

Who are we?

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security ('the Coalition') is a coalition of civil society organisations and individuals advocating for women's rights and empowerment in issues related to women, peace and security. The Coalition seeks to support and enhance the implementation and scope of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018,¹ and work with the Australian Government towards the realisation of the goals set forth in the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women Peace and Security.²

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Where are we now?

It has been 15 years since the United Nations adopted Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which recognised the importance of women's equal and substantive participation as actors for peace and security. Since that time, there have been seven subsequent resolutions, operationalised through the development of National Action Plans at the country-level. As of December 2015, fifty-five countries have created National Action Plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and associated resolutions.

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Following UNSCR 1325 in 2000, there have been seven further UN Security Council resolutions adopted under the title of 'Women, Peace and Security'. SCRs 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013) are primarily focused on preventing and responding to sexual violence as a tactic of war. SCR 1889 (2009) calls for global indicators to monitor implementation of SCR 1325 and for greater integration of gender in post-conflict planning and financing. Security Council resolution 2122 (2013) is focused on measures to enable women to participate in conflict resolution and recovery and the importance of women as actors in the women, peace and security arena. Most recently, the Security Council adopted SCR 2242 which aims to enhance institutional mechanisms for UN-wide integration of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and to recognise the importance of women as agents in countering violent extremism.

Despite the international recognition of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, more action is needed. We know women's leadership and substantive participation is essential for sustainable peace, yet, women are still being excluded from peace talks. Post-conflict recovery processes are still failing to reflect the priorities of women and girls; police and peacekeeping forces remain male dominated and women and girls continue to face violence on an alarming scale. On average, only 3 percent of the military in UN missions are women³ while a review of 33 peace negotiations, found that only 4% of participants—11 out of 280—were women.⁴ There has been a failure to address the root causes of gender inequality and slow progress on women's participation. There has also been limited resourcing for the women, peace and security agenda. A review of 47 national action plans on women, peace and security in 2014 showed that only 11 had a budget.⁵

Women activists and women's rights organisations were instrumental in the adoption of UNSCR1325 and these actors continue to demand inclusion in peace and security-related decision making. Considering the interests, needs and priorities of women and enabling their equal contribution makes efforts towards peace and security more inclusive and more effective. It also enables humanitarian programming and disaster response to address the gendered impacts of crises

Civil Society and the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018

Australia launched its first National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security in October 2012. It is a whole-of-government document, coordinated by the Office for Women. Under the NAP, the Attorney General's Department, Australian Civil-Military Centre, Australian Federal Police, Department of Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet have current responsibilities.

Unsatisfied with the scale and quality of the engagement with the initial drafting of Australia's NAP, civil society organisations worked together to organise the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security. This annual event is designed to facilitate effective dialogue between civil society and the Australian Government on Women, Peace and Security in the context of UNSCR 1325. The product of the Dialogue is an Annual Civil Society Report Card on the implementation of Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security designed as a tool for government in enhancing their implementation of the NAP and the WPS agenda more broadly.

The Sustainable Development Agenda and Women, peace and security

The Coalition welcomes the commitment to promoting peace, justice and strong institutions as one of the 17 Global Goals that make up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, reference to women, peace and security is conspicuously absent. Goal 16 contains twelve targets; none of these explicitly consider gender.

It is proposed that some indicators currently being developed under Goal 16 be disaggregated by age and sex. However, worryingly, there are no proposed indicators which directly focus on women's experiences of, and needs in relation to, peace and security or measures for women's participation in peace talks and post-conflict reconstruction. For example, there is no proposed indicator in relation to sexual or gender-based violence.

The Coalition calls on the Australian Government to adopt, and to advocate for other governments to adopt, an approach to Goal 16 which recognises existing commitments and places women, peace and security at the centre of its efforts. This approach simply make sense, given the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable peace, justice and inclusive governance.

The fact that the principles of the Women, Peace and Security agenda have not been reflected in Goal 16 does not change the existing obligations created by Security Council resolutions and national action plans, or make the women, peace and security agenda any less critical.

The Coalition urges the Australian Government to lead by example, by adopting four key approaches to inform action under Goal 16:

- (a) Make connections between Goal 5 and Goal 16 in implementation;
- (b) Draw on existing frameworks such as UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, the Beijing Platform for Action, and UNSCR 1325 global indicators to implement and track progress against Goal 16.
- (c) Utilise and resource existing commitments and mechanisms such as the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in implementing the Global Goals.
- (d) Recognise the instrumental role of civil society to the women, peace and security agenda.

¹ Further details as to the role and aims of the Coalition are available at: <http://wpscoalition.org/role/>

² UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242

³ UN Women (2015), *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*, available at:

<http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/media/publications/en/03awomenpeaceeneg.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.