

DISCUSSION PAPER

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN ASIA PACIFIC: EMERGING ISSUES IN NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognising the importance of the 15th anniversary of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the UN Global Study ('Preventing Conflict, Securing Peace', UN Women 2015) on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda called for the redoubling of efforts at the UN, and among States and civil society, to fulfil the goals of this agenda. In October 2015, at the High Level Open Debate in the UN Security Council, States renewed their commitment to UNSCR 1325 by unanimously adopting Resolution 2242. Both the Global Study and UNSCR 2242 emphasise the changing global context of peace and security, highlighting the gender dimensions of the escalation in violent extremism, the mass forced migration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and of the impact of climate change. These global challenges have major implications for peace and security, and particularly the harmful effects on the human rights of women and girls.

Although there is growing scholarly, government and civil society awareness of the unequal, gendered dynamics and impacts of conflict, there is far less understanding of violent extremism, mass displacement, and climate change, and their gender-specific causes and consequences. These emerging issues are having a visible and growing impact on peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular on the achievement of women and girls' security. Conflicts in the region both affect and are affected by climate-induced natural disasters, and resource degradation and scarcity. Conflict and disaster (and often their combined effects) create or contribute to mass displacement, in which women and girls are adversely affected. Displacement of large populations, in turn, fuels instability and conflict with social dislocation and resettlement. In such contexts, where some population groups are often marginalised or excluded, and women and girls become targets

of abuse and exploitation, the opportunity is heightened for extremist ideologies to take root, reasserting order and control over women, and for violent masculinities and mobilisation to spread. To be relevant and meaningful in the Asia Pacific region, the WPS agenda must be able to connect traditional and emerging security issues and provide practical approaches in mutually addressing them.

This paper explores the gender and security challenges with respect to preventing violent extremism and promoting a culture of peace and tolerance, and responding to the causes and effects of mass displacement and climate change. These challenges marshal significant resources, bureaucracy, and crisis management capacities, but to date none of the responses to them have adequately addressed the gender dynamics and inequalities involved. To develop an integrated WPS framework, the paper considers four key commonalities across the emerging issues of violent extremism, mass displacement and climate change. The three issues all represent (1) direct threats to women's human rights and freedoms; and (2) drivers of conflict with their root causes in structural gender discrimination and inequalities; that (3) underappreciate women's participation and resilience; and (4) require gender-inclusive knowledge and gender-responsive solutions. These common dimensions suggest the basis for a practical framework that could inform the design of new generation WPS National Actions Plans (NAPs) in the Asia-Pacific region.

National Action Plans are a crucial institutional mechanism for mainstreaming women's rights and gender equality in peace and security. They provide a concrete way to link the range of frameworks and agendas addressing women's rights and gender equality in conflict, disaster, sustainability and insecurity contexts. For

example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an important complement to NAPs with its focus on substantive gender equality and non-discrimination, its recognition of the diversity among women, and with General Recommendation 30, its broad definition of conflict and post-conflict situations. NAPs make it possible and feasible for governments and civil society to establish nationally meaningful goals and targets to address multiple security challenges together, and they typically require agencies and actors to deliver on specific responsibilities and goals. While, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to provide a single, universal framework for realising peaceful and sustainable development, they are largely an aggregation of agendas. By themselves, the 17 SDGs do not provide the mechanisms for integrating multiple agendas relating to development, peace, security, sustainability, human rights and gender equality. These must be developed at national and regional levels. **WPS NAPs could serve that purpose if they are explicitly designed to integrate rather than aggregate common goals between peace and security**, and other agendas such as those relating to displacement, climate change, and the prevention of violent extremism. The paper examines the institutional opportunities and constraints to such integration. It considers where conceptual and implementation tensions might arise between and among the WPS, displacement, climate change and countering violent extremism (CVE) agendas based on research and perspectives from the Asia Pacific region. Finally, the paper offers some practical recommendations for governments, the UN and donors, and civil society actors including women's organisations, on approaches to designing NAPs that address and connect traditional and emerging WPS issues.

INTRODUCTION

In the 15 years since the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000), the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda has never been more salient on the agenda of states and international organisations. The Global Study ('Preventing Conflict, Securing Peace', UN Women 2015) commissioned by the UN Secretary-General, thoroughly examined the implementation of Resolution 1325 since the year 2000. A central argument of the Global Study is that there are significant implementation gaps in the agenda with respect to women's participation in peace and security processes, including conflict-prevention and protection of women's human rights in conflict-affected environments. At the historic Security Council High-Level Open Debate in October 2015, the overwhelming consensus of State parties was that failure to deliver on achieving women's equal participation, protection, and contribution to the prevention of conflict is severely undermining the prospects for sustainable peace around the world.

