dublin, Ireland: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, pp. 29-30.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

⁵¹ For more detailed information on the support listed here, please refer to the WPS NAP annual reports: Government of Ireland (2021). *First Annual Report on Women Peace and Security: Ireland's third National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions 2019-2024*. Dublin: Government of Ireland <https://assets.ireland.ie/documents/First-Annual-Report-on-Irelands-third-National-Action-Plan-for-WPS.pdf>; Government of Ireland (2022). *Second Annual Report on Ireland's third National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2024)*, Dublin: Government of Ireland. <https://assets.ireland.ie/documents/Second-Annual-Report-on-Irelands-NAPIII-WPS.pdf>; and Government of Ireland (2023). *Third Annual Report on Ireland's third National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2024)*, Dublin: Government of Ireland. https://assets.ireland.ie/documents/WPS_Annual_Report_2022_Digital_final.pdf



3. Lessons learned

This section focuses on lessons learned, both in terms of key challenges and good practices for integrating arms control and disarmament measures into WPS NAPs. These insights are largely derived from semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in WPS NAP processes across State institutions, the security sector, civil society, academia and think tanks, and international organizations.

3.1. Key challenges

Throughout this research, the most commonly challenges identified by our interviewees included:

- ▶ ‘connecting the dots’ – making the case for why and how WPS and arms control/disarmament are relevant to each other;
- ▶ a lack of political will and adequate funding; and
- ▶ ensuring convergence and coherence across different levels and spheres of policy and practice.

Connecting the dots

A continuing challenge highlighted during several interviews – echoing findings from previous research⁵² – is bridging the gap between the WPS Agenda and arms control/disarmament. The connections and complementarity of the two fields is not always self-evident or self-explanatory, and efforts in one field may seem distant from the everyday work of policymakers and practitioners in the other field.

Many civil society organizations, as well as State agencies, working on broader gender equality issues may struggle to see the relevance of frameworks such as the ATT or of issues such as WMD non-proliferation to their everyday work. Underlying challenges in this regard include making the case for the need to integrate the two fields in the first place, to more specific challenges of the two fields being seen as arcane, technical, and difficult to access for those outside a given field. Nonetheless, interviewees underscored a wish for more mutual exchange across the fields.⁵³

As in UNIDIR's 2020 "Connecting the Dots"⁵⁴ report, interviewees had a sense that the field of arms control/disarmament was perhaps more open to taking the WPS Agenda on board rather than the other way around, with various Member States, specialised United Nations agencies, and civil society organizations making concerted efforts to this end.

On the WPS side, however, there has not been a similar effort. National- and local-level women's rights organizations seeking to work in arms control and disarmament often need to invest considerable effort and resources (e.g. to develop relevant expertise among staff) to be able to participate.⁵⁵ Furthermore, although impacts of WMD, lethal autonomous weapons systems, and arms sales and transfers are highly gendered, their everyday relevance is minimal compared to that of the issues women's rights organizations and others are seeking to address.

Nonetheless, concerted efforts to integrate the two fields can create opportunities for women, including at the community level, to access capacity-building and to develop expertise on weapons, arms control and disarmament. This process can allow women to become experts in these fields, thus increasing the participation of women and leading to more sustainable outcomes in arms control and disarmament (see Box 3).

⁵² Myrttinen, Henri (2020). *Connecting the Dots: Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women Peace and Security Agenda*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/connecting-the-dots/>

⁵³ Expert interviews conducted by authors, March–April 2025.

⁵⁴ Myrttinen, Henri (2020). *Connecting the Dots: Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women Peace and Security Agenda*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/connecting-the-dots/>

⁵⁵ Expert interviews conducted by authors, April 2025.

Insights from South-Eastern Europe

The integration of gender perspectives into SALW strategies is increasingly recognized as critical, yet not all WPS NAPs align directly with SALW strategies. In South-Eastern Europe, while aligning WPS NAPs with SALW strategies remains a work in progress, there are encouraging developments and innovative approaches. The region is advanced in terms of SALW strategy development. All six Western Balkans jurisdictions have made significant strides in developing national strategies on SALW, and in doing so, efforts have been made in advancing gender perspectives in their work on arms control.⁵⁶

A key strategy for enhancing synergies between the fields is the cross-referencing of WPS NAPs and SALW NAPs/strategies in national documents. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** provides a strong example, where the WPS NAP (2017) explicitly references the national SALW strategy, ensuring gender considerations are integrated into both security and disarmament efforts.

Political leadership plays a crucial role in promoting the integration of gender perspectives. For example, the Gender Coaching Programme of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) has been quite successful in helping senior officials to understand the importance of gender in arms control, thus fostering the political will necessary for effective implementation and tangible results.⁵⁷

Additionally, the EU is supporting all jurisdictions in the region in integration of gender responsive approaches to SALW control. EU requirements encourage the alignment of national strategies with the European Union's SALW strategy, Gender Action Plan, and WPS approach. Furthermore, regional cooperation is contributing to a stronger, more collaborative approach to integrating gender perspectives – both in NAP development and, more specifically, in SALW strategies.⁵⁸ However, compared to SALW control, progress has been slower in other fields of arms control and disarmament, such as mine action, where the sharing of information appears to be less focused on gender, and often ad hoc (e.g. addressed at some annual summits but not mainstreamed).⁵⁹

Initiatives like the SEESAC programme mentioned above are facilitating important cross-sectoral dialogue, bringing together SALW commissions and gender-equality agencies to collaborate.⁶⁰ Such collaboration helps to put people into contact with each other, as many interviews highlighted the importance of personal relationships as key levers for successful harmonization of both agendas.

