



**The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women  
Peace and Security**

**Submission to the**

**Senate Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable  
Development Goals (SDGs).**



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## Executive Summary

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security's submission to this Inquiry, outlines that Australia's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals must recognise the interconnectedness between sustainable peace and sustainable development.

We make recommendations for better linkages between the SDGs and Australia's commitments to the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

- **Recommendation 1:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP must expand the focus from protection to prevention, prioritising the full and effective participation of women in the maintenance of peace and security and conflict prevention.
- **Recommendation 2:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP must clearly demonstrate how Government policies, plans, and actions are promoting peace and security both domestically and internationally.
- **Recommendation 3:** The Australian Government must initiate a public awareness campaign on the SDGs that clearly communicates a focus on conflict prevention; the human dimensions of security; and the importance of addressing gender inequality and promoting women's human rights to the achievement of the SDGs.
- **Recommendation 4:** Develop a national implementation plan for the SDGs which make explicit the importance of the WPS agenda to achieving Goal 16 and the pivotal role of gender equality for achievement of all of the SDGs in order to provide policy coherence and enable a whole-of-government approach to achieving the SDGs.
- **Recommendation 5:** Establish a gender balanced multi-sectoral reference group comprising members from civil society, academia and the private sector who have expertise in WPS and gender to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the Inter-Departmental Committee on SDGs. WPS, gender equality and women's empowerment should be a standing item on the agenda of this multi-sectoral reference group.
- **Recommendation 6:** Existing and any proposed cross-government/whole of government mechanisms to support implementation of the SDGs should link with existing cross-government bodies such as the Inter-Departmental Committee on Women, Peace and security.

## Introduction

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security (WPS Coalition) is a non-partisan and independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks and individuals working to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in Australia, Asia and the Pacific region and globally.

Our vision is a world in which gender equality, and the contributions and rights of diverse women and girls, are at the forefront of transforming conflict to build peace.

The Coalition, through its advocacy and advisory work, is aiming to ensure that the Australian Government's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognises the importance of women, peace and security across the 17 goals and explicitly makes the link between Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment and Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

As a Coalition, we work to harness the collective power of women's movements and peace movements towards our vision in Australia, our region and globally. The SDGs provide a key moment for this collective action, linking the work of domestic organisations and those with an international focus within Australia with regional and global women, peace and security networks.

This submission considers four aspects of the Inquiry terms of reference:

- a) The potential costs, benefits and opportunities for Australia in the domestic implementation of the SDGs;
- b) The understanding and awareness of the SDGs across the Australian Government and in the wider Australian community;
- c) What governance structures and accountability measures are required at the national, state and local levels of government to ensure an integrated approach to implementing the SDG that is both meaningful and achieves real outcomes;
- d) Which of the SDGs is Australia best suited to achieving through our ODA program, and should Australia's ODA be consolidated to focus on achieving core SDG.

To provide a comprehensive map linking the SDGs to the WPS agenda, we enclose as an annex a mapping undertaking by us.

## Contact

Email: [wpscoalition@gmail.com](mailto:wpscoalition@gmail.com)

Phone: +61411145652

Website: <http://wpscoalition.org>

## WPS Coalition Steering Committee Members

Anuradha Mundkur, ACFID

Barbara O'Dwyer, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Barbara K. Trojanowska, Monash Gender, Peace and Security

Carol Angir, Actionaid Australia

Navanita Bhattacharya, Independent Expert on WPS

Ludmilla Kwitko, WILPF

Melissa Monterio, CMRC, NSW

Roslyn Dundas, CARE Australia

Sharon Smee, International Women's Development Agency

# The potential costs, benefits and opportunities for Australia in the domestic implementation of the SDGs

*“We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”<sup>1</sup>*

The two goals most relevant to the women, peace and security agenda are Goals 5 (achieve gender equality) and 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies). The Australian Government can be a leader in ensuring that the women, peace and security agenda is at the centre of efforts to support Goal 16 and that connections are made between Goal 5 and Goal 16.

