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Toolkit: Addressing weapons-related risks in Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plans

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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
ERW	explosive remnants of war
LAWS	lethal autonomous weapons systems
NAP	National Action Plan
SALW	small arms and light weapons
WMD	weapons of mass destruction
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	6
<hr/>		
2.	WHAT? ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT TOPICS IN WPS NAPs	8
<hr/>		
2.1.	Gender and SALW	8
	Masculinities	8
	Firearms and gender-based violence	11
	Examples of integrating SALW into WPS NAPs	11
2.2.	Gender and mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war	15
	Examples of integrating mine action, cluster munitions and ERW into WPS NAPs	16
2.3.	Gender and conventional weapons treaties	21
	Examples of integrating conventional weapons treaties into WPS NAPs	22
2.4.	Gender and weapons of mass destruction	23
	Examples of integrating WMD into WPS NAPs	24
2.5.	Gender and emerging technologies	26
	Examples of integrating emerging technologies and cybersecurity into WPS NAPs	26
2.6.	Gender-responsive arms control, including participation and empowerment of women	30
	Examples of integrating support for women's participation into WPS NAPs	30
2.7.	Funding for gender-responsive arms control and disarmament	32
	Examples of integrating funding commitments into WPS NAPs	32
3.	HOW? INTEGRATING ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT THROUGHOUT THE WPS NAP PROCESS	34
<hr/>		
3.1.	Design phase	34
3.2.	Implementation and harmonization	38
3.3.	Reporting, monitoring and evaluation	39

1. Introduction

Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) National Action Plans (NAPs) are one of the key strategic, policy, and often also practical tools for implementing the WPS Agenda. The plans outline priorities, coordinate and sequence activities, and thereby provide a concrete road map for agreed measures to advance the WPS Agenda.

Often, NAP design, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation processes themselves, provide an important platform for various actors to engage around these topics, bringing together State ministries and agencies, civil society, academia, and others, including international organizations. These processes are usually organized into the four pillars of the WPS Agenda: the full and meaningful **participation** of women; **prevention** of and **protection** from all forms of violence against women and threats to women's rights; and post-conflict or post-crisis **relief and recovery**.

These plans offer an opportunity for integrating arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation measures into the WPS Agenda. Likewise, arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation measures, policies, and procedures offer an opportunity for the integration of WPS issues leading to gender-responsive action. Such measures are an essential tool in the prevention of all forms of armed violence and thereby the protection of women and girls, and many of the practical activities (e.g. small arms control, mine action), are essential parts of relief and recovery. Furthermore, arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation work at all levels, from diplomacy and advocacy to weapons and ammunition management, is a key avenue for strengthening women's full and meaningful participation in international security.

This Toolkit offers practical explanations of how the WPS and arms control/disarmament policy and programming fields are mutually reinforcing, and to help demystify these fields in order to facilitate their integration. It includes dozens of examples and ideas to integrate arms control and disarmament measures into WPS NAPs. Although the examples and suggestions are non-exhaustive, they can serve as references to inspire action on WPS projects and programmes.

This Toolkit is intended for practitioners and policymakers involved with developing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating of WPS NAPs as well as arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation activities, but also for those interested within the media, academia, and civil society. While this Toolkit is not a comprehensive guide to the broader processes of designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating WPS NAPs, it does touch upon various stages of these processes.

Why it matters

The adoption of NAPs is arguably one of the success stories of the WPS Agenda, showing States' commitment to implementing its principles at the national level. At the time of writing, over 230 NAPs have been issued by over 115 States since the first plan was issued by Denmark in 2005, with a number of States having produced several plans. In addition, various regional

organizations have developed or are developing regional action plans, and numerous States have issued local action plans to guide work at the subnational level.

Recent research conducted by the authors has showed that, while there has been increasing integration of WPS and arms control and disarmament issues, there is still much room for improvement.¹

- ▶ Analysis of the 236 WPS NAPs adopted by 115 States and territories between 1 January 2005 and 31 December 2025 shows that 165 WPS NAPs include at least one mention of a term relevant to arms control or disarmament.
- ▶ Most often arms control and disarmament are mentioned in the introductory section of WPS NAPs, rather than in proposed actions.
- ▶ Where there is an inclusion of relevant activities, most of these focus on increasing women's participation in arms control and disarmament. Other common actions encompass gender and small arms and light weapons and, to a lesser degree, gender and mine action and the implementation of the gender-relevant provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
- ▶ Weapons of mass destruction and lethal autonomous weapons systems have received little attention in NAPs.
- ▶ The shift away from “outward-looking” WPS NAPs² and the increasing understanding that such plans also apply to non-conflict-affected contexts open new avenues for the integration of arms control and disarmament measures.
- ▶ However, there remains a siloing of WPS work and arms control and disarmament work. This stems in part from different mandates and areas of work and expertise of various actors, different career trajectories of people involved in these fields, different vocabularies and terminologies, and also due to a lack of understanding of the mutual relevance of these fields.
- ▶ In order to improve policy coherence and reduce the reporting burden of multiple policy frameworks, the harmonization of WPS NAPs with other action plans and strategies (e.g. addressing gender-based violence or small arms and light weapons) should be enhanced.
- ▶ Overall, there is a need for data and concrete, practical examples on the intersections of gender, WPS, arms control, and disarmament. This is ever more important in view of pushback against gender equality and the WPS Agenda.

¹ Myrtilinen, Henri, Anastaesia Mondesir, and Mariana Terreros Lozano. *Closing Gaps: Strengthening the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through Arms Control and Disarmament*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNIDIR, 2025. <https://unidir.org/ClosingGaps>

² This refers to NAPs that focus mainly on WPS-related activities which a given States undertakes outside of its territory, e.g. through overseas development assistance, peacekeeping missions, or diplomacy. 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>

2. What? Arms control and disarmament topics in WPS NAPs

This section gives a brief introduction to the gender dimensions of the main weapon categories covered by WPS NAPs, including small arms and light weapons (SALW), mines and cluster munitions (including explosive remnants of war), other conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and new and emerging technologies. The section concludes with a look at gender mainstreaming across different arms control and disarmament measures in WPS NAPs.

2.1. Gender and SALW

Of the weapons categories addressed by WPS NAPs, SALW appear most often, with a greater focus on small arms than light weapons. This is likely due to the far greater circulation of small arms and their known prevalence in gender-based violence.³ Nonetheless, there are key gender perspectives on SALW that are for the most part either missing from WPS NAPs or not explicitly articulated. Two key aspects that are often missing refer to i) the link between firearms and certain expressions of gender roles, especially masculinities, and ii) the links between SALW and different forms of gender-based violence.

Masculinities

The owning and carrying of firearms is highly gendered, both in security sector institutions and non-State military and security forces, and among civilians. Not only are State and non-State security forces (e.g. militias, guerrilla groups, private security companies, gangs) predominantly composed of men, but women serving in such forces are less likely to be in roles where they would carry firearms. Civilian firearms ownership is likewise predominantly among men, often in the range of 80–90 per cent of owners, depending on the country.⁴

Men, especially younger men, are also by far the most likely casualties of firearms-related violence (both in peacetime and in conflict), accidents, and suicide by firearm.⁵ This close

³ 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; 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>

⁴ 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>

⁵ Small Arms Survey (2024). “How are sex, firearms, and homicidal violence linked?”. <https://www.smallarms-survey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-IG-2024-Gender-GVD-ENG.pdf>



UNMISS helps release former child soldiers in MirMir, South Sudan, 2019. Credit: UN Photo / Nektarios Markogiannis.

relationship between men and firearms is often linked to particular understandings or forms of masculinities, such as militarized masculinities, protector masculinities, of being an economic provider (e.g. in the case of illicit activities) or certain gang masculinities.⁶ Disarmament and arms control efforts need to account for these dynamics, or, better yet, seek to transform this masculinized relationship to firearms.

WPS NAPs are naturally focused on women and girls. Nonetheless, they should also critically engage with men and masculinities in order to better advance gender equality and women's empowerment (see Box 1).

⁶ See for 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/>; 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

Addressing masculinities in WPS NAPs

Over a dozen WPS NAPs specifically mention the need for transforming violent or otherwise harmful masculinities, especially in the context of gender-based violence prevention work. **Uganda (2008, 2011)** refers to militarized masculinities as a factor that should be taken into account in conflict analyses,⁷ and **South Sudan (2015)** refers to masculine norms in militaries.⁸

Despite the close link between men and weapons, relatively few NAPs reference masculinities directly in relation to arms control and disarmament measures. Here are some examples of references, both direct and indirect.