Additionally, involving women's organizations in the consultative process can ensure that SALW strategies address gender-based violence and the broader impact of small arms proliferation on affected communities. Women's organizations can serve as valuable sources of knowledge and expertise in this context.

⁵⁶ SEESAC (2016). Gender and SALW in South East Europe – Main Concerns and Policy Response, Belgrade: SEESAC. https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Armed-Violence/Gender_and_SALW_publication_eng-web.pdf

⁵⁷ Expert interviews conducted by authors, March 2025.

⁵⁸ Expert interview conducted by authors, March 2025.

⁵⁹ Expert interview conducted by authors, March 2025.

⁶⁰ Expert interview conducted by authors, March 2025.

Lack of political will and adequate funding

A growing issue of concern in both the disarmament/arms control and WPS communities, and in terms of bringing the two together, is the shifting political environment in many States towards rearmament, and the rising global pushback on gender equality and diversity. Coupled with these shifts, funding cuts have in recent years affected civil society actors, academia, the United Nations system as well as State institutions.

To contend with these challenges, increased cooperation and coordination of efforts, the pooling of resources, and joint lobbying and evidence-based advocacy can be useful. To that end, it is important to ensure that WPS NAPs processes are locally owned and based on local expertise and understandings of the context, rather than primarily donor-driven or designed by external actors.

However, interviewees noted explicit political resistance to engaging on arms control and disarmament among those women's rights organizations that, for example, saw armed resistance as a legitimate strategy, or among those that did not want to be seen as legitimizing militarized institutions or policies.

Many interviewees also raised concerns about the increasing difficulty of securing funding for both WPS and arms control/disarmament work, in part related to the changing political and security environment, and in part due to fiscal pressures more generally. This trend has accelerated in 2024–2025 with funding cuts by key donor governments, affecting multilateral agencies as well as research institutions and civil society.

In terms of WPS funding at the national level, only a few NAPs have a dedicated budget. While this presents obvious challenges for implementation, it can also present opportunities. In Sweden, for example, a deliberate decision was made not to have a separate NAP budget and thereby force State implementing bodies to prioritize WPS activities in their own respective budgets.⁶¹

WPS NAPs are almost never the only action plan or strategy that various actors and institutions need to implement and report on, and the burden of multiple implementation demands can often lead to institutional pushback against participation in WPS NAP processes. As discussed in the following section, harmonization of different plans and of their reporting processes (e.g. of SALW NAPs, WPS NAPs, and gender-based violence action plans), and simplification and streamlining across processes can help, as can ensuring the engagement with various reporting bodies in a given process from an early stage to ensure buy-in.

Ensuring convergence and coherence

A further persistent issue, especially for State and security sector actors, but also international organizations, is the siloing of different issues – for example, WPS policy, firearms control measures, and gender-based violence response – and the restrictions which mandates might place on them.

⁶¹ Expert interview conducted by authors, April 2025.

While the comprehensive and holistic approaches which WPS NAPs can offer in terms of incorporating arms control and disarmament into broader frameworks of violence prevention and reduction might be enticing for some, such as policymakers and civil society practitioners, these approaches can be harder to navigate and might exceed the stricter mandates of key State security actors.

Similarly, ensuring policy coherence at various levels and spheres can be challenging, and may require strong coordinating bodies with the mandate, networks, and institutional knowledge to draw these strands together (see Box 4).



Linking Policy Frameworks in the Philippines

The Philippines in 2023 launched its fourth WPS NAP, which will have a 10-year implementation period through 2033. The Philippines, which in 2010 was the first South-East Asian State to issue a WPS NAP, has been consistent in its inclusion of language on SALW in its WPS NAPs. The 2023 NAP, in the context of Action Point 10 on protections of women and men from gender-based violence, notes the pressing need to involve men in these efforts, as most arms are largely held by men. Under Action Point 14.2, the Philippines pledges to strengthen gender-responsive initiatives to address the proliferation of SALW, including in the context of peace agreements and through the implementation of relevant laws and policies.

The specific reference to SALW in the context of peace processes is related to the history of both the origin of the Philippines WPS NAPs and the Bangsamoro peace process. These advanced in parallel and key actors – including influential women negotiators – were involved in both processes. Further relevant legal frameworks are the Republic Act 9851 on International Humanitarian Law⁶² and the draft NAP on SALW, the current version of which includes an annex on gender-based action plans.⁶³

The 2023 WPS NAP is a key part of an architecture of regional, national, and subnational legal frameworks, policies, and commitments that forms an enabling environment for gender-responsive small arms management at the community level, especially in the southern Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.⁶⁴

At the regional level, the Philippines WPS NAP and other national laws and policies align with regional frameworks such as the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (2022) and the 2023 ASEAN Declaration on Combatting Arms Smuggling. At the subnational level, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region is currently implementing its second localized WPS action plan (2023–2028).

Drawing on local knowledge as well as learnings from other peace processes – such as in Indonesia, Colombia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – the government facilitated the signing in 2024 of a memorandum of understanding on the surrender of SALW in Basilan province, along with the implementation of the ASPIRE programme facilitated by the United Nations Development Programme which exchanges firearms for socioeconomic supports, such as farm equipment, fishing boats, as well as fabrics.

While men are traditionally viewed as the primary custodians of the household weapons, the programme has also been successful in giving women, who often are key decision-makers inside the household, a platform and voice to engage on small arms management at the community level. By September 2025, the programme had registered 1,969 civilian-held firearms.⁶⁵

⁶² Republic Act 9851 (2009) on International Humanitarian Law. <https://issuances-library.senate.gov.ph/legislative%2Bissuances/Republic%20Act%20No.%209851>

⁶³ Expert interviews conducted by authors, April 2025.