The achievement of peace and the achievement of equality and justice for all people together with the full inclusion and representation of women in all their diversity make these two goals inseparable. There is, however, no target specific to women, peace and security, not even in Goal 16. Despite this omission, the 2017 report of the UN Secretary-General on women and peace and security details how the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda contributes to the achievement of the SDGs, enhances the effectiveness of interventions and facilitates sustained peace and the prevention of conflict.<sup>2</sup>

**Recommendation 1:** As the Australian Government considers the goal and vision of the Second National Action Plan on Women peace and Security (2<sup>nd</sup> NAP), it is vital to expand the focus of the NAP focus from protection to prevention, prioritising the full and effective participation of women in the maintenance of peace and security and conflict prevention. This can be done by:

- Including an explicit reference to the SDGs, specifically the link between Goal 5 and Goal 16.<sup>3</sup>
- The NAP must include (a) specific goals to work towards sustainable peace and (b) clear indicators to show whether these targets are being met.
- Making explicit the links with other relevant cross-government mechanisms and plans and considering how the 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP will coordinate with and reflect this existing work, such as Australia’s National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 and the Inter-Departmental Committee on the SDGs.
- Cooperating with other countries in the region through exchanging lessons learnt, good practice and research findings in relation to the implementation of the WPS Agenda including NAPs and interlinkages with the 2030 agenda.

It is also important to communicate the SDGs within the Australian Government as an agenda which spans both domestic and international issues and requires both domestic implementation as well as prioritisation as part of the Australian aid program. Community-based roundtable discussions (see below) organised by the WPS Coalition provided unequivocal community support for a peace and security agenda that has a strong domestic focus, while recognising the need to be linked with international priorities and activities as well. The community-based roundtables strongly advocated for a domestic program built around addressing inequality; and a peace-based foreign policy grounded in principles of ensuring gender equality, promoting peace and stability, focusing on preventing conflict and reflective of our international human rights commitments. (see figure below). This articulation can inform the Government’s approach to the SDGs.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (page 2/35). [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_70\\_1\\_E.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security. [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2017\\_861.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_861.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Note the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Action Plans of Sweden and Netherlands reference the 2030 Agenda.

**Figure 2: Dual Focus for Peace and Security**



**Recommendation 2:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP must clearly demonstrate how Government policies, plans, and actions are promoting peace and security both domestically and internationally by:

- Clearly articulating an approach to Goal 16 focussed on sustainable development and human security.
- Promoting the importance of women's leadership and effective participation to achieve Goal 16 as well as all of the other SDGs.
- Promoting the importance of women's rights organisations as agents for change and increasing investment in women's rights organisations and networks.

- Drawing on existing knowledge and 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.
- Ensuring mechanisms driving a whole of government approach on women, peace and security, such as the Inter-Departmental Working Group on women, peace and security, are also utilised to drive action on Goal 16.
- Ensuring adequate resourcing for the development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP including civil society engagement and resourcing for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and to support the functioning of a whole-of-government secretariat to coordinate Australia's actions on WPS.

## The understanding and awareness of the SDGs across the Australian Government and in the wider Australian community – the importance of listening to women's voices

In generating understanding of Goal 16 on peace, justice and institutions as well as the importance of gender equality and women's effective participation to the achievement of all the SDGs, listening to the voices, experiences and needs of women and girls both in Australia and our region is critical.

Women are largely excluded from processes and forums where decisions are made regarding approaches to national security and peace. This applies in Australia just as in conflict affected countries. Women's voices must be heard in all decision making processes that lead to policy decisions on national security, in all its forms, so that all sources of preventing and resolving violent conflict are included – not only military or armed police action. All forms of peacebuilding must be included to ensure we have a genuinely inclusive and peaceful society which can influence other nations to pursue a less militarised approach to order, peace and security in the world.

To achieve this, peace needs to be reimaged and security redefined. In September 2017, the WPS Coalition organised a series of roundtables in each Australian capital city, with the support of the Australian Government, to provide a space for women to discuss what peace and security means in practice. These community-based discussions demonstrated the importance of adopting a human security approach to the implementation of Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions and the importance of gender equality for achieving sustainable peace.

The roundtables engaged both individuals and organisations working domestically as well as those with an international focus, aligning with the aims of the SDGs to create these connections. A Talanoa discussion was also held at the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women with Pacific feminists and women's human rights defenders coming together to voice their concerns, priorities and ideas for Australia's WPS agenda in the Pacific region. Discussions have been collated into a summary report and provides a crucial resource for considering approaches to SDG 16.<sup>4</sup>

The outcomes of the discussions demonstrate the importance of developing approaches to Goal 16 which take into account community-led definitions of peace and security in Australia and our region, and which acknowledge the importance of women's leadership and participation in women, peace and security policy and practice.