- ▶ **Ireland (2019):** “Further our work in understanding and challenging how harmful masculinities influence policies of disarmament and arms control, including conventional arms control, nuclear deterrence and other justifications for the possession of nuclear weapons.”⁹
- ▶ **Netherlands (2016):** “Many approaches to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration reaffirm gender stereotypes and confirm the perception of women as victims, potentially undermining the empowering leadership roles that women can play and reducing the space for men to reconsider the gender norms that prescribe certain behaviour.”¹⁰
- ▶ **Philippines (2023):** “Due to the fact that men generally are the ones to hold arms such as small and light weapons in conflict-affected communities, there is a pressing need to include men in all their diverse and intersecting identities [in] provisions that tackle promotion and prevention.”¹¹

These examples highlight not only engagement with men but also the diversity of men’s identities, and the societal norms around masculinities. This shows the importance of finding language on masculinities that opens spaces for meaningful conversations with men.

⁷ Uganda (2008). *Uganda National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2008)*. Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, p.16. and Uganda (2011). *Uganda National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (Revised Version 2011)*. Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, p. 10.

⁸ South Sudan (2015). *South Sudan National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015–2020)*. Juba, South Sudan: Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, p.17.

⁹ Ireland (2019). *Ireland’s Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2024*. Dublin, Ireland: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, p. 29

¹⁰ The Netherlands (2016). *Dutch National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2016–2019: Taking a stand for women, peace and security*. The Hague, Netherlands: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p.9.

¹¹ The Philippines (2023). *Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security 2023–2033*. Pasay City, Philippines: Philippine Commission on Women, p.35

Firearms and gender-based violence

Where there are high levels of armed violence, men and boys are the most likely casualties of firearms violence. However, in places where rates of armed violence are low, the proportion of women victims is often high.¹² Furthermore, globally, an estimated 60 per cent of all women victims of homicides are killed by family members or intimate partners, highlighting the risks posed to women and girls from domestic violence and intimate partner violence as well as in cases of so-called honour killings', especially if there is a weapon in the household.¹³

In the case of persons of diverse gender identities, there is limited data available on armed violence targeting them. Nonetheless, where specific data has been collected, such as in some Latin American countries, firearms are often used in attacks against such persons (including in mass shootings), but also in cases of domestic/intimate partner violence, so-called 'honour' killings and as a tool of coercion.¹⁴

In addition to greatly increasing the risks of a lethal domestic and intimate partner violence, firearms also facilitate conflict-related sexual violence, with a 2023 UNIDIR study finding that in "six countries where disaggregated data on weapons was available, approximately 70% to 90% of [conflict-related sexual violence] incidents are reported to involve weapons, particularly firearms".¹⁵

Examples of integrating SALW into WPS NAPs

SALW are the most common type of weapon referenced in WPS NAPs, in terms of legal and regulatory reform and enhanced data collection. Examples of increasing the participation of women in SALW regulation, arms collection and other disarmament measures are covered in section 2.6 below.

¹² UNODC (2019). *Global Study on Homicide - Booklet 3: Understanding homicide: typologies, demographic factors, mechanisms and contributors*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet_3.pdf; UNODC and UN Women (2023). *Gender-Related Killings of Women and Girls (Femicide/Feminicide) - Global estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/briefs/Femicide_brief_2023.pdf

¹³ UNODC and UN Women (2024). *Femicides in 2023: Global Estimates of Intimate Partner/Family Member Femicides*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/11/femicides-in-2023-global-estimates-of-intimate-partner-family-member-femicides>

¹⁴ Conron, Kerith J., Shoshana K. Goldberg, Andrew R. Flores, Winston Luhur, Wynn Tashman, and Adam P. Romero (2018). *Gun Violence and LGBT Adults: Findings from the General Social Survey and the Cooperative Congressional Election Survey*. Los Angeles: UCLA, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Gun-Violence-LGBT-Adults-Nov-2018.pdf>; Intersecta, Data Cívica, EQUIS Justicia para las Mujeres, and Centro de Estudios Euménicos (2023). *Gender-Based Violence with Firearms in Mexico*. <https://equis.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Gender-Based-Violence.pdf>; and Sin Violencia LGBTI (2024). *Annual Report. Homicides of LGBTI+ People in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023*. https://sinviolencia.lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Situation-of-homicides-of-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-trans-people-in-Latin-American-and-Caribbean-countries-2023_MC.pdf

¹⁵ Salama, Hana (2023). *Addressing Weapons in Conflict-related Sexual Violence: The Arms Control and Disarmament Toolbox*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/addressing-weapons-in-conflict-related-sexual-violence-the-arms-control-and-disarmament-toolbox/>

Legal and regulatory reform

Several WPS NAPs emphasize that legal reform is a vital tool in combating the proliferation of SALW, especially where existing laws fail to consider gender-specific impacts. Updating firearms legislation with a gender perspective not only strengthens control over arms circulation but also addresses systemic inequalities that increase women’s vulnerability to violence. Spain’s (2025) WPS NAP is notable for linking national regulatory frameworks to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and using knowledge produced by local and international feminist organisations as an indicator.

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Ghana (2012) “Organise a consultative meeting with the [Attorney-General’s] Office to discuss and develop a roadmap for the review of firearms and ammunition laws from ... gender perspectives.”¹⁶</p>	<p>“Existence of a gender-sensitive firearms and ammunition law approved by Parliament.”¹⁷</p>
<p>[Action] Lebanon (2019) “Review and amend all gun laws related to importing weapons and issuing permits to limit the spread of small weapons.”¹⁸</p>	<p>“Number of laws reviewed and amended.”¹⁹</p>
<p>[Action] Philippines (2009) “Strict qualifications for the issuance of license to carry arms and laws regulating possession of small arms strictly enacted and/or enforced.”²⁰</p>	<p>“[Develop] improved system for registration of small arms, which includes legitimate neuro [psychological] exams, seminar and orientation on [human rights] and women’s rights for gun owners.”²¹</p>
<p>[Objective] Spain (2025) Support control of the misuse and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, especially as regards their impact on women and girls, including those living in conflict zones, and establish an effective system for registering and controlling weapons used in acts of violence against women and girls.²²</p>	<p>“Number and proportion of Spanish reports on compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty that incorporate a specific assessment of the risk of gender violence (art. 7.4).”²³</p> <p>“Qualitative and quantitative perception of local and international feminist organizations on the effectiveness of Spain’s measures in this respect.”²⁴</p>

¹⁶ Ghana (2012). *Ghana National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2012–2014)*. Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. p.26.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Lebanon (2019). *Lebanese National Action Plan 2019-2022 on Women, Peace and Security*. Beirut, Lebanon: National Commission for Lebanese Women. p.41.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Philippines (2009). *The Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security: Implementing UNSCRs 1325 & 1820 (2010-2016)*. Manila, Philippines: Government of the Philippines. p. 13.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Spain (2025). *Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2025–2030*. Madrid, Spain: Government of Spain, p. 51.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Require psychological tests and background checks for past convictions of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, controlling and abusive behaviour or other potentially problematic behaviour before issuing civilian firearms licences, and revoking licences in the case of such offences.
- ▶ Prohibit firearms licenses for individuals awaiting trial or sentencing or who have been convicted of a crime involving the threat, attempted use, or use of violence (with or without a small arm). This includes assault, robbery, intimate partner or family-related violence, gender-based violence, or sexual violence.
- ▶ Enact legislation that allows for the confiscation of firearms and temporary suspension of firearms licenses as emergency measures during investigations of reported gender-based violence or hate crime cases.

Gender-disaggregated data and impact analyses

Several WPS NAPs highlight the gendered impacts of SALW and incorporate commitments to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data. This approach improves understanding of the different ways that men, women, and persons of diverse gender identities experience armed violence, allowing for more targeted and effective responses.

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Germany (2021) “Gender-based analyses are taken into account in controls of small arms and light firearms, in disarmament, and in arms controls and export controls. Participation by women in decision-making processes is also strengthened at all levels.”²⁵</p>	<p>“Number and proportion of measures for conflict prevention, including control of small arms and light firearms and disarmament, and mediation (support), peacebuilding, peace negotiations, stabilization, reconstruction and humanitarian assistance, which used gender-sensitive conflict analysis or requirements analysis, or other gender-responsive instruments for analysis.”²⁶</p>
<p>[Foreword] Malta (2025) “The consequences of current global trends on women, girls, and members of the LGBTIQ+ community in fragile contexts, have been significant and detrimental. The proliferation of small arms into conflict countries alone has facilitated and exacerbated gender based and conflict-related sexual violence as a military strategy.”²⁷</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>

²⁵ Germany (2021). *Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2021-2024*. Berlin, Germany: Federal Foreign Office, p. 23.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

²⁷ Malta (2025) *Women, Peace & Security - Malta’s Second National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 2025 – 2030*. Valletta, Malta: Government of Malta, p. 6.