⁶⁴ Expert interviews conducted by authors, February–April 2025.

⁶⁵ UNDP (2025). Turning Arms into Aid: ASPIRE Project Celebrates Peace Champions in Upi, Maguindanao del Norte, September 9, 2025. <https://www.undp.org/philippines/press-releases/turning-arms-aid-aspire-project-celebrates-peace-champions-upi-maguindanao-del-norte>

3.2. Good practices

Interviewees highlighted a number of emerging good practices for integrating arms control and disarmament measures into WPS NAPs, many of which apply to the design of WPS NAPs, but also require follow-through in implementation, monitoring and evaluation. We have divided these into the following interrelated thematic clusters:

- ▶ broad and diverse participation and cross-government coordination;
- ▶ evidence-based approach, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation;
- ▶ policy harmonization and coordination; and
- ▶ broadening the scope of the WPS Agenda to engage with men and masculinities.

Broad and diverse participation and cross-government coordination

The process of designing and implementing WPS NAPs involves bringing together a wide variety of State, civil society, and other actors, such as academia, think tanks and international development partners. Interviewees stressed the importance of ensuring the participation of a diverse set of voices, especially including actors specialized in issues of arms control and disarmament, be it on the side of civil society or the State, and where possible including communities and individuals directly affected by conflict, armed violence or explosive remnants, particularly survivors.

Key to ensuring that such local experience informs a WPS NAP process is making the design process accessible to a diverse range of women, for example by organizing consultation sessions beyond the capital or by soliciting public input nationally and internationally, in person and online. The design process for **Colombia (2024)** stands out in this respect, as over 1,500 women across the country gave input, across age and identity groups, and with special effort undertaken to ensure the participation of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.⁶⁶

For **Kyrgyzstan (2018)**, the planning and design process included planning workshops held in different parts of the country to allow for more local input and ownership of the process.⁶⁷ The design process for **Trinidad and Tobago (2025)**, which has a strong focus on firearms violence, also ensured the inclusion of a wide range of voices from civil society and affected communities, but moreover ensured that different State institutions, including a range of security sector institutions, were involved as well. Thus, not only the police, but also customs and immigration as well as the coast guard, who are tasked with curbing the illicit trafficking of firearms, were engaged.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ NIMD (2024). Breaking New Ground: Colombia's Inclusive Journey to a National Action Plan, 10.12.2024. <https://nimd.org/breaking-new-ground-colombias-inclusive-journey-to-a-national-action-plan/>

⁶⁷ Myrtilinen, Henri, Laura Shepherd, and Hannah Wright (2021). Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region, Vienna: OSCE. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/4/444577.pdf>

⁶⁸ Expert interviews conducted by authors, February 2025.

A further avenue for broadening participation, as well as increasing local ownership, is through ‘localization’ of a NAP.⁶⁹ This can be done in a number of ways, such as having specific WPS plans for certain parts of the country (as for example in Armenia, Georgia and the Philippines; see Box 4), mandating or encouraging local governments to design their own WPS action plans, as for example in **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017)**, **Serbia (2017)**, and **Ukraine (2016, 2020)**. In the latter case, mine action efforts are localized, while in at least one municipality in Serbia, a women’s rights organization engaged closely with a local hunting club to improve firearms safety, as reported by an interviewee.

In some national contexts, women’s rights organizations have expressed concern about being excluded from key decision-making processes related to NAPs on disarmament and conflict-related violence and feel that their perspectives are often sidelined in favour of organizations that emphasize other work, such as gender-based violence prevention and response. This has particularly been the case in some conflict-affected regions where addressing armed violence is often seen as politically sensitive and risky, given the complexities of ongoing instability.⁷⁰ As a result, there is a tendency within some NAP processes to prioritize a focus on gender-based violence, as it is considered a more politically acceptable focus, and issues related to arms may not receive the same level of attention.

The meaningful participation of civil society and academia in these processes is important for the diverse perspectives and expertise that they bring to the table, and for the fact that they also often act as repositories of institutional knowledge of such processes, given the frequent staff turnover in State institutions. On the government side, coordination across various ministries, agencies and other institutions involved is essential. **Canada (2023)** is an example of a decentralized approach with monitoring frameworks that each agency/ministry needs to report on; as well, the use in **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013, 2017)** of the Gender Equality Agency as a lead agency, with its cross-sectoral gender expertise, is another good example in this respect.

Evidence-based approach, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation

A consistent need noted by interviewees was for more and better data on the various aspects of gender and arms control and disarmament, be it in order to make the case for the integration of gender perspectives, for designing and implementing better measures, for assessing ‘what works’, and to have practical, tangible examples of the above to illustrate what integration means in practice. Developing such evidence requires the collaboration of State agencies, civil society, development partners, media and above all academia and think tanks, as well as investment and support (see also Box 2).

Reporting, monitoring, and evaluation are key areas of work for developing such a knowledge base, and likewise for tracking progress on the stated objectives and goals of WPS NAPs. Such progress was not assessed for this report, as not all monitoring and evaluation frameworks are

⁶⁹ See for example Cabrera-Balleza, Mavic and Agnieszka Fal Dutra Santos (2018). From Best Practice to Standard Practice: A Toolkit on the Localization of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security. Global Network of Women Peacebuilders. https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/BestPractice_5march2019_NoCropMk-1.pdf

⁷⁰ Expert interviews conducted by authors, March–April 2025.

publicly available. Interviews suggest a general trend towards more action-oriented language on arms control and disarmament measures, and indicators to better measure such action. However, progress is not always linear, and from one NAP to the next there may be a consolidation of indicators that makes disaggregating data relevant to arms control and disarmament difficult or impossible.