**Recommendation 3:** The Australian Government must initiate a public awareness campaign on the SDGs that clearly communicates a focus on conflict prevention; the human dimensions of security;

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<sup>4</sup> Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security (2017). Listening To Women's Voices And Making The Connections To The Women, Peace And Security Agenda, Fifth Report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace And Security, available at: [http://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety\\_2018\\_report\\_ART\\_web.pdf](http://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety_2018_report_ART_web.pdf)

and the importance of addressing gender inequality and promoting women's human rights to the achievement of the SDGs.

## **Governance structures and accountability measures required at the national, state and local levels of government to ensure an integrated approach to implementing the SDG that is both meaningful and achieves real outcomes**

The Coalition plays a crucial role in tracking Government progress against the current National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS through an annual dialogue and the production of a civil society report (see reference list). This space for civil society engagement and the resulting recommendations should also inform the Government's implementation of the SDGs.

We support the Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID's) proposal for a national implementation plan for the SDGs.

**Recommendation 4:** Develop a national implementation plan for the SDGs which make explicit the importance of the WPS agenda to achieving Goal 16 and the pivotal role of gender equality for achievement of all of the SDGs in order to provide policy coherence and enable a whole-of-government approach to achieving the SDGs.

**Recommendation 5:** Establish a gender balanced multi-sectoral reference group comprising members from civil society, academia and the private sector who have expertise in WPS and gender to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the Inter-Departmental Committee on SDGs. WPS, gender equality and women's empowerment should be a standing item on the agenda of this multi-sectoral reference group.

**Recommendation 6:** Existing and any proposed cross-government/whole of government mechanisms to support implementation of the SDGs should link with existing cross-government bodies such as the Inter-Departmental Committee on Women, Peace and Security.

## **Which of the SDGs is Australia best suited to achieving through our ODA program, and should Australia's ODA be consolidated to focus on achieving core SDG.**

While the WPS Coalition has highlighted the importance of Goal 16 and Goal 5 in this submission, we believe that the SDGs are interconnected and build on each other. It is crucial that as the Australian Government implements the SDGs, that it connects targets across the goals and explicitly recognises the interdependence of the goals. We believe that a focus on gender equality and sustainable peace as cross-cutting issues provide a mechanism for making these links across the goals and targets and across domestic and international spaces.

## Annexure

# Table: Sustainable Development Goals and the WPS Agenda

		Prevention	Participation	Protection	Relief & Recovery
<b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY 	<b>5.1</b> End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	●			
	<b>5.2</b> Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres	●		●	
	<b>5.3</b> Eliminate all harmful practices	●		●	
	<b>5.4</b> Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work				●
	<b>5.5</b> Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	●	●		
	<b>5.6</b> Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights			●	●
	<b>5.A</b> Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources	●	●		●
	<b>5.B</b> Enhance the use of enabling technology to promote the empowerment of women	●	●	●	●
	<b>5.C</b> Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	●	●	●	●
<b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	<b>10.2</b> By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status		●		
	<b>10.3</b> Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome	●	●		
	<b>10.7</b> Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people			●	●
<b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	<b>16.1</b> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	●			
	<b>16.2</b> End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	●		●	
	<b>16.3</b> Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	●		●	
	<b>16.4</b> By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows	●			
	<b>16.5</b> Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	●			
	<b>16.6</b> Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	●			
	<b>16.7</b> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all level	●	●		
	<b>16.10</b> Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	●		●	
	<b>16.A</b> Strengthen relevant national institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime	●		●	
	<b>16.B</b> Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development				

## Reports and References:

WPS Coalition (2017). *Listening to Women's Voices and Making the Connections to the Women, Peace And Security Agenda*, Fifth Report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace And Security, available at: [http://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety\\_2018\\_report\\_ART\\_web.pdf](http://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety_2018_report_ART_web.pdf)

WPS Coalition (2017) Submission to the Foreign Policy White Paper: Practical and effective integration of a gender equality perspective and Women, Peace and Security (WPS), available at: <https://wpscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2017/02/wpscoalition-fp-wp.pdf>

2016 Fourth Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2017), available at: <https://wpscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/fourth-annual-civil-society-report-card-on-the-national-action-plan-for-women-peace-and-security.pdf>

2015 Third Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2016), available at: <https://wpscoalition.org/category/2015/2015-report-card/>

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