NAP EXTRACT (CONT.)	INDICATOR (CONT.)
<p>[End Notes] Switzerland (2018) “Monitor the impact of the misuse and illicit trade of small arms and light weapons on women, including those living in conflict zones, and ensure that arms producing corporations monitor and report on the use of their arms in violence against women.”²⁸</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] United Kingdom (2023) “Collect disaggregated data on the basis of gender for the purposes of reporting, in relation to the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) policy and control, as well as to further our understanding of the gender specific impact of SALW.”²⁹</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Ensure that all data related to SALW (e.g. purchases, ownership and licences, incidents, fatalities and injuries, seizures) is disaggregated by age and gender.
- ▶ Conduct more in-depth research into the gendered dynamics of the illicit production, diversion, and sales of SALW.
- ▶ Conduct in-depth gender analyses of direct and indirect impacts of firearms violence on communities, including better understanding of mental health impacts of armed violence, including trauma, anxiety, and stress disorders, particularly on women, girls, persons of diverse identities and survivors of gender-based violence.
- ▶ Disaggregate data regarding firearms involved in gender-based violence (including whether the arms were authorized, unregistered, in civilian or police use).
- ▶ Develop standard operating procedures or guidelines for law enforcement officers when gender-based-violence cases are being reported, including questions on the possible presence or use of firearms and ammunition.
- ▶ Establish inter-agency protocols for data-sharing between national entities responsible for addressing gender-based violence and those managing firearms-related information, such as licensing authorities. This could enable, for example, firearms licensing units to consult databases of individuals with documented histories of gender-based violence before approving or renewing firearm permits.

It is also worth noting that the UN Secretary-General’s Women, Peace, and Security report (2010) proposed that States use the “Existence of national mechanisms for control of illicit small arms and light weapons” as an indicator and that they report on which agency is the focal point on SALW, and records of SALW ownership and transfer, drawing on information shared

²⁸ Switzerland (2018). *National Action Plan 2018-2022 on Women, Peace and Security*. Bern, Switzerland: Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, p. 26.

²⁹ United Kingdom (2023). *UK Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2023-2027*. London, UK: Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, p. 44.

in the context of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms And Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and to use this data as a proxy indicator of women' physical security in conflict settings.³⁰

2.2. Gender and mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war

The gendered impacts of mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) greatly depend on the gender roles in the affected area, in particular the division of labour. Especially in rural areas, the risk of exposure depends greatly on what groups (e.g. men or women, boys or girls) are expected to carry out certain activities that might put them at risk, such as collecting water or firewood, herding cattle, foraging, or using machines or vehicles that might trigger anti-vehicle mines.

Globally, the number of mine- and cluster munitions-related incidents and casualties has grown in recent years, especially due to the wars in Myanmar and Ukraine, though figures are not fully reliable given a lack of data on military casualties. Based on available data, however, most casualties in mine- and cluster munitions-related incidents globally are civilians.³¹ While there is not enough age-, sex-, or gender-disaggregated data available on cluster munitions, in the case of landmines, men and boys form the majority of the casualties globally, though women and girls are often affected indirectly as well, e.g. due to gendered expectations of care work or the loss of an economic provider to the household.

As with firearms, the death, disability, injuries and trauma caused by these weapons also have differentiated, direct and indirect impacts on men and women, which may differ based on location (e.g. urban versus rural) and on the sociocultural context. An important dimension of mine action, especially in survivor assistance, is sexual and reproductive health, which is frequently a sensitive or taboo issue. These dynamics need to be considered in survivor assistance, as does the common societal expectation of women to take on unpaid care roles in the family and community.³²

Over the past decades, concerted efforts have been undertaken by State governments, donors, non-governmental organizations, private sector actors, United Nations agencies, and others to systematically increase gender equality in mine action. Though the sector remains dominated by men, there has been some progress, with a Mines Action Canada survey of demining organizations showing an increase of women in the workforce from around 20 per cent in 2019 to 30 per cent in 2023, though often the more technical roles were mostly held by men.³³

³⁰ United Nations Security Council (2010). Women and peace and security. Report of the Secretary-General. Document S/2010/ 498. New York: United Nations, p. 42. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/691952>

³¹ International Campaign to Ban Landmines (2024). *Landmine Monitor 2024*, Geneva: ICBL-CMC. <https://the-monitor.org/api/assets/reports/Landmine-Monitors/LMM2024/Downloads/Landmine-Monitor-2024-Final-Web.pdf>

³² See also de Courcy Wheeler, Anna and Delphine Valette (2025). *From Casualties to Care: Implementing Age- and Gender-Sensitive Victim Assistance*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/from-casualties-to-care-implementing-age-and-gender-sensitive-victim-assistance/>

³³ Mines Action Canada (2023). Gender and Employment in Mine Action by the Numbers: An Update. <https://>



UNICEF offers mine awareness programme for Iraqi children, Sulaymaniah, 2011. Credit: UN Photo / Bikem Ekberzade.

Employing women in mine action has been shown to be beneficial in terms of improving community outreach and making explosive ordnance risk education more accessible and effective for different age and gender groups. Women’s employment can challenge stereotypes both in the sector and in society more broadly, while also enhancing women’s economic empowerment – all the while ensuring the efficacy of clearance operations.³⁴

The planning and implementation of land release (i.e. the return of cleared land to individuals, families, and communities, which is one of the ultimate goals of mine action) also requires a contextualized gender analysis to ensure that the process does not lead to an entrenchment of gendered inequalities.³⁵

Examples of integrating mine action, cluster munitions and ERW into WPS NAPs

WPS NAPs that integrate mine action, cluster munitions and ERW include these as part of increasing women’s participation in mine action, through States’ accession to and compliance with relevant conventions, by supporting explosive ordnance risk education programming, and by enhancing data collection and analysis.

assets.nationbuilder.com/minesactioncanada/pages/443/attachments/original/1700477530/Gender_and_Employment_in_Mine_Action_by_the_Numbers_2023_A4.pdf?1700477530

³⁴ UNIDIR and GICHD (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

³⁵ 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/>

Increasing women’s participation in mine action

Supporting increased women’s participation, gender equality, and diversity in mine action at various levels – including involvement of women in communities, in civil society, and as deminers – has been an important means of integrating mine action into WPS NAPs.

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Belgium (2022) Pay particular attention to the participation of women in demining programs and involve women in determining the areas that should be demined as a priority.”³⁶</p>	<p>“Creation of a gender criterion which will be systematically checked as part of the evaluation of new demining projects.”³⁷</p>
<p>[Narrative] Finland (2023) “Opportunities for women to participate in demining work have been strengthened by recruiting women for demining and other humanitarian mine action tasks.”³⁸</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP</p>
<p>[Action] Ireland (2011) “All Irish supported projects adhere to best practice in humanitarian mine action, including incorporating consultations with women affected by landmines.”³⁹</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP</p>
<p>[Narrative] United States of America (2023) “Additionally, as feasible, we will include the participation and leadership of women for humanitarian mine action and the clearance of explosive remnants of war.”⁴⁰</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP</p>

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Ensure that women receive the necessary technical skills and knowledge to also work in the more technical aspects of mine action.
- ▶ Promote exchanges between women deminers and agencies/organisations working on demining to share good practices on overcoming resistance to women’s participation.

³⁶ Belgium (2022). *Quatrième Plan d’Action National ‘Femmes, Paix, Sécurité’ (2022-2026)*, Brussels: Government of Belgium, p. 21.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Finland (2023). *Finland’s National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2023–2027*. Helsinki, Finland: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, p. 38.

³⁹ Ireland (2011). *Ireland’s National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2011–2014*. Dublin, Ireland: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, p. 24.

⁴⁰ United States of America (2023). *U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2023–2028*. Washington, DC: The White House, p. 14.

Accession to and compliance with international treaties

Some WPS NAPs focus on the accession to and implementation of international treaties such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Belgium (2013) “Continue action within the context of the convention on the prohibition of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines by placing particular emphasis on the effects of such weapons on women and children.”⁴¹</p>	<p>“Interventions carried out.”⁴²</p>
<p>[Narrative] Lebanon (2019) “The [National Action Plan for Human Rights] calls on the government to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty) and to complete demining activities in Lebanon, particularly in south Lebanon.”⁴³</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Contribute to international cooperation under the relevant conventions by funding projects and policies that enhance the integration of gender perspectives and women’s empowerment.
- ▶ Support international, national, and local women civil society organisations working towards the integration of gender perspectives into the implementation of key treaties and action plans.

Awareness, Education, and Early Warning about Explosive Weapons

Some WPS NAPs prioritize education and community involvement to reduce mine-related accidents by informing those most at risk about hazards and safe behaviours. These efforts aim to address specific vulnerabilities and build local resilience through safety measures, including early warning systems.