While it is important for monitoring and evaluation data to be as comprehensive as possible, the process should not be too time- and resource-intensive, and the data to must be suitable to the task at hand. The collection of age-, sex-, and gender-disaggregated data, as well as of reliable baseline data, and properly resourcing data collection and analysis are essential fundamentals for successful monitoring and evaluation efforts. While these are fundamental steps, much arms control- and disarmament-relevant data continues to be aggregated, and data gaps are not uncommon.⁷¹ Resources for baseline data collection and analysis, as well as for reporting, monitoring, and evaluation, are also often lacking.⁷²

Across WPS NAPs, quantitative indicators (e.g., number of women involved, amount of SALW collected) tend to be the most common for monitoring and evaluation. There is often a lack of indicators measuring the impacts of these actions, such as the degree of women's meaningful participation (as opposed to just being present), changes in community behaviour, or reductions in violence. Assessing impact requires more complex indicators, such as for measuring the sustainability and effectiveness of activities and outputs using both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Interviewees highlighted the need to avoid having an excess of indicators, to harmonize WPS NAP reporting indicators and processes with those of other agendas, and to enable the use of qualitative reporting of impacts and outcomes, such as in the case of **Canada (2023)**. While resource-intensive, investing time to ensure that those reporting on indicators understand their purpose makes reporting more effective.

In terms of assessing the overall effectiveness of NAPs, midterm and final reviews are useful common practices. However, such reviews are often relatively general as they need to cover all aspects of the plan, and thus often are not able include a great amount of detail on individual aspects of a given NAP due to time, resource, and length constraints.

Harmonization and coordination of policy agendas

One of the most compelling reasons to integrate WPS, arms control and disarmament efforts is the benefit of coordination in processes and structures. In the early stages, coordination often struggles to take root. Fragmented responsibilities, competing institutional priorities, lack of a whole-of-government approach, and challenges in engaging a broad range of actors – from

⁷¹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for example observes that despite notable improvements in terms of mentions of gender in Programme of Action implementation reports, gaps remain when it comes to consistent age-, sex-, and gender-disaggregation of data. UNRCPD (2025). UNRCPD and the Government of Nepal convene an Informal Regional Meeting to discuss Lessons Learned and Opportunities from the Progressive Harmonization of Small Arms Control and Women, Peace and Security. <https://www.unrcpd.org/unrcpd-and-the-government-of-nepal-convene-an-informal-regional-meeting-to-discuss-lessons-learned-and-opportunities-from-the-progressive-harmonization-of-small-arms-control-and-women-peace-and-security/>

⁷² Expert interviews conducted by authors, March–May 2025.



ministries to grassroots organizations – can all stall progress both in terms of coordination and implementation.⁷³

However, where coordination mechanisms do develop, they become the backbone of effective, gender-responsive arms control and disarmament work. They reduce duplication, improve strategic alignment, and make better use of limited resources.⁷⁴ This point was raised repeatedly by interviewees, who flagged uncoordinated, primarily donor-led or externally supported disarmament initiatives without strong local ownership as a particular risk. Establishing a designated lead agency has proven vital – not only to facilitate information-sharing and to ensure alignment, but also to create space for regular consultation and feedback among all stakeholders.

Legal frameworks for gender mainstreaming have also played a pivotal role in this process. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **Mali**, for example, gender equality laws provided the initial momentum to incorporate gender in national SALW strategies (see Box 5). These laws did not just mandate inclusion – they signalled political will, anchored gender within official policy, and opened the door to more systematic integration. Over time, this legal grounding created ripple effects, triggering institutional reforms, encouraging cross-sectoral capacity-building, and legitimizing efforts to address the differentiated impacts of armed violence.

On a practical level, greater engagement between arms control and disarmament experts on the one hand and WPS experts on the other should be encouraged, not only to foster mutual understanding, but also to exchange knowledge and insights from the respective fields. This has the potential to improve the quality of the policies and processes on both sides.⁷⁵

⁷³ Expert interviews conducted by authors, March–May 2025.

⁷⁴ Expert interviews conducted by authors, March–May 2025.

⁷⁵ Expert interviews conducted by authors, February–April 2025.

Factors enabling the effective Integration of SALW and WPS in Mali

Mali's (2019) WPS NAP, building on earlier NAPs, illustrates a coordinated approach with the national Small Arms and Light Weapons Commission. Several enabling factors can help officials overcome siloed areas of work to embed disarmament in national policy frameworks at multiple levels. For example:

- ▶ **Impact-focused analysis** – Early assessment of the impact of SALW on specific groups, especially women and girls, informed clear protection objectives with measurable indicators in the WPS NAP.⁷⁶ The plan's protection pillar results framework includes as an outcome the safety of women and girls against trafficking and the circulation of SALW, with the associated indicator tracking the proportion of weapons collected of which the origin or illicit use has been traced by competent authorities.⁷⁷
- ▶ **Legal and institutional gender mainstreaming** – The adoption of gender mainstreaming laws⁷⁸ led to the creation of a dedicated gender unit within the SALW framework, reinforcing political commitment and resulting in sustained leadership by women at the highest levels of the SALW Commission.⁷⁹
- ▶ **Strong partnerships and coordination** – The appointment of a focal point within the NAP monitoring committee and collaboration with the arms proliferation secretariat facilitated prioritization of SALW issues and enabled the development of aligned sectoral plans.⁸⁰
- ▶ **Youth inclusion and empowerment** – Active involvement of the National Youth Council in the SALW Commission ensured youth concerns were integrated beyond awareness-raising, giving young men (who are particularly vulnerable to SALW risks) a direct role in policy design and implementation.⁸¹
- ▶ **Multi-sectoral engagement** – Coordination across sectors and stakeholders, including legal, political, and civil society actors, created a comprehensive approach to disarmament beyond isolated initiatives.⁸²