However, attention is currently focused on the need for national, regional and international peace and security actors to act on their responsibility to implement women's rights and gender equality. In addition to the eight WPS resolutions, a range of frameworks exist and inform this responsibility: among them the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and General Recommendation 30 on women's rights in situations of conflict and post-conflict, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Counter-Terrorism framework, the 1995 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the 2015=2030 Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2014 Global Call to Action to Protect Women and Girls in Emergencies, and commitment to action at the World Humanitarian Summit.² But there is a need to understand and

operationalise the shared goals and strategies among these frameworks and to consider how they might be aligned in the short-, medium- and long-term. For instance, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stated at the October 2015 WPS Open Debate that the "implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) must be aligned with the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals", with particular reference to: SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and SDG 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies (see also UNSG WPS 2015, para 7). This alignment is vital to both the SDGs and the WPS agendas. In aligning the goals and strategies of multiple frameworks pertaining to women, peace and security, however, the problems of insecurity should be approached not just from the global level but from the bottom-up as well: including from the perspective of women's lives where, for example, disaster and conflict, lack of access to clean water and the fear of sexual violence may be experienced simultaneously as part of the same everyday experience.

Responsibility for addressing gender equality and women's rights in peace and security will involve a range of institutions from local, national, regional and international levels; and not only the traditional security sector institutions. Regional inter-governmental and civil society organisations (CSOs), for example, can play a crucial role in realising the WPS goals.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

Security Council Resolution 1325 calls for the integration of gender across UN Security Council policies and operations; including the need for equal participation of women in decision-making, a gender approach to policy analysis, and the provision of sex-specific data and research on

the gender dimensions of peace and security. The WPS framework is focused on four pillars (UN Secretary-General 2010) addressing the gender-specific impacts of conflict on women and girls, including: (1) Protection against sexual and gender-based violence; (2) promoting women's participation in peace and security processes, and (3) supporting their roles as peace builders in the prevention of conflict, and in (4) post-conflict relief and recovery. The implementation of these pillars must be interconnected in peace and security settings, but also in the contexts of preparedness for and response to violent extremism, mass displacement, disasters and climate change. Investing in participation, for example, has a strong impact on prevention and protection.³ This is true not because women are more peaceful or less bound by ethnic, political, and religious allegiances than men, but because they represent at least half of the population and their participation and progress is essential to achieve peace and security from the community to the international level. Promoting inclusive participation also addresses protection issues by tackling the impunity for sexual and gender-based violence linked to women's disempowerment in particular (especially women's disempowerment within marginalised groups). Moreover, conflict-prevention requires recognising the fragility and instability caused by failure to address gender inequality and violent masculinities, and is thus linked to protection of women's rights. In an environment where political, ethnic and religious persecution is widespread, women's structural inequality – on account of gender as well as minority status – compounds the risk of human rights violations. States and non-states actors often permit, or even condone, impunity for these violations. Such failures of protection perpetuate the cycle of violence.

Women, peace and security National Action Plans (NAPs) are a driving force for facilitating state action on the WPS agenda (UN Women, 2015: 241; Miller et al 2014), although there are other tools for WPS implementation (Hudson, 2013: 17).⁴ The NAPs indicate national policy commitments to addressing the gender dimensions of peace and security and women's inclusion in these processes.

Importantly, they provide concrete goals and targets for meeting these commitments. NAPs can be tailored to address local and regional peace and security challenges and capacities, as well as global issues with the broad WPS framework. From a policy diffusion perspective, NAPs illustrate the implementation process or stage of 'prescriptive status' following the formal adoption of the WPS agenda in UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions. At present, more than 50 countries have adopted NAPs for the implementation of resolution 1325, including 11 countries in the Asia Pacific region (according to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific [UNESCAP] group of countries) which have adopted WPS action plans: Afghanistan, Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste (see True 2016). Given the increased WPS institutionalisation trend, there is a major opportunity to promote further national and regional consensus and action on WPS. Acknowledging and supporting women as peace and security actors with significant capacities, which are under-recognised, under-utilised, and under-resourced, is an entry point for bringing together relevant policy frameworks on traditional and emerging threats to security, including violent extremism, mass displacement and climate change (see UNSG WPS 2015, para 9).

ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Asia-Pacific region is the largest global region, with some of the world's most protracted conflicts, usually occurring at the sub-national level within states rather than between them, and in peripheral regions. These conflicts often fall off the radar of the international community and very few situations are on the agenda of the UN Security Council due to their non-recognition as conflicts⁵ and their low-intensity, with 'battle death counts' frequently below the 1,000 deaths threshold of international conflict data collection (see Uppsala Conflict Programme 2015). Moreover, the region is distinct as conflicts are largely not the product of weak or fragile states, rather, many involve government forces in strong, developmental states.

A common theme across the Asia-Pacific region is the limited progress in women's political empowerment, representation and voice compared with other global regions. The relatively marginal representation of women in positions of political power stands in stark contrast to the growing wealth and prosperity of the region, to which women's economic participation and empowerment has contributed. All countries in the region, except Palau and Tonga, have ratified or acceded to CEDAW, enshrining gender equality and non-discrimination norms. Progress in applying CEDAW to the development of laws and policies across the region has been considerable. For instance, the outlawing of domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, and human trafficking has recently been undertaken in many Asia-Pacific countries. Many governments are committed to mainstreaming gender equality perspectives in national economic and social planning, requiring that national development plans include gender equality provisions and allocating resources to developing NAPs (UNW-CEDAW 2012). However, women's political representation in the region is below the global average and there are significant barriers to the participation of non-elite women in political parties and systems. Strong resistance to women's participation in public life is evident in the formal statements of leaders and politicians and in publicly expressed societal attitudes. Local cultural, customary, and religious discourses are frequently used to moralise that the 'rightful' place of women is not in politics. Furthermore, violence against 'political' women who speak up in public, defend human rights, or seek political office is very common in Asia-Pacific, especially in conflict-affected countries and sub-national regions. Violence and the constant threat of it strongly dissuade women from political participation, despite CEDAW and UNSCR 1325, which mandate women's participation in decision-making (see True, George, Niner and Parashar 2014).

Seven regional organisations globally have adopted dedicated Regional Action Plans (RAPs) on WPS.⁶ In the Asia-Pacific region, only the Pacific Islands Forum adopted a RAP (for 2010-2015) which has now expired. ASEAN has adopted a regional framework to eliminate violence against

women (VAW), the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women.⁷ Given the connections between VAW and the perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict, disaster and displacement situations, and by violent extremist groups, such a framework is an important foundation for WPS action plans. However, without a WPS regional framework there is no consensus or institutional mechanism to prioritise action in the Asia-Pacific region. As a consequence women in conflict-affected communities in the region do not have access to the commitments put in place by Resolution 1325. They must make use of a wider range of institutional mechanisms on development, gender equality and human rights, including the application of CEDAW General Recommendation 30, "to ensure their meaningful participation in and benefit from all initiatives and measures to build peace and establish security" (Asia Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security 2015).

With respect to WPS NAPs, they can and have taken different forms addressing a range of nationally-specific WPS issues in different states across Asia-Pacific. In the Philippines for example, the NAP covers the domestic implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty provisions through national laws to regulate small arms transfer and exchange, given their frequent use in the perpetration of gender-based and sexual violence in conflict-affected areas. The Pacific Islands regional plan 2010-2015 was focused on women's contributions to peace-building and security sector reform (George 2016), whereas Nepal's NAP enables the inclusive participation and protection of war widows in post-conflict decision-making (2016). By contrast, Australia's NAP (2012-2018) has sought to implement targets to increase women's participation in security sector institutions, especially in frontline and leadership roles in the Australian Defence Force (Australian Council for International Development 2014; Koo 2016). The Global Study (pp. 241-46) suggests that baseline studies on community and women's security needs, as well as institutional audits of responsible agencies, are useful to conduct before NAPs are developed for any given time-period.

CHAPTER 1.

EMERGING ISSUES: CHALLENGES AND APPROACHES

The WPS agenda is flexible enough to extend beyond issues of inter-state and intra-state conflict to address local and global challenges to sustainable peace and security, such as violent extremism conducive to acts of terrorism, mass displacement and climate change.