⁴¹ Belgium (2013). *Belgium National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2013-2016*. Brussels, Belgium: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 2013. p. 19.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Lebanon (2019). *Lebanese National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2022*. Beirut, Lebanon: National Commission for Lebanese Women; 2019. p. 12.

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017) “Continuously warning about the danger of mines, particularly girls and boys at school age, women and men in rural areas, and particularly vulnerable groups (hikers, hunters, agricultural workers) taking into account gender aspect of the issue.”⁴⁴</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] Croatia (2011) “Systematically point to the danger of mines, cassette ammunition and other explosive remnants of war still threatening civilian populations, especially women and children.”⁴⁵</p>	<p>“Number of training courses, conferences, expert meetings and other forms of information aimed at raising awareness about the mine danger; Number of women and children who participated in education and information about mine hazards.”⁴⁶</p>
<p>[Action] Georgia (2011) “Provide information on cleanup works to women residing near affected regions.”⁴⁷</p>	<p>“Relevant reports on cleaning up of explosive waste [remnants] of war.”⁴⁸</p>
<p>[Action] Sudan (2020) “Create awareness at the community level about the risks of landmines and explosive remnants of war through the media and educational and religious institutions.”⁴⁹</p>	<p>“Number of beneficiaries educated, Number of programs implemented.”⁵⁰</p>
<p>[Action] Ukraine (2020) “Conducting regular training for pedagogical staff and parents on the peculiarities of the safety of life of girls and boys, in particular, the handling of explosive objects.”⁵¹</p> <p>“Creation of a system of early warning of the population about the dangers associated with armed conflict (notifications of intensification of hostilities, demining, mined objects, etc).”⁵²</p>	<p>No indicators in the NAP.</p>

⁴⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017). *Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2022)*. Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Agency for Gender Equality. p. 39.

⁴⁵ Croatia (2011). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, and Related Resolutions (2011–2014)*. Zagreb: Government of the Republic of Croatia, p. 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Georgia (2011). *2012–2015 National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960 on Women, Peace and Security*. Tbilisi: Parliament of Georgia. p. 7.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Sudan (2020). *Sudan National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2020–2022*. Khartoum: Ministry of Labour and Social Development, p. 26.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ukraine (2020). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security until 2025*. Kyiv: Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, p. 25.

⁵² Ibid., p. 26.

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Review all explosive ordnance risk education material to assess whether it can be made more gender- and age-responsive.
- ▶ Increase the number of women conducting outreach and trainings in explosive ordnance risk education.

Gender-specific data monitoring and policy development

To better understand and respond to the differing impacts of mines on women and men, some WPS NAPs prioritize the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data, and the integration of gender perspectives into policy and programme development.

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013) “Conducting a gender analysis of the impact of mined areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the quality of life of people.”⁵³</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Narrative] Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017) “The information regarding landmine casualties are kept in BHMAIS database and they are classified according to gender, type of injury, age groups and explosives which caused the accident.”⁵⁴</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Narrative] United Kingdom (2014) “In Sri Lanka, humanitarian agencies supported gender sensitive demining actions where careful analysis of gender based roles influenced the choice of areas to be cleared to ensure safe access to safe sites to both women and men.”⁵⁵</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Conduct gender analyses of mine and ERW impacts on communities.
- ▶ Conduct assessments to ensure that support to survivors is age- and gender-responsive, as well as survivor-centric.

⁵³ Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2014–2017*. Sarajevo: Agency for Gender Equality, p. 36.

⁵⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018–2022)*. Sarajevo: Agency for Gender Equality, p. 20.

⁵⁵ United Kingdom (2014). *United Kingdom National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2014–2017*. London Foreign and Commonwealth Office, p. 7.



ONUCI supervises collection of weapons in Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, 2012. Credit: UN Photo / Basile Zoma.

2.3. Gender and conventional weapons treaties

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is referenced in several WPS NAPs. The ATT is the first legally binding multilateral arms control instrument to address connections between the international arms trade and the perpetration of gender-based violence. The Treaty requires States Parties in their arms export risk assessments to consider whether the material in question may be “used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children.”⁵⁶ While the most common link in this respect is with SALW, especially firearms, the ATT also applies to other conventional weapons and weapons systems which may directly or indirectly facilitate gender-based violence.⁵⁷

An emerging issue with respect to conventional weapons is the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Such use also has different direct and indirect impacts on people of different genders, but also of different ages and social classes. These differential impacts depend on the kinds of infrastructure targeted, such as utilities, hospitals, or schools.⁵⁸

While there are no specific binding international legal instruments on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, warring parties are bound by existing commitments under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and 88 States have endorsed a political declaration on the issue.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Arms Trade Treaty, Article 7(4). https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_English/ATT_English.pdf?templateId=137253

⁵⁷ 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.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-ATT-GBV-BP.pdf>

⁵⁸ UNIDIR (2024). “Gendered Impacts of the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas”. https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/UNIDIR_Gendered_Impacts_of_the_Use_of_Explosive_Weapons_in_Populated_Areas.pdf

⁵⁹ Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences

Examples of integrating conventional weapons treaties into WPS NAPs

The most common way of including arms control and disarmament measures for conventional weapons into WPS NAPs is through alignment with the ATT. However, in some WPS NAPs, the ATT is only mentioned rather than being linked to specified actions.

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Argentina (2022): “Assess the risk that the conventional weapons referred to in article 2, paragraph 1, or the elements included in article 3 or article 4 of the Arms Trade Treaty (New York, on 2 April 2012 and in force as of 24 December 2014), are used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and girls.”⁶⁰</p> <p>“Contribute to the incorporation of a gender variable in the analysis of the export licences applications that so require, according to article 7.4 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).”⁶¹</p>	<p>“Number of cases where the gender issue was examined during the processing of the export licences.”⁶²</p>
<p>[Narrative] Denmark (2014): “Gender-based violence was allocated a prominent place in the Arms Trade Treaty, where it was reflected both in the preamble and in the operative article 7.4.”⁶³</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Narrative] Finland (2018): “Finland supports implementation of Article 7(4) of the Arms Trade Treaty, on preventing gender-based violence, by all State Parties.”⁶⁴</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] Ireland (2019): “Systematically advocate for gender responsive language and action in resolutions, working groups, training programs and more throughout the Arms Trade Treaty process.”⁶⁵</p>	<p>”[Number] and quality of gender perspective and actions incorporated in resolutions, working groups, training programs and more throughout the Arms Trade Treaty process (low, medium, high).”⁶⁶</p>

Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Political-Declaration-on-EWIPA_EN.pdf

⁶⁰ Argentina (2022). *Argentine Second National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) et seq.* Buenos Aires: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, p. 26.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Denmark, (2014). *Denmark’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2014–2019.* Copenhagen: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; p. 18.

⁶⁴ Finland (2018). *Finland’s National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2021.* Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, p. 34

⁶⁵ Ireland (2019). *Ireland’s Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2024.* Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, p. 31.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

NAP EXTRACT (CONT.)	INDICATOR (CONT.)
<p>[Action] Norway (2023) “Continue efforts to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into work on arms control and humanitarian disarmament, for example through follow-up of the political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA).”⁶⁷</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] Spain (2025) “Integrate the gender perspective into the analysis and control of small and light weapons, disarmament initiatives, and the monitoring and regulation of exports.”⁶⁸</p>	<p>“Gender-focused projects applied to the control of small arms and light weapons, risk assessment, arsenal management or Arms Trade Treaty measures.”</p> <p>“Degree to which community disarmament processes supported by Spain incorporate consultations with women, invite their participation and pay attention to their specific needs.”⁶⁹</p>

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Conduct capacity-building for arms export licensing personnel on the gendered dimensions of weapons use.
- ▶ Fund research on the direct and indirect gendered impacts of conventional weapons other than SALW and ERW, for example, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

2.4. Gender and weapons of mass destruction

The gendered impacts of WMD have long been under-researched, but over the past decade or so a growing body of literature has emerged, drawing in part on the activism of women’s organizations from communities affected by the use of chemical weapons and nuclear testing, for instance.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Norway (2023). *Norway’s National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2023–2030*. Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 28.

⁶⁸ Spain (2025). *Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2025–2030*. Madrid, Spain: Government of Spain, p. 52.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Dalaqua, Renata H. (ed.) (2024). *From the Margins to the Mainstream: Advancing Intersectional Gender Analysis of Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/from-the-margins-to-the-mainstream-advancing-intersectional-gender-analysis-of-nuclear-non-proliferation-and-disarmament/>



Women first responders participate in chemical emergency training cycle organised by OPCW and Switzerland's Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), 2024. Credit: OPCW / flickr.com.