⁷⁶ Expert interviews conducted by authors, February-March 2025

⁷⁷ Government of Mali (2020). Mali National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2023. p.31

⁷⁸ *Loi n° 2015-052 du 18 décembre 2015 instituant des mesures pour promouvoir le genre dans l'accès aux fonctions nominatives et électives*. Journal officiel de la République du Mali, No. 56, 2015

⁷⁹ Expert interviews conducted by authors, February-March 2025

⁸⁰ Expert interviews conducted by authors, February-March 2025

⁸¹ Expert interviews conducted by authors, February-March 2025, See also Commission Nationale de Lutte contre la Prolifération des Armes Légères et de Petit Calibre (2014). *Plan d'action national de lutte contre la prolifération des armes légères et de petit calibre au Mali 2014–2018*. Bamako, Mali : CNLPAL, 2014. p.12 -p14

⁸² Expert interviews conducted by authors, February-March 2025, see also Government of Mali (2020). Mali National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2023. p. 25

Broadening the WPS scope

The WPS Agenda rightly focuses on addressing the needs of women and girls, as well as ensuring their meaningful participation in all areas related to peace and security. However, especially in the fields of arms control and disarmament, engaging with men and masculinities as well as ensuring a better convergence with the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda are essential.⁸³

In terms of the engagement with men and masculinities, this is important due to men being predominant in decision-making positions in this field, but also due to men being the primary users of weapons, and the interplay of arms and violence with harmful or militarized masculinities.⁸⁴

The engagement with the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda is of importance due to the often higher likelihood of youth and young adults being implicated in, or affected by armed violence, but also due to the role they can play as peacebuilders.

Masculinities- and youth-focused initiatives are increasingly gaining traction and being mentioned in WPS NAPs (see Box 6). However, the scope of relevant activities has generally remained narrow, mostly limited to awareness-raising.⁸⁵

In some contexts, disarmament and arms control and gender equality efforts have increasingly sought to engage men as allies, reflecting a broader recognition of the role that militarized masculinities play in sustaining armed violence. Nonetheless, these dynamics are often approached indirectly and strategies tend to emphasize softer entry points – partly due to political sensitivities and the need to preserve alliances in fragile or polarized settings. This cautious engagement reflects the constraints many actors face when navigating complex social landscapes, where directly addressing masculinities can be seen as politically risky.

The broadening of the scope of how gender is approached in arms control and disarmament work (i.e. taking into account masculinities and diverse identities), and the deepening of this scope (i.e. by examining gender in relation to age, class, ethnicity, location and other factors), also requires a stronger engagement with individuals and communities of diverse identities. Not only are individuals and communities often at a heightened risk of armed violence, but they are experts in their own lived experiences and can be agents for positive change.

⁸³ Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (2022). “Men and Masculinities in Gender Responsive Small Arms Control”. https://gensac.network/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Men-and-Masculinities_final.pdf; Myrtilinen, Henri (2020). *Connecting the Dots: Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women Peace and Security Agenda*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/connecting-the-dots/>

⁸⁴ See for example Baird, Adam (2025). *No Man's Land? Focusing on Men to Reduce Global Armed Violence*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/no-mans-land-focusing-on-men-to-reduce-global-armed-violence/>

⁸⁵ Expert interviews conducted by authors, February-May 2025.

Masculinities, Arms, and WPS in the African Group

As numerous studies have shown, men and adolescent boys are the main users and owners of weapons and often the most likely direct victims of these, even if women and gender-diverse persons are often disproportionately affected by certain types of arms-related violence.

Men and masculinities are both present and invisible in the WPS agenda. While the focus of the agenda is on women, men are mentioned in three of the relevant Security Council resolutions – 2106 (2013), 2242 (2015) and 2467 (2019) – as potential allies for gender equality and preventing gender-based violence, as well as potential victims of conflict-related sexual violence.⁸⁶

Some WPS NAPs have been much more outspoken about the need to work with men and boys, especially with a view to transforming harmful expectations of masculinities in the context of violence reduction.

Several States of the African group have been pioneering such work in both policy and practice. When examining the 52 WPS NAPs adopted by members of the African group, only 3 do not mention men; masculinities are mentioned in 10 WPS NAPs.⁸⁷ For example, **Uganda (2008, 2011)** refers to militarized masculinities as a factor that should be taken into account in conflict analyses, and **South Sudan (2015)** refers to masculine norms in militaries.

The most common context in which masculinities are mentioned in WPS NAPs is the prevention of gender-based violence, be it through the enrolment of men gender champions (**South Sudan 2015**), the promotion of positive masculinities (**Burundi 2022; Rwanda 2018**) or tackling violent, negative, or harmful masculinities (**Liberia 2019; Namibia 2019; South Africa 2020; Zimbabwe 2023**).

Nigeria (2017) is interesting in terms of being the only NAP that mentions work with violent masculinities together with the proliferation of SALW and the impacts of climate change as an area of violence prevention work, though only in referencing the 2015 Global Study on WPS.

On a practical level, States of the African group have been at the forefront of much of the programming that has been done by civil society, non-governmental organizations, State agencies, faith-based organizations, and others, such as United Nations agencies, on transforming masculinities to prevent gender-based violence and other harmful behaviours, as well as the norms underpinning them. Such efforts are reflected in the engagement of the African Union on promoting work on positive masculinities.