The prevalence of rising violent extremism around the world with the integration of local/regional groups in transnational networks is a pressing challenge for individual and state security. UNSC WPS resolution 2242 (para 11) recognises that there is both an opportunity and an urgency in bringing together the key violence prevention objectives of the WPS, countering violent extremism (CVE) and counter-terrorism (CT) agendas. The resolution specifically requests the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue throughout their mandated activities and to consult “with women and women’s organisations to help inform their work”. The promotion of gender perspectives on peace and security and women’s participation in conflict-prevention has the potential to be harnessed to prevent violent extremism conducive to acts of terrorism. The Global Study, however, expresses important concerns about the potential militarisation of the WPS and women’s rights agenda when mobilised to assist with CVE and CT. It notes that counter-terrorism interventions have sometimes exacerbated women and girls’ insecurity and perpetrated violations of women’s human rights, in particular in militarised contexts. It

recommends “supporting women peace-builders and respecting their autonomy, particularly in the context of countering various forms of extremism across religions and regions, which have launched violent attacks on the rights of women and girls to education, to public life and to decision making over their own bodies” (UN Women 2015: 5).

There is currently no international consensus on women’s roles in CVE. Typically, women are excluded from decisions around responses to violent extremism and terrorism or there is a gender stereotype that women, especially as mothers and family members, are inherent peace-builders. However, recognising that women are participating in extremism as agents of violence and being recruited to extremist groups in gender-specific ways enables us to see the unique and specific ways that women are positioned within different political groupings and religious communities to be able to prevent or counter violent extremism and terrorism. Within the Asia-Pacific region there is a wide range of violent extremism involving Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic religious fundamentalism as well as class and clan-based movements. The region presents strong similarities across countries in terms of the challenges of extremism from fundamentalist Muslim insurgents, some of who are linked to transnational *Jihadi* movements including Islamic State (IS)/Daesh. However, national responses to violent extremism are diverse across the region, and there is little evidence of a gender perspective in counter-terrorism/countering violent extremism programmes outside of largely

civil society-led programmes, such as ‘mother schools’ in several countries, including Pakistan (see Schläffer and Kropiunigg 2015).

Mass displacement is also a pressing WPS issue. The experience of displacement and migration resulting from conflict, violent extremism and terrorism, and disasters, differs for women and girls from that of men and boys, due to structural gender inequalities in access to resources, basic rights and needs. Mass displacement thus intersects with the WPS agenda and its call to achieve women’s equal participation, protection, and contribution to the prevention of crises. An estimated one-in-seven humans is currently a migrant, refugee, internally displaced person (IDP) or asylum seeker. At the end of 2015, there were 40.8 million displaced persons, and the average number of people displaced each year by conflict and violence has continued to rise over the past decade (IDMC 2016). Most of this movement is within countries and the majority – as much as 80 percent of all IDPs – are women and children.⁸ In Asia-Pacific there were 3.2 million new IDPs at the end of 2013, fleeing armed conflict, violence and human rights violations as well as disasters (80 percent in Afghanistan, India, Myanmar and Pakistan). Between 2008-2013, a total of 80.9 percent of all displacement due to disasters took place in Asia, with the highest displacement levels in Bangladesh, China, India, the Philippines, and Viet Nam, affecting men and women during displacement and resettlement in gender-specific ways (IDMC 2014: 7; Ganguly-Scrase and Lahiri-Dutt 2016).

Displacement is also connected with climate change, another significant WPS issue. Natural disasters may be the product of, or intensified by, climate change and extreme weather, such as rising tides, typhoons, cyclones and flooding. Climate-induced extreme weather events are increasing in frequency and intensity affecting many countries and displacing many people in the Asia-Pacific region, with gender-specific impacts on women and men. Complex and severe displacement situations arise in countries affected by both conflict and natural or climate-

induced disasters. In 33 out of 36 countries globally affected by armed conflict between 2008 and 2012, hazards and disasters forced people to flee their homes (IDMC 2014: 44). Failure to recognise all forms and phases of displacement and their gender dimensions, may exacerbate conflict and environmental tensions. Thus, conflict prevention and disaster risk reduction measures need to be considered in a gender-sensitive and integrated way. The countries facing multiple and often recurrent high risks of climate-induced natural disaster are frequently those that have limited or low capacity to deal with their scope and magnitude, often compounded by high levels of societal gender inequality.