Evidence indicates variation in levels of susceptibility by gender and age to toxic chemical and biological agents, as well as differing impacts on sexual and reproductive health.⁷¹ Research on exposure to ionizing radiation following the detonation of a nuclear weapon indicates that women tend to develop cancer, heart disease, and stroke at a higher rate than men.⁷² In addition to gender, age is an important factor in considering the harm caused by radiation exposure: girls (ages 0-5 years) are the most at-risk group for developing cancer and other health consequences over the course of a lifetime.⁷³ Gender roles may also lead to differing levels of exposure, for example where one gender group shoulders caregiving duties, or first response duties in the case of WMD incidents.⁷⁴

Examples of integrating WMD into WPS NAPs

Several WPS NAPs incorporate a gender perspective in relation to disarmament and WMD, though often in broad or generalized terms rather than in detail.

⁷¹ 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>

⁷² Nichols, Amanda M. and Mary Olson (2024). *Gender and Ionizing Radiation: Towards a New Research Agenda Addressing Disproportionate Harm*. UNIDIR. <https://unidir.org/publication/gender-and-ionizing-radiation-towards-a-new-research-agenda-addressing-disproportionate-harm/>

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ See UNIDIR and International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group (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/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/UNIDIR_Factsheet_Gender-and-Chemical-Weapons_2021.pdf

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Ireland (2019) “Further our work in understanding and challenging how harmful masculinities influence policies of disarmament and arms control, including conventional arms control, nuclear deterrence and other justifications for the possession of nuclear weapons.”⁷⁵</p>	<p>”[Number] of side events relating to or including masculinities.</p> <p>Level of research commissioned (low, medium, high).”⁷⁶</p>
<p>[Narrative] Jordan (2017) “The services include offering special assistance and support to Syrians female refugees during child birth, providing safe spaces, managing crisis-prevention and self-protection, ensuring readiness in issuing alarms, preparing evacuation spaces and camps, as well as mine- and chemical-spill-detection.”⁷⁷</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Narrative] Malta (2025) “Malta is particularly focused on highlighting the disproportionate suffering of women and girls as pertains to weapons proliferation, coupled with women’s marginalization in decision-making within the nuclear field, and from 2025-2026, has been appointed the focal point to support the implementation of the gender provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).”⁷⁸</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Narrative] Philippines (2009) “Indiscriminate weapons such as nuclear arms, cluster munitions and landmines are increasingly being used in armed conflicts.”⁷⁹</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Include considerations of the potential exposure of women first responders and care workers into assessments of potential WMD threats and impacts.
- ▶ Develop gendered guidelines for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear emergencies, taking into account women first responders’ heightened risk of exposure.

⁷⁵ Ireland (2019). *Ireland’s Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2024*. Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. p. 29.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Jordan (2017). *Jordanian National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2018–2021)*. Amman: Jordanian National Commission for Women, p. 41.

⁷⁸ Malta (2025). *Women, Peace & Security - Malta’s Second National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 2025 – 2030*. Valletta, Malta: Government of Malta, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Philippines (2009). *Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2010–2016*. Manila: National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women. p. 4.

2.5. Gender and emerging technologies

The wide and rapidly evolving field of new and emerging technologies ranges from outer space weapons technology to 3D printing, from lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) to the integration of large language models (LLM) and other AI into weapons systems. Many of these technologies, including information and communication technologies, are distinctly dual-use. The gendered dimensions of these technologies have to date been under-researched. This is in part, due to their newness and complexity, but in part also due to the under-representation of women in spaces where these technologies are being developed and/or regulated.

Cybersecurity threats (i.e. threats related to information and communication technologies) have rapidly grown as an issue of concern in WPS NAPs. Such threats include data breaches, Internet shutdowns, cyber scams, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, ‘deep fakes’, the facilitation of human trafficking, and gendered mis- and disinformation, all of which disproportionately affect women, girls, and persons of diverse gender identities.⁸⁰ Emerging technologies do however also have the capacity to help facilitate the WPS Agenda and ‘digital peacebuilding’.⁸¹

Conversely, military AI and LAWS are not mentioned in any of the WPS NAPs issued until December 2024. This is problematic, as research has showed the risks of gender-, race- and disability-based biases in the algorithms underlying such systems, which may endanger civilians.⁸²

Examples of integrating emerging technologies and cybersecurity into WPS NAPs

Several States recognize digital tools and disinformation as emerging dual-use threats that can be weaponized and/or that disproportionately pose risks to women and girls, raising new challenges for the WPS Agenda, arms control and disarmament.

⁸⁰ Katharine Millar and Verónica Ferrari (2025). *A Novel Approach to the 11 UN Norms for Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace: Guidelines for Gendered Implementation*. Organization of American States and UNIDIR. https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNIDIR_Novel_Approach_11_UN_Norms_Responsible_State_Behaviour_Cyberspace_Guidelines_Gendered_Implementation.pdf

⁸¹ UN Women (2023). “Action Brief from Warfare to Peacebuilding: Employing Artificial Intelligence for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda”. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/04/from-warfare-to-peacebuilding>

⁸² See for example Chandler, Katherine (2021). *Does Military AI Have Gender? Understanding bias and promoting ethical approaches in military applications of AI*. UNIDIR. <https://doi.org/10.37559/GEN/2021/04>; and Mohan, Shimona and Dongyoun Cho (2024). “Factsheet: Gender and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems”. UNIDIR. https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/UNIDIR_Gender_Lethal_Autonomous_Weapons_Systems_LAWS_Factsheet.pdf

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Narrative] Argentina (2022) “The purpose is to acknowledge and promote the role of women, not only as potential victims of threats in the cyberspace but as active agents of change, who may make important contributions to the fight against cyberthreats, the promotion of cybersecurity and the conclusion of international agreements which may help maintain a safe, stable, resilient and peaceful cyberspace.”⁸³</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] Armenia (2024)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> “1. Assessing the specific cybersecurity threats and challenges faced by women and girls in conflict and emergency situations; 2. Developing mechanisms for reporting cybercrimes and supporting victims, through which women and girls can confidentially report cybercrimes; 3. Providing legal aid, counselling, and technical assistance to women and girls who have been victims of cybercrimes; 4. Developing mechanisms for gender-sensitive cybersecurity that include appropriate measures to protect women and girls from online harassment, cyberstalking, digital gender-based violence, trafficking and other cybercrimes, in line with the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and other relevant international instruments; 5. Conducting public awareness-raising campaigns by the RA [Republic of Armenia] Ministry of Internal Affairs on the protection of women in the field of cybersecurity and trafficking.”⁸⁴ 	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Narrative] Canada (2023) “The world is experiencing non-traditional security challenges, such as cyber threats (including technology-facilitated, gender-based violence (TFGBV) and disinformation and the misuse, abuse and perpetuation of harmful stereotypes and biases by artificial intelligence and machine learning), climate change, economic insecurity, competition in space, radicalization to violence and pandemics.”⁸⁵</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>

⁸³ Argentina (2022). *Argentine Second National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) et seq.* Buenos Aires: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, p. 12.

⁸⁴ Armenia (2025). *Third National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Women, Peace and Security 2025-2027 - Investing in Global Peace.* Yerevan: Government of Armenia, p. 34.

⁸⁵ Canada (2024). *Foundations for Peace: Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2023–2029.* Ottawa: Global Affairs Canada, p. 22

NAP EXTRACT (CONT.)	INDICATOR (CONT.)
<p>[Action] Colombia (2024) “Strengthening the training of women in military forces on cybersecurity issues is implemented as an action to prevent gender-based violence against women in all their diversities in contexts affected by urban and rural conflict.”⁸⁶</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Narrative] Finland (2023) “Internet-based disinformation campaigns also aim to exploit social divides related to gender, identity and sexuality.”⁸⁷</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Narrative] Kenya (2025) “The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) introduces new challenges, including the spread of disinformation during elections, online hate speech, and backlash from groups opposing gender equality.”⁸⁸</p> <p>[Action] Establish conflict-sensitive digital literacy campaigns and platform regulation partnerships to prevent and counter negative narratives.⁸⁹</p>	<p>“• Number of women-led initiatives in technology-driven early warning systems contributing to conflict prevention, through conflict and gender-sensitive approaches to countering violent extremism and addressing root causes of insecurity (national/county online counter-extremism platforms);</p> <p>• Per cent of conflict early warning systems that integrate AI analysis of gendered online threats.”⁹⁰</p>
<p>[Objective] Malaysia (2025) “‘Protecting Women in Cybersecurity’ - This strategy calls for the integration of gender perspectives into existing cybersecurity frameworks by evaluating and strengthening current policies to ensure they are gender-responsive and inclusive of women’s digital safety and rights.”⁹¹</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>

⁸⁶ Colombia (2024). *Primer Plan De Acción Nacional Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad Resolución 1325 Del Consejo De Seguridad De Las Naciones Unidas 2024-2034*. Bogotá: Government of Colombia, p. 46.

⁸⁷ Finland (2023). *Finland’s National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2023–2027*. Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, p. 13.

⁸⁸ Kenya (2025). *Kenya National Action Plan 2025 - 2029 For the advancement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, From Commitment to Action: Women Shaping Peace and Security in Kenya*. Nairobi: Government of Kenya, p.16.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Malaysia (2025). *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2025-2030*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, p. 34

NAP EXTRACT (CONT.)	INDICATOR (CONT.)
<p>[Action] Philippines (2023) “Provide end-to-end capacity-building initiatives for women of diverse and intersecting identities in conflict-affected/vulnerable communities, focusing on areas such as peace, human rights, governance, economic empowerment, humanitarian response, climate change adaptation, cybersecurity, and emerging digital technologies that impact peace and security.”⁹²</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] Timor-Leste (2024) “Conduct dialogue and analysis to understand security threats in cyberspace, and occurrence of conflicts and gender-based crimes facilitated through online platforms, including human trafficking, and recruitment of girls and women by trafficking networks; and to promote gender-transformative approaches to prevent cyber-related security threats and violence, and counter spread of misinformation, and promote inclusion of gender considerations in cyber security related laws and policies.”⁹³</p>	<p>“[Number] of dialogues conducted at national and sub-national levels” “[Number] of laws and policy frameworks integrating gender considerations in preventing violence, conflicts and gender-based crimes in cyber space.”⁹⁴</p>
<p>[Action] Ukraine (2020) “[C]onducting classes on cybersecurity and cybercrime counteraction in educational institutions using a gender approach.”⁹⁵</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Conduct further research into assessing potential gendered and other, e.g. racialized, risks from LAWS and ‘artificial intelligence’ algorithms.
- ▶ Support digital/media literacy initiatives to counter gendered mis- and disinformation online that may be disseminated as a tactic of hybrid warfare.

⁹² Philippines (2023). *Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2023–2033*. Manila: Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, p. 24

⁹³ Timor-Leste (2024). *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2024–2028*. Dili: Government of Timor-Leste, p. 21.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ukraine (2020). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security until 2025*. Kyiv: Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, p. 25.

2.6. Gender-responsive arms control, including participation and empowerment of women

WPS NAPs may include cross-cutting approaches that integrate gender perspectives across a particular arms control/disarmament-related sector or across several sectors. These can for example include the support of women-led grassroots or civil society arms control and disarmament initiatives, ensuring women’s meaningful participation in arms control and disarmament diplomacy and policy-making, or enhanced capacity-building and funding for such measures. This is important, given that women continue to be underrepresented in all areas of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Examples of integrating support for women’s participation into WPS NAPs

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Action] Gabon (2020) “Strengthen the capacities of women in the process of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the fight against SALW and reconciliation.”⁹⁶</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] Ireland (2019) “Strategic Outcome 2.2. Women’s leadership and meaningful participation in conflict-prevention, resolution, mediation, recovery from conflict, international security, peacebuilding and the disarmament fora is significantly improved including through empowerment.”⁹⁷</p>	<p>(selection of indicators as these are top-level outcomes)</p> <p>“[Number] of trainings and capacity building that include gender equality, gender sensitive conflict analysis and GBV response training for DFAT staff and partners, including pre-posting training.”⁹⁸</p> <p>“[Number] of quality [Youth, Peace, and Security]/WPS related events which engage young women and girls.”⁹⁹</p> <p>“Increased [funding] and support for programmes that empower adolescent girls.”¹⁰⁰</p> <p>“Level of reported inclusion of young women who meaningfully take part in decision-making, conflict prevention and peacebuilding at all levels (low, medium, high).”¹⁰¹</p>

⁹⁶ Gabon (2020). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2020–2023*. Libreville: Government of Gabon, p. 60.

⁹⁷ Ireland (2019). *Ireland’s Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2024*. Dublin, Ireland: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, p 32.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.28.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.33.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

NAP EXTRACT (CONT.)	INDICATOR (CONT.)
<p>[Action] Kenya (2025) “Establish gender quotas for cyber governance bodies, digital peace innovation hubs and train digital peace ambassadors.”¹⁰²</p>	<p>“Percentage of women meaningfully engaged in peace and security decision-making through institutionalised women-led steering committees, policy dialogues, and technology-driven advocacy platforms.”¹⁰³</p>
<p>[Action] Luxembourg (2025) “Promote the inclusion of women in discussions on disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and the fight against the illegal trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons.”¹⁰⁴</p>	<p>“Number of women represented in disarmament discussions; number of initiatives launched; number of gender equality measures included in resolutions and working groups.”¹⁰⁵</p>
<p>[Action] Mali (2015) “Establishment and support of local women’s initiatives in the collection of SLCAs [SALW] and explosive devices.”¹⁰⁶</p>	<p>“Number of SLCAs [SALW] collected.”¹⁰⁷</p>
<p>[Action] South Africa (2020) “Ensure more women are trained in gender and disarmament and participate in international forums on the topic.”¹⁰⁸</p>	<p>“Number of women trained on, and participating in, disarmament.”¹⁰⁹</p>
<p>[Action] South Sudan (2015) “Incorporate the voices and concerns of women in the drafting of the Disarmament Operational Guidelines, which will elaborate disarmament procedures and weapon management.”¹¹⁰</p>	<p>“[Number] of meetings and reports with women’s groups enlisted to participate in the disarmament programme;</p> <p>[Number] of guns and other ammunition willingly surrendered; Security reports by security organs about women’s experiences to inform preventive actions.”¹¹¹</p>

¹⁰² Kenya (2025). *Kenya National Action Plan 2025 - 2029 For the advancement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, From Commitment to Action: Women Shaping Peace and Security in Kenya*. Nairobi: Government of Kenya, p. 27.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Luxembourg (2025). *Second National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) “Women, Peace and Security” 2025-2030*. Luxembourg: Government of Luxembourg, p. 26.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Mali (2015). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and Related Resolutions 2015–2017*. Bamako: Government of Mali, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ South Africa (2020). *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2020-2025)*. Pretoria: Department of International Relations and Cooperation Office; p. 67.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ South Sudan (2015). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2015–2020*. Juba: Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, p. 45.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Increase targeted trainings and capacity-building for women and women-led organizations on all areas of arms control and disarmament, including emerging technologies.
- ▶ Review job requirements for positions in weapons and ammunition management to ensure gendered barriers are reduced or removed.¹¹²

2.7. Funding for gender-responsive arms control and disarmament

Funding has been a challenge for both WPS NAPs as well as for work on gender-responsive arms control and disarmament. Thus, the explicit inclusion of financial resources for gender-responsive work in different fields of arms control and disarmament, from research on diplomacy and advocacy, to on-the-ground measures in WPS NAPs, is an essential step in ensuring that proposed actions can be implemented in practice.

Examples of integrating funding commitments into WPS NAPs

NAP EXTRACT	INDICATOR
<p>[Narrative] Finland (2023) “Finland has promoted the addition of a gender perspective to the implementation of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, and supports the clearing of landmines with humanitarian project funding.”¹¹³</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] Ireland (2019) “Increase and strengthen women’s voices in decision making at all levels and their meaningful participation in peacebuilding. Increase funding to progress programmes dedicated to increasing and strengthening women’s voices in decision making at all levels.”¹¹⁴</p>	<p>“[Amount of] increased funding.”¹¹⁵</p>
<p>[Action] Norway (2019) “The proportion of funds allocated to peace and reconciliation, security sector reform, and global security and disarmament that are marked with a gender equality marker will also be monitored.”¹¹⁶</p>	<p>[The indicator, i.e. the use of the gender equality marker, is integrated into the action statement]</p>

¹¹² See also 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/>

¹¹³ Finland (2023). *Finland’s National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2023–2027*. Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, p.38.

¹¹⁴ Ireland (2019). *Ireland’s Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2024*. Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, p.32.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Norway (2019). *Norway’s National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council*

NAP EXTRACT (CONT.)	INDICATOR (CONT.)
<p>[Action] Slovakia (2021) “The Slovak Republic financially supports [the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearing-house for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons] through small projects on gender equality in the defence sector ‘Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans.’”¹¹⁷</p>	<p>No indicator included in the NAP.</p>
<p>[Action] Slovenia (2018) “Strengthened project and activity support of Slovenian non-governmental organizations and other development stakeholders in the area of gender equality, the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and thus women’s empowerment in this area, as well as in the demining and rehabilitation of mine victims areas, and the integration of the gender perspective into all activities of the Slovenian development cooperation.”¹¹⁸</p>	<p>“• Number of projects of Slovenian non-governmental organizations and other development stakeholders dealing with gender equality and empowerment of women, girls and children in general, especially in the field of education and support for women’s self-employment, women integration into decision-making processes and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and performance assessment;</p> <p>• The share of available bilateral official development assistance taking into account the gender perspective.”¹¹⁹</p>

Other possible actions could include the following:

- ▶ Earmark funds for increased participation of women’s civil society organizations in arms control and disarmament, including for participation in capacity-building on arms control and disarmament.
- ▶ Ensure sufficient funds are allocated to the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of arms control and disarmament measures in WPS NAPs, including a focus on impacts and identifying effective models/approaches that have been found to work in practice.

Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2019–2022. Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 59.

¹¹⁷ Slovakia (2021). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2021–2025.* Bratislava: Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, p. 8.

¹¹⁸ Slovenia (2018). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2020.* Ljubljana: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 10.

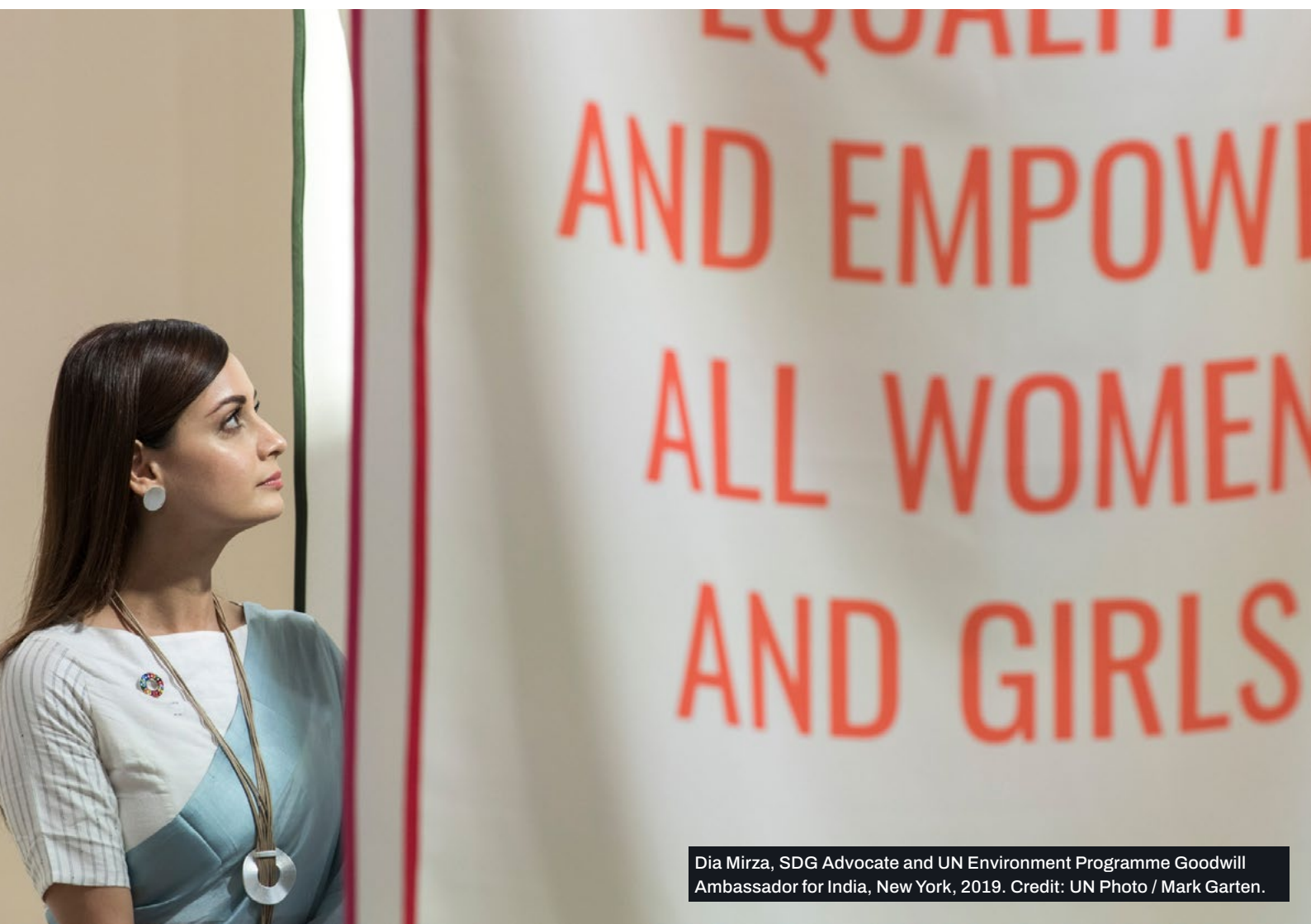
¹¹⁹ Ibid.

3. How? Integrating arms control and disarmament throughout the WPS NAP process

This section covers the integration of arms control and disarmament measures in the various stages of designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating WPS NAPs. The subsequent section examines the harmonization and alignment of WPS NAPs with other policy instruments and processes to increase synergies and avoid duplications.

3.1. Design phase

WPS NAPs are commonly drafted by a small core group, usually from the lead ministry, but often also involving staff from other ministries, as well as civil society members and organizations. While having a core group makes for an effective drafting process, it is essential for this group to be able to draw on as much expertise as possible – including not only from technical experts in the security sector, academia and civil society, but also from community members with direct experiences of the security issues – and for the process to be as inclusive as possible (See Figure 1).



An important, yet consistently under-represented, group with first-hand experience is survivors of armed violence and their carers. Although their inclusion requires additional safeguards and facilitation of access, broad participation and the solicitation of a wide range of expertise on the technical, social, economic and political dimensions of arms facilitate higher quality NAPs and related activities, while also fostering a broader sense of ownership.

Ensuring meaningful participation means that barriers to joining the process are minimized, that different kinds of expertise are valued (including direct experience), and that inputs are taken seriously and incorporated into the plan.¹²⁰ Some key barriers include language (including the excessive use of technical terms), location (including holding meetings only in the capital city) and time constraints, fraught relationships or mistrust between actors, or actors not necessarily seeing the relevance of either WPS or arms control/disarmament to their specific work.

Concerted efforts should thus be undertaken to reduce these barriers by translating documents into local languages, minimizing the use of technical or theoretical terms, holding consultations outside of capital cities. Equally relevant would be enabling online submissions, ensuring that participants feel listened to, building trust between actors, and making the case for why these issues are of relevance (for which supporting data and the identification of good practices can often be highly effective).

While inclusive and participatory approaches are necessary, at times difficult compromises and decisions have to be made around what to include in a NAP. In the case of Colombia (2024), for example, the design process was notable for its high level of inclusivity. However, although firearms-related issues were raised by women from affected communities and by civil society, these issues were not included in the NAP as other issues were given higher priority in the plan.¹²¹

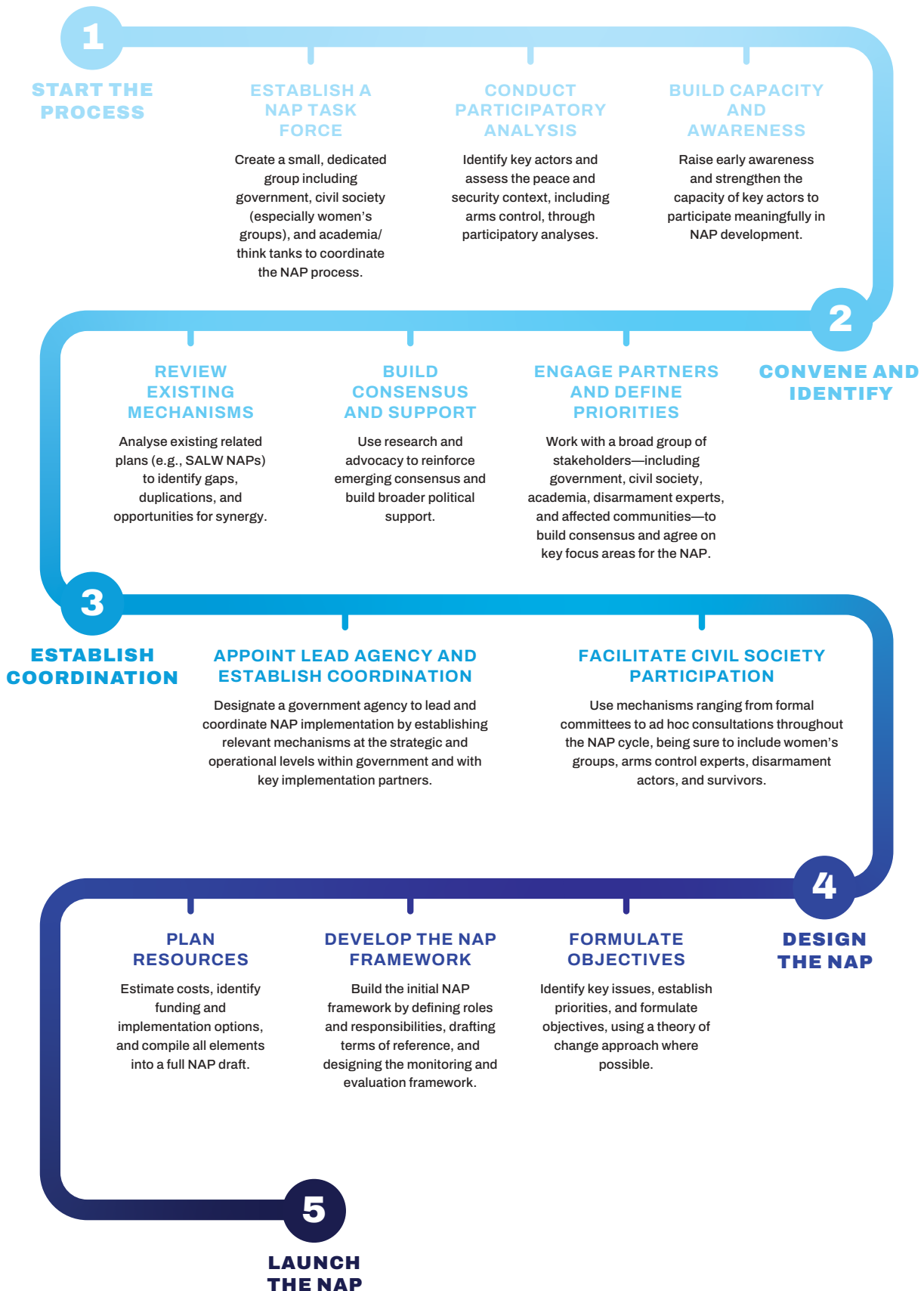
A key part of the NAP design process is to ensure that planned activities – including reporting, monitoring, and evaluation – are properly resourced. A good practice in this respect is to ensure that actors in charge of the allocation of resources, for example ministries of finance and members of parliament, are brought into the WPS NAP process at an early stage. Most WPS NAPs do not have dedicated budgets, which can be a challenge at the implementation stage; nevertheless, that fact can push institutions charged with implementation to make the necessary resources available.

¹²⁰ On ways to ensure meaningful participation, see for example GAPS UK (2019). *Beyond Consultations*. <https://www.saferworld-global.org/resources/publications/1205-beyond-consultations-a-tool-for-meaningfully-engaging-with-women-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-states>; Salmela, Katarina and Megan Manion (2018). *Women's Meaningful Participation in Negotiating Peace and the Implementation of Peace Agreements. Report of the Expert Group Meeting*. UN Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/10/egm-report-womens-meaningful-participation-in-negotiating-peace>; Djouhri, Kheira and Callum Watson (2025). *How-To Guide: Developing Gender-responsive National Action Plans on Small Arms*. Small Arms Survey. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-How-to-guide-2025-Gender-NAP-EN.pdf>

¹²¹ Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (2024). "Breaking New Ground: Colombia's Inclusive Journey to a National Action Plan". <https://nimd.org/breaking-new-ground-colombias-inclusive-journey-to-a-national-action-plan/>

FIGURE 1.

Steps in NAP design



BOX 2.

Structures for gender mainstreaming in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina offers an example of how an enabling environment – shaped by gender mainstreaming laws, strong institutional leadership, access to data, and a human security framework – can create synergies between the WPS Agenda and arms control and disarmament. The Law on Gender Equality provides a robust legal foundation, mandating that all institutions, including those responsible for arms control, incorporate gender considerations into their policies.¹²²

This legal framework, further reinforced by regional frameworks such as the EU Strategy Against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms and Light Weapons and their Ammunition, has been key. The Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina plays a pivotal role in translating this legal mandate into action. Responsible for reviewing new laws and strategies, the Agency has shaped policies by recommending gender-sensitive entry points, contributing expert input during preparatory workshops, and ensuring that gender obligations are fully integrated into national strategies.

Collaboration with research organizations, such as the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) has further strengthened these efforts, providing the data and insights necessary to push for gender-sensitive reforms, particularly in SALW control.

A key aspect of Bosnia and Herzegovina's approach is the integration of a human security framework within its WPS NAPs. This broader view of security emphasizes the protection of civilians, particularly women, shifting the focus beyond traditional security threats to include the impacts of arms control. This framework enables a more comprehensive approach to disarmament and arms control, notably in addressing the misuse of firearms in domestic violence.

Interviews conducted for this research indicate that this shift has not only shaped arms control policy but has also reframed issues such as landmine action, moving it from a purely military concern to a human rights and development issue, enhancing community resilience and contributing to broader peacebuilding efforts.

This shift towards a more inclusive, human security-oriented approach has contributed to a more open and flexible mindset within the security sector. Security actors are increasingly receptive to expanding WPS efforts to cover emerging issues such as arms control, disaster response (e.g. floods), and combating gender-related disinformation. While these efforts have helped to strengthen the case for prioritizing gender perspectives and civilian security, implementation remains challenging.

¹²² Law On Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Official Gazette of BiH 32/10, https://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/GEL_32_10_E.pdf

3.2. Implementation and harmonization

As with the design and drafting of a WPS NAP, effective implementation often relies on a core group, led by the ministry or agency charged with implementation of the WPS NAP. Cross-sectoral coordination is key, with NAP coordination mechanisms having the potential to play a central role in sustaining dialogue, sharing information on how implementation is progressing, and aligning efforts.

WPS NAPs are usually not the only action plans or strategies being implemented by a State, and a lack of coordination can lead to thematic gaps, a duplication of efforts, a lack of coherence, as well as frustration among implementers and intended beneficiaries. Good examples of how WPS NAPs can be aligned and harmonized with other policy instruments can for example be found among several States which have both WPS NAPs and SALW NAPs.¹²³

A common challenge in the implementation of WPS NAPs is staff turnover in key ministries, which may lead to a loss of institutional memory or to changes in priorities. In some States, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, this has been addressed by establishing a specialized State agency to be in charge, in that case the Agency for Gender Equality (see Box 2). Civil society organizations, think tanks, and academia engaged with WPS NAPs processes are a valuable repository of institutional knowledge on WPS processes as their engagement tends to be longer and staff turnover less frequent than in key ministries.

Apart from challenges in coordination, staff turnover and resourcing, experts interviewed for the research underpinning this toolkit also noted that WPS NAP implementation can face both active and passive resistance.¹²⁴ While some of this may be due to social or ideological opposition to the WPS Agenda, at other times it stems from WPS efforts being seen as an additional burden or as irrelevant to a given institution or organization's work. Successful strategies to counter resistance have included strategic use of data to highlight the relevance of gender or arms control and disarmament, as well as coaching and mentoring for key staff and leadership.

¹²³ For an extensive and detailed discussion, see Watson, Callum (2024). "Meaningful Partners - Opportunities for Collaboration between Women, Peace and Security, and Small Arms Control at the National Level". Small Arms Survey. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/resource/meaningful-partners-opportunities-collaboration-between-women-peace-and-security-and-small>

¹²⁴ As part of this research project, expert interviews were conducted between January and July 2025 with 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 list of States and organizations is presented in Annex 2 of Myrntinen, Henri, Anastaesia Mondesir, and Mariana Terreros Lozano. *Closing Gaps: Strengthening the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through Arms Control and Disarmament*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNIDIR, 2025. <https://unidir.org/ClosingGaps>

3.3. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

The reporting on, and monitoring and evaluation of WPS NAPs are essential not only to assessing progress and identifying emerging challenges, but also as a tool to identify and document existing and emerging good practices for gender-responsive arms control and disarmament, especially at the local level, which could, in turn, be scaled up or replicated.

In practice, however, these processes have often been challenging, whether due to inadequate, unclear, or excessive indicators; a lack of suitable data, especially that which has been disaggregated by age, sex, or gender; lack of resources for reporting, monitoring and evaluation; challenges in coordinating and collecting data; or the burdens of having to report on multiple action plans and strategies too frequently. Apart from undermining the quality of reporting, these challenges can also lead to frustrations with the process and resistance to the WPS NAP as a whole.

Some of the solutions highlighted by practitioners include:

- ▶ reducing the number of indicators;
- ▶ allowing more space for narrative (qualitative) evidence in addition to quantitative indicators;
- ▶ making reporting processes less burdensome by streamlining them and coordinating the timing of WPS NAP reporting processes with that on other action plans or strategies to ensure reporting demands do not overlap;
- ▶ using the same indicators for different, yet related, action plans or strategies;
- ▶ providing capacity-building support on monitoring and evaluation; and
- ▶ conducting midterm and final reviews, including detailed examinations of arms control and disarmament-related measures, of WPS NAPs.

Furthermore, there is a continuing need for more systematic collection of age-, sex-, and gender-disaggregated data, as well as of concrete examples of which actions have or have not worked in practice, of WPS NAPs measures in general, and of arms control/disarmament-related activities specifically.

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