⁸⁶ For a more in-depth discussion, see Brown, Michael E. and Chantal de Jonge Oudraat (2025). Mainstreaming Masculinities in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in Myrtilinen, Henri, Chloé Lewis, Heleen Touquet, Philipp Schulz, Farooq Yousaf, and Elizabeth Laruni (eds). *Routledge Handbook of Masculinities, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 197-206, and Myrtilinen, Henri (2019). Locating Masculinities in WPS. In: Davies, S. E. & True, J. (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 88–97

⁸⁷ This is based on an additional review of the WPS NAPs of the African Regional Group using the search terms 'men,' 'masculinities,' and 'gender norms' and those WPS NAPs which had these terms were reviewed more closely.



Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Bineta Diop, dances with African Union soldiers at Mogadishu Stadium, Somalia, 2014. Credit: AMISOM Photo / Tobin Jones.

In some instances, this approach has been explicitly combined with the equally extensive work on arms control and disarmament, especially on SALW. Examples of where this has been done include programmes to address urban gang violence in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **South Africa**, efforts to end cattle raiding in **South Sudan**, and firearms collection projects in the Karamoja region in **Uganda** – though these efforts have not been referenced in WPS NAPs.⁸⁸

WPS NAPs thus have a tremendous opportunity to bring together the vast practical and policy knowledge that has been accumulated on gender-transformative violence prevention work with men, on the one hand, and arms control/disarmament work, on the other.

⁸⁸ For more detail on these, see for example LeBrun, Emile (ed) (2019). *Gender-responsive Small Arms Control: A Practical Guide*. Small Arms Survey. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/resource/gender-responsive-small-arms-control-practical-guide>; Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (2022). "Men and Masculinities in Gender Responsive Small Arms Control". https://gensac.network/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Men-and-Masculinities_final.pdf

4. Conclusions

The current global landscape presents a decidedly mixed picture in terms of the WPS Agenda and arms control and disarmament. In many ways, both WPS and arms control and disarmament are facing an unprecedented range of challenges. Rearmament, rather than disarmament, has become the predominant trend in many States and regions; emerging technologies are rapidly expanding and developing, and conceptual lines between civilian and military uses are becoming blurred as these are utilized for hybrid warfare.

Global insecurity has led to rapidly increasing expenditure on arms, as well as a partial retreat by some States from arms control and disarmament commitments, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.⁸⁹ Simultaneously, resistance to gender equality has been growing, and funding for work on gender has been affected by budget cuts.⁹⁰ Against this backdrop, integrating arms control and disarmament into WPS NAPs is not a technical exercise, it is a strategic imperative.

Increasingly, it is small and medium States that are at the forefront of developing the mutual integration of the WPS Agenda and arms control and disarmament, as well as working to prevent any rollback or dilution of achieved gains in this respect. This leadership illustrates their deep commitment to these issues and may also reflect their interest in preserving a rules-based international order.

While global consensus on the WPS Agenda has arguably diminished over the past years – with the last Security Council WPS resolution adopted in 2019 – regional cooperation has gained momentum in various parts of the world.⁹¹ Notable progress has been made across Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, South-East and Central Asia, where regional actors have pursued tailored WPS initiatives. Several regional action plans, including those of the European Union and NATO, have been renewed, reflecting sustained institutional commitment. In parallel, regional efforts have intensified around arms control and disarmament, particularly in addressing the illicit flow of SALW, further reinforcing security cooperation frameworks.⁹²

⁸⁹ UN News (2025). Adhering to bans on mines only in peace time will not work: UN rights chief, 2 July 2025. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165261>

⁹⁰ Gorokhovskaia, Yana and Cathryn Grothe (2025). *Freedom in the World 2025: The Uphill Battle to Safeguard Rights*. Freedom House. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2025/uphill-battle-to-safeguard-rights>

⁹¹ Nanthini, S. (2025). 25 Years of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Sustaining Regional Momentum, IDSS Paper 09/25, Singapore: RSIS. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/25-years-women-peace-and-security-agenda-sustaining-regional-momentum>

⁹² This is especially the case for SALW, where there have been several dozen regional initiatives at different levels globally, see for example Berman, E. and K. Maze (2016), Regional Organizations and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (PoA). Geneva: Small Arms Survey. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/POA-RO%20Internals%20REV%202016%20WEB.pdf>

These national and regional initiatives demonstrate that integrating arms control and disarmament into WPS NAPs is not only possible but also desirable. They highlight new approaches to preventing conflict, reducing violence, and building inclusive, sustainable peace. The recommendations outlined in this report, together with the practical examples listed in the accompanying Toolkit, provide a roadmap for States, international and regional organizations, and civil society to close existing gaps and unlock the transformative potential of the WPS Agenda.



Student Observance of International Peace Day (21 September), New York, 2016. Credit: UN Photo / Laura Jarriel.

Annex 1. List of WPS NAPs analysed

COUNTRY	YEAR	GENERAL	SALW/WAM	MINES	WMD	ACD	EMERGING TECH
Afghanistan	2015	✓					
Albania	2018			✓			
Angola	2017						
Argentina	2021	✓		✓		✓	✓
	2015	✓					
Armenia	2022						✓
	2019						
Australia	2021	✓		✓			
	2012	✓		✓			
Austria	2012	✓					
	2007	✓					
Azerbaijan	2020						
Bangladesh	2019	✓					
Belgium	2017	✓	✓			✓	
	2013	✓	✓	✓			
	2009	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2017		✓	✓			
	2013			✓			
	2010			✓			
Brazil	2017	✓	✓		✓		
Bulgaria	2020	✓			✓		
Burkina Faso	2012						

SALW / WAM

Small Arms and Light Weapons / Weapons and Ammunition Management

MINES

Landmines

WMD

Weapons of Mass Destruction

ACD

Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties

EMERGING TECH

Emerging Technologies

COUNTRY	YEAR	GENERAL	SALW/WAM	MINES	WMD	ACD	EMERGING TECH
Burundi	2022						
	2017						
	2011						
Cameroon	2017					✓	
Canada	2023	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	2017	✓					
	2010	✓					
Central African Republic	2019	✓					
	2014	✓					
Chad	2023	✓	✓				
Chile	2015						
	2009						
Côte d'Ivoire	2019	✓					
	2008	✓					
Croatia	2019		✓	✓			
	2011		✓	✓			
Cyprus	2021						
	2020						
Czech Republic	2017	✓					
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2018	✓	✓				
	2013	✓	✓				
	2010	✓	✓				
Denmark	2020						
	2014					✓	
	2008	✓					
	2005						

SALW / WAM

Small Arms and Light Weapons / Weapons and Ammunition Management

MINES

Landmines

WMD

Weapons of Mass Destruction

ACD

Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties

EMERGING TECH

Emerging Technologies

COUNTRY	YEAR	GENERAL	SALW/WAM	MINES	WMD	ACD	EMERGING TECH
Djibouti	2017						
El Salvador	2017						
Estonia	2020						✓
	2015						
	2010						
Finland	2023	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	2018	✓			✓	✓	
	2012	✓					
	2008	✓					
France	2021						
	2015	✓				✓	
	2010	✓					
Gabon	2020	✓	✓				
Gambia	2012		✓				
Georgia	2018						
	2016						
	2011			✓			
Germany	2021	✓	✓			✓	
	2017	✓	✓				
	2012	✓	✓				
Ghana	2020	✓					
	2012	✓	✓				
Guatemala	2017		✓				
Guinea	2009						
Guinea-Bissau	2010	✓	✓				

SALW / WAM Small Arms and Light Weapons / Weapons and Ammunition Management
MINES Landmines
WMD Weapons of Mass Destruction
ACD Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties
EMERGING TECH Emerging Technologies

COUNTRY	YEAR	GENERAL	SALW/WAM	MINES	WMD	ACD	EMERGING TECH
Iceland	2018						
	2013						
	2008	✓					
Indonesia	2014						
Iraq	2020		✓				
	2014						
Ireland	2019	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	2015	✓			✓		
	2011	✓	✓	✓			
Italy	2020	✓					
	2016						
	2014	✓				✓	
	2010			✓			
Japan	2019	✓	✓			✓	
	2015	✓	✓			✓	
Jordan	2017						
Kazakhstan	2021	✓					
Kenya	2020	✓	✓				
	2016	✓	✓				
Kosovo	2014						
Kyrgyzstan	2018						
	2013						
Latvia	2020					✓	
Lebanon	2019		✓	✓		✓	
Liberia	2019		✓				
	2009	✓	✓				

SALW / WAM

Small Arms and Light Weapons / Weapons and Ammunition Management

MINES

Landmines

WMD

Weapons of Mass Destruction

ACD

Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties

EMERGING TECH

Emerging Technologies

COUNTRY	YEAR	GENERAL	SALW/WAM	MINES	WMD	ACD	EMERGING TECH
Lithuania	2020						
Lithuania	2011						
Luxembourg	2018	✓		✓		✓	
Malawi	2021						
Mali	2019	✓	✓				
	2015	✓		✓			
	2012	✓					
Malta	2020	✓					
Mexico	2021	✓	✓		✓		
Moldova	2023						
	2018						
Montenegro	2017	✓	✓				
Mozambique	2018	✓	✓	✓			
Namibia	2019	✓					✓
Nepal	2022			✓			
	2011						
Netherlands	2021	✓	✓			✓	
	2016	✓	✓				
	2011	✓					
	2007	✓	✓				
New Zealand	2015		✓			✓	
Niger	2020						
	2016						
Nigeria	2017	✓	✓				
	2013	✓					

SALW / WAM Small Arms and Light Weapons / Weapons and Ammunition Management
MINES Landmines
WMD Weapons of Mass Destruction
ACD Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties
EMERGING TECH Emerging Technologies

COUNTRY	YEAR	GENERAL	SALW/WAM	MINES	WMD	ACD	EMERGING TECH
North Macedonia	2012	✓					
Norway	2023	✓		✓			
	2019	✓		✓		✓	
	2015	✓	✓			✓	
	2011	✓					
	2006	✓					
Palestine	2020	✓					
	2017						
	2015						
Paraguay	2015						
Peru	2021						
Philippines	2023	✓	✓				✓
	2017	✓	✓				
	2009		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Poland	2018	✓				✓	
Portugal	2019	✓					
	2014						
	2009	✓					
Republic of Congo	2021	✓					
Republic of Korea (South Korea)	2021						
	2018						
	2014						
Romania	2014	✓					
Rwanda	2018	✓					
	2010	✓			✓		

SALW / WAM

Small Arms and Light Weapons / Weapons and Ammunition Management

MINES

Landmines

WMD

Weapons of Mass Destruction

ACD

Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties

EMERGING TECH

Emerging Technologies

COUNTRY	YEAR	GENERAL	SALW/WAM	MINES	WMD	ACD	EMERGING TECH
Senegal	2020	✓	✓	✓			
	2011	✓	✓	✓			
Serbia	2017	✓	✓				
	2010	✓					✓
Sierra Leone	2019		✓				
	2010						
Slovakia	2021		✓				
Slovenia	2018	✓		✓			
	2010			✓			
Solomon Islands	2017	✓					
Somalia	2023						
South Africa	2020	✓	✓			✓	
South Sudan	2015	✓	✓	✓			
Spain	2017	✓	✓				
	2007	✓		✓			
Sri Lanka	2023						
Sudan	2020	✓		✓			
Sweden	2024						
	2016	✓	✓		✓		
	2009						
	2006	✓					
Switzerland	2018	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	2013	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	2010	✓					
	2007			✓			

SALW / WAM Small Arms and Light Weapons / Weapons and Ammunition Management
MINES Landmines
WMD Weapons of Mass Destruction
ACD Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties
EMERGING TECH Emerging Technologies

COUNTRY	YEAR	GENERAL	SALW/WAM	MINES	WMD	ACD	EMERGING TECH
Tajikistan	2014	✓					
Timor-Leste	2024						✓
	2016						
Togo	2011		✓				
Tunisia	2018	✓					
Uganda	2021	✓	✓				
	2011	✓	✓				
	2008	✓	✓				
Ukraine	2020	✓		✓			✓
	2016	✓		✓			
United Arab Emirates	2021						✓
United Kingdom	2023	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	2018	✓		✓			
	2014		✓	✓			
	2012						
	2006	✓					
United States of America	2023	✓	✓	✓			✓
	2019						
	2016	✓					
	2011	✓					
Uruguay	2021	✓					✓
Yemen	2020	✓					
Zimbabwe	2023	✓	✓				✓

SALW / WAM

Small Arms and Light Weapons / Weapons and Ammunition Management

MINES

Landmines

WMD

Weapons of Mass Destruction

ACD

Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties

EMERGING TECH

Emerging Technologies

Annex 2. Methodology

This report is based on research conducted from January to July 2025. It draws on a desk-based literature review, a Python-based quantitative analysis of 197 WPS NAPs, as well as 39 semi-structured interviews with experts on WPS, arms control, and disarmament. Further insights came from participating in the Informal Regional Meeting ‘Separate Agendas, Common Objectives’, convened in Kathmandu, 2–3 April 2025, by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. Preliminary research findings were presented and discussed in a workshop organized by UNIDIR in Geneva in June 2025, which brought together 25 arms control and disarmament experts.

WPS NAP Analysis

Categorization and Keywords

The following keywords were used to identify references to key disarmament and arms control topics within the documents:

- ▶ **General mentions:** Disarmament,⁹³ Arms Control
- ▶ **SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons) and Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM):**⁹⁴ Small Arms and Light Weapons, Firearms, Ammunition, Munitions, SALW, Guns, Stockpile management, WAM
- ▶ **Landmines:** Demining, Explosive, Landmines, Cluster munitions, Stockpile destruction, Anti-personnel mines
- ▶ **Weapons of Mass Destruction:** Chemical weapons, Biological weapons, Nuclear weapons, Weapons of mass destruction, Non-proliferation, Nuclear
- ▶ **Arms Control & Disarmament Processes and Treaties:** Arms Trade Treaty, - ATT, Arms Trade, First Committee,⁹⁵ Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention - APMBC, Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention - BTWC, Convention on Cluster Munitions, Non-Proliferation Treaty - NPT, Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons - TPNW, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons – CCW, Chemical Weapons Prohibition Convention - CWC
- ▶ **Emerging Technologies:** Military AI, Dual use, Autonomous weapons, UAV, Drones, Disinformation, Cyber threats, Cyber warfare, Cyber-attack, Cyber security, Cybersecurity, Cyber-threat, Cyber-warfare, Artificial intelligence, Hybrid threat, Hybrid warfare

These categories formed the basis for the quantitative analysis and were cross-checked against other keywords related to broader WPS priorities, such as prevention, protection, participation, and attention to masculinities, to ensure alignment with the wider research objectives.

⁹³ Please note that the terms ‘Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration’ and ‘DDR’ were excluded from the search.

⁹⁴ Please note that WAM does not only refer to SALW stockpiles, but given the contextual overlap between how these terms were used in WPS NAP texts, they were analysed together to avoid duplication.

⁹⁵ The Disarmament and International Security Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

Text Extraction and Analysis

NAPs were analysed in English, using either the original texts or available translations. Automated searches were conducted to identify relevant references, accounting for common variations in spelling and formatting, while intentionally excluding fuzzy matching or advanced natural language processing to maintain transparency and reproducibility.

Sentences were used as the primary unit of analysis, supporting both frequency counts and the generation of charts. Frequently used abbreviations, such as LAWS (lethal autonomous weapons systems) or CCM (Convention on Cluster Munitions), were excluded to prevent ambiguity across contexts.

To ensure both reliability and contextual accuracy, multiple safeguards were applied:

- ▶ Manual review at every stage to validate automated results.
- ▶ Close reading to capture the broader context, including distinctions between narrative statements and concrete commitments.
- ▶ Cross-referencing with language related to prevention, protection, and participation to illuminate linkages across WPS priorities.

Final verification through detailed, case-by-case review to confirm correct categorisation of references.

Interviews

Expert interviews were conducted between January and July 2025, encompassing 39 individuals. The interview pool comprised 13 governmental representatives, 15 members of civil society or academia, and 11 practitioners in international or regional organizations. The interviewees spoke in their personal capacity and were affiliated with the following States and organizations:

- ▶ **Member States:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Ireland, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, the Philippines.
- ▶ **International Organizations and Regional Organizations:** South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons; UNIDIR; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific; United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- ▶ **Civil Society and Academia:** Asociación para el Análisis de Políticas Públicas (Argentina), Association of Women for Peace Initiatives Mali, Control Arms, International Action Network on Small Arms, Mines Action Canada, Mines Advocacy Group, Nonviolence International, Small Arms Survey, University of the West Indies, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and individual consultants working on WPS.



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