The common focus on gender equality, women’s participation and human rights highlighted by the UN Secretary-General in the three UN reviews in 2015⁹ provides a framework for preventing and responding to violent extremism, mass displacement and climate change. **The rationale for including these emerging issues in WPS NAPs is fourfold: (1) They represent direct threats to women’s human rights and freedoms; (2) they are drivers of conflict with their root causes in structural gender discrimination and inequalities; (3) they underappreciate women’s participation and resilience; and (4) they require gender-inclusive knowledge and gender-responsive solutions.** Each of the rationales for integrating violent extremism, mass displacement and climate change in the design of new generation NAPs in the Asia-Pacific region is discussed in the remainder of this section.

I. DIRECT THREATS TO WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Violent extremism, mass displacement and climate change constitute direct threats to women’s human rights and freedoms and as such need to be reflected in WPS action plans. Specifically, the impunity for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) disproportionately affecting women and girls is heightened in the contexts of displacement and climate-induced disaster, as well as integral to the threat of violent extremism and terrorism.

With respect to violent extremism conducive to acts of terrorism, the UNSC recognises SGBV as both a tactic of war and of terrorism. Moreover, the UN Secretary-General's 2016 conflict-related sexual violence report notes that, "misogynistic media propaganda and crackdowns on women's rights and freedoms have presaged the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war, terrorism and political repression" (para 13).¹⁰ UNSC Resolution 2242 (2015) further affirms that conflict-resolution and counter-terrorism strategies can no longer be decoupled from efforts to protect and empower women and girls and to combat conflict-related sexual violence. The case being built by the Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict for making women's protection and empowerment central to counter-terrorism strategies, demonstrates that the targeting of women and girls – accompanying the rise of extremism – is not incidental, but premeditated, systematic and strategic. Importantly, mass sexual and gender-based violence is both a push factor for women and men to engage in violent extremism, and a pull factor, especially for men to engage as (foreign) fighters (see Parashar 2009, 2011). In the case of IS, SGBV is one of the strategies used to recruit men as (foreign) fighters with the promise of sex slaves and wives. This political strategy is also used to take over territory and resources by displacing populations who flee their community and across borders for fear of rape and the shame/dishonour that accompanies it within traditional societies. As the UN Secretary-General report on conflict-related sexual violence of 2016 states "women's bodies are used as biological weapons to alter the demography of a region and to unravel existing kinship ties" (para 14) (see note 1).

With respect to mass displacement and its specific threats to women's human rights, women are more likely to be displaced than killed during conflicts (World Bank 2011). Women also constitute a majority of displaced populations globally that suffer human rights violations due to conflict, violent extremism, disaster and climate change. The experience of displacement

brings economic and social insecurity as well as physical and political insecurity. Displacement is associated with higher proportions of female-headed (single-parented) households, which generally have higher rates of poverty and malnourishment (Ghoborah, Huth and Russett 2003; World Bank 2011). The material effects of protracted displacement in households also place women at greater risk of intimate-partner violence, and SGBV. In Afghanistan, for example, a 2012 study found that "underage internally displaced girls were targeted by outsiders for cheap marriages and that 26.9 per cent of IDP households had at least one child who had been forced to marry", and this was particularly true among female-headed households (Hennion 2014). The forcible re-location of over 100,000 Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state by the Myanmar government into displacement zones has led to high rates of gender-based violence in camps, where official reporting is restricted (Davies and True forthcoming). In the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda in December 2014, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimated that 5,000 women were exposed to sexual violence as 4.1 million people were forced to leave their homes and live in bunkhouses and tent cities in Leyte province. Some women have been further forced into trafficking to survive and provide for their families (UNFPA 2015).

Women often lose their traditional support and protection mechanisms when they relocate to a new and unfamiliar area, and where it may be too risky to access the police or justice system. Female displaced persons face specific challenges related to health, reproductive health, livelihoods, education and security that are often ignored in the humanitarian response. A recent study found that urban displaced Afghan females in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad face significant constraints to accessing education, health and employment opportunities compared with male counterparts. Of those surveyed, 7-in-10 said they had never attended school. "Many of them find themselves kept in 'prison-like' seclusion, and are not permitted to venture outside their homes

and unable to seek much needed assistance” (Schmeidl 2015). Most striking was the significant loss of freedom and social capital, and extreme marginalisation that women experienced (also Schmeidl and Tyler 2014).¹¹ Women and girls are often unable to seek assistance in disaster/displacement due to gender social norms. For instance, in Pakistan, when seeking emergency aid, women have been harassed and abused for violating *purdah*. In camps, women’s needs are frequently unmet, especially with respect to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), psychosocial health, livelihoods, education, camp coordination and management. Women may have to travel outside camps to procure water, firewood or to reach latrines, often without adequate protection or privacy. Poor design and unsafe shelter and WASH facilities are major risk factors for SGBV in IDP camps, in Kachin and northern Shan in Myanmar for example (Kachin Women’s Peace Network [KWPN] and GEN 2013).

Women and girls also often face grave threats to their physical security when passing checkpoints and crossing borders, for example, in Myanmar (UNSG 2016 CRSV, para 15). South-east Asia has the largest volume of hazardous, irregular border crossings of any global region, and the female proportion of those crossing borders has grown dramatically (Pickering and Powell 2016).¹² During displacement, women and girl’s mobility may be greatly restricted by the security situation within and around refugee or IDP camps. Moreover, when women survivors return to their homes and communities, they may be further targeted for SGBV (UNSG 2016 CRSV), as well as face socio-economic marginalisation.

The direct threats to women’s human rights presented by violent extremism, mass displacement and climate change demand a gender-sensitive human rights approach to prevention, protection response, relief and recovery.¹³

II. DRIVERS OF CONFLICT WITH ROOT CAUSES IN STRUCTURAL GENDER INEQUALITIES

Violent extremism, displacement and climate change are all drivers of local and international conflict, with structural gender inequalities among their root causes. That is, the likelihood of extremism, displacement and climate change affecting conflict and insecurity is heightened by the existence of structural gender inequalities in societies, and mitigation of these issues is made more challenging by the presence of unequal and discriminatory gender relations.

Recent research has shown a relationship between higher levels of gender equality in a society and the risk of being a target/victim or perpetrator of terrorism (Salman 2015). The causal pathways through which structural gender equality affects the occurrence of terrorist events have yet to be fully explored. However, the implications of this macro research are that more equal gender norms and societal structures that uphold women’s rights are likely to be protective factors against the rise of extremism.¹⁴ There is an existing knowledge base on how extremism frequently causes discrimination against women and children in law and practice (Iman and Yuval-Davis 2004; AWID 2008, 2015, 2016; Hudson et al 2011). We should also be concerned about how systemic gender-based discrimination in specific contexts may create the conditions for the rise of extremism. The 2015 UN Secretary-General report on situations of sexual violence in armed conflict states that, “across the varied contexts examined a common point is that waves of conflict-related sexual violence take place against a backdrop of structural gender-based discrimination” (UNSG 2015 CRSV, para 11). Given the connections between systemic gender-based discrimination and SGBV, and the use of SGBV by extremist groups, governments must provide context-specific, gender analysis of the risk factors for extremist ideologies and political violence. The WPS NAPs could prioritise the development of tailored early-warning indicators and systems that connect the investigation of violations of women’s rights

and of changes to gender status in local law and practice, to the early warning and prevention of the spread of extremist ideologies and violence.

Gender inequalities are inter-connected with the causes and consequences of displacement and climate change, as well as violent extremism. The situation of high risk and low capacity to respond, with respect to displacement and climate change in many Asia-Pacific countries, is associated with and/or compounded by gender inequalities. A disproportionate figure of 70 percent female deaths and a large proportion of displaced persons resulting from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami is illustrative (Neumayer et al 2007), as is the analysis of the 2010 floods in Pakistan (see U.S State 2011, Bukhari and Rizvi 2015). Survival strategies, such as such as marrying off daughters to generate income in the context of “debt and dependency on humanitarian assistance”, reinforce the gender inequalities that partly led to the displacement in the first place (UNSG 2016 CRSV, para 17).

The South Asia Women’s Resilience Index (Action Aid and EUI, 2015) measures disaster-preparedness for climate change and other environmental factors in eight countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, with Japan as a benchmark country). The Index finds that seven countries – other than Japan, which has invested in women’s disaster preparedness – have barely incorporated women’s needs or invested in women’s capacities to prepare for disasters. The Index shows that the lack of investment in gender-equality in social, economic, infrastructural, and policy institutions renders countries highly vulnerable to disasters and magnifies the effects of disasters and crises.

Gender-related factors often cause displacement as well as affect the experience of displacement, return and recovery. For instance, SGBV (including trafficking) targeted at women and girls is a key strategy to force people off their land/property. The threat of such violence may also be major reason to flee, as in the case of Chittagong Hill Tribeswomen scared off their indigenous land (Chakma and Hill 2013; Da Costa

2016). Displacements due to war, military land confiscations, agribusiness expansion, hydropower dams, and mining have created thousands of cases of land conflict in Myanmar (Eleven Myanmar, 2014). The extent to which returnees from displacement are able to resume their lives depends greatly on gendered factors. Women and girl returnees, for example, typically have weak claims on land and inheritance rights and/or lack adequate documentation of these, given biased land administration and management (Faxon et al 2016). Moreover, the gendered experiences and needs of displaced women are frequently not addressed by transitional justice processes, as in the case of Timor-Leste and its Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (Hovil 2013). In Tamil communities in Sri Lanka, single women who head nearly 60,000 households, resulting from displacement due to conflict, describe an ever-present threat of sexual exploitation by the military. This threat of violence compounds women returnees’ insecurity due to their lack of access to land and other productive assets, and to financial and food security (see UNSG 2016 CRSV, para 13).

There is a causal relationship between structural gender inequalities and the risks and insecurities associated with violent extremism, displacement and climate change revealed by research in different global contexts, including the Asia-Pacific region. This relationship calls for a gender perspective on peace and security and the integration of these rising threats to women’s security in WPS action plans.

III. THE FAILURE TO HARNESS WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION AND RESILIENCE

Women’s participation and resilience is increasingly recognised as crucial to the prevention of conflict and violent extremism and the mitigation of climate change and displacement. However, institutions and processes have yet to fully harness these capacities in policy, planning and decision-making.

Over the past two years there has been significant attention paid to the participation of women and women's organisations in CVE (de Jonge Outdraat and 2016; Fink, Zeiger and Bhulai ed. 2016; OSCE 2013).¹⁵ At the Security Council Open Debate on WPS (2015), the UN Secretary-General stated that "at a time when armed extremist groups place the subordination of women at the top of their agenda, we must place women's leadership and the protection of women's rights at the top of ours".¹⁶ The UNSCR 1325 (2000) emphasises the critical contributions of women and women's organisations to conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building, while SCR 2122 (2013) stresses that women can also play an important part in preventing violent extremism and in delegitimising and reducing support for extremist groups (see also UNSG WPS 2015, para 4). At the same time, it must be recognised that many women are involved in promoting violent extremism, even participating in terrorist activities across the Asia-Pacific region. It is essential to better understand the gender-specific reasons for women and men's recruitment into extremist groups. Women's support for extremist organisations varies from logistical, kinship and intelligence to direct combat, including as suicide bombers. Women have joined militant groups of all ideological persuasions after experiencing human rights violations, including SGBV; within their own communities, and perpetrated by state security forces through their counter terrorism/insurgency efforts. Moreover, women are often supportive of ideological, militant groups as the groups provide for material needs in the community, ease their social burdens and ensure safety for themselves and their families when the state or governments have failed to do so.

The international recognition of women's political agency within the WPS agenda means taking seriously women's support for and recruitment to extremist movements, as well as the roles of women and women's CSOs in promoting a culture of non-violence and tolerance in the Asia-Pacific region. Governments must find ways to involve women leaders and women's organisations in the design of CVE and CT programmes, and policies

that recognise their knowledge and legitimacy in the community. Greater knowledge-generation and sharing is needed on the impact of violent extremism on women in the Asia-Pacific region, and their roles in the family, the workplace, and in community organisations, in both supporting and preventing it (Fink et al 2015).

In situations of forced displacement and climate change, women and girls are often depicted as vulnerable, weak and dependent victims in need of protection rather than agents of community resilience and recovery. The ways in which women experience migration and displacement can lead them into collective action and leadership roles to shape new and sustainable solutions. For example, in Myanmar – a country with multiple protracted conflicts in political transition – the response to the effects of Cyclone Nagis in 2010 triggered and unified women's groups in civil society. Women's coming together in the disaster response has since expanded into movements to address violence against women, discriminatory land rights, and women's inclusion in the Myanmar peace process. Consequently, the issue of gender inequality in Myanmar's social, economic and political structures has been raised in the public realm for the first time since independence. Similarly, women's organisations across the Pacific Islands have come together to lead regional activism on climate change mitigation. They have been at the forefront of climate change action linking gender, economic and climate justice issues. Initiatives such as FemlinkPacific's 'Women's weather watch' mobilises women's household and community-level knowledge through community radio to negotiate risk reduction, adaptation strategies, alternative livelihoods and the relocation of entire communities.

If climate change and displacement are not incorporated as WPS issues in NAPs, women's participation and leadership in these areas may not be supported. For instance, in the Pacific, the cultural resources such as matrilinearity and land, which have enabled women's participation in peace and security processes are precisely those resources eliminated by situations of

climate change and displacement. George (2016: 384) describes the case of a women leader in the relocated Cartaret Islands community, Tinputz, whose quest for an equal role in decision-making to promote trade and economic prosperity in resettlement was received as a threat to male power and customary gender roles. In this context of climate-induced displacement, UNSCR 1325 did not assist her leadership to enhance women's security.

The WPS agenda has yet to systematically address the linkages between gender, displacement, disaster-preparedness and climate change and to recognise and promote the benefits to operational effectiveness from women's enhanced participation and resilience. Only recently has there been recognition of the need to involve women in disaster-preparedness and climate mitigation, for instance in the 2015 Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2016 Ha Noi recommendations for action on gender and disaster risk reduction to improve the prevention and mitigation of disaster, climate and conflict risks. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit re-committed organisations to promoting women's participation in humanitarian situations, such as displacement zones and camps, to ensure gender-specific service provision, protection and safety, as well as long-term self-reliance and development outcomes. Moreover, women play crucial roles in bringing consensus in major areas of international cooperation, notably the Paris climate change negotiations (Ivanova 2015; Robinson 2016), as well as in peace agreements (UN Women 2015; Paffenholz et al 2016).

All countries should be able to realise the promise of women's participation in and leadership on the major peace and security challenges of our time. With the pressing nature of environmental insecurity in Asia-Pacific, and the precedent of civil society organising that already connects issues of climate change, disaster preparedness and displacement, WPS NAPs could further direct and consolidate government and non-government actions on these issues, while promoting and enhancing women's political agency and resilience.

IV. THE NEED FOR GENDER-INCLUSIVE ANALYSIS AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE SOLUTIONS

Women's participation and resilience as discussed above in (iii) can only be harnessed and supported with gender-sensitive policy analysis. Such analysis should enable gender-responsive solutions to preventing and/or mitigating the effects of violent extremism, displacement and climate change. These solutions, in turn, should be devised to protect women's human rights, as discussed in (i); address gender inequalities as root causes that make conflict outcomes more likely (discussed in ii); and facilitate women's participation.

Gender-inclusive approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism have yet to be devised despite the large number of counter terrorism think-tanks, research organisations and regional initiatives addressing the rise of violent extremism in Asia-Pacific.¹⁷ There is currently a paucity of information on women's contributions to violent extremism, within government policy frameworks in the region, and little engagement between organisations working on CVE and women's groups working against fundamentalism and violence generally. Yet gender-inclusive and sensitive knowledge, including women's knowledge and experiences of SGBV, has the potential to inform CVE/CT responses through early warning prevention and reduction of risks. This knowledge requires women's participation, which is crucial for early warning and prevention, but also community de-radicalisation programmes and rehabilitation and reintegration of radicalised groups and former terrorists.

Mass displacement and climate change affect women and men differently because of gender inequalities. To address this, gender analysis should be mainstreamed into assessments and response strategies for refugee and IDP settlements, and women's knowledge and leadership should inform all strategies and solutions for displaced populations and communities at risk of disaster and climate

change. A range of new tools and indicators have emerged that integrate baseline data on gender equality and women's empowerment, governance, livelihoods and ecosystems to bridge the knowledge and capability gaps on the gender-specific sources of individual and community resilience. For example, both the Environment and Gender Index (EGI) based on 72 countries and the South Asia Women's Resilience Index (WRI) assess gender equality and women's empowerment in institutional settings affecting environmental and disaster preparedness. They reveal areas where women's resilience for disaster risk reduction and recovery is poor and therefore important to monitor and target, such as addressing gender inequalities in economic livelihoods and tackling high levels of violence against women as foundational issues that have an impact on post-disaster recovery (Action Aid and EUI 2015). These indexes could further integrate conflict indicators and local women's knowledge to provide a 'joined-up' approach to women's security that is useful to both policymakers and communities.

The Ha Noi recommendations for action on gender and disaster risk reduction agreed in May 2016 provide important guidelines for countries in the Asia-Pacific region on how to implement the four priorities of the Sendai framework on disaster risk reduction in a gender responsive and inclusive way. These recommendations stress the need to institutionalise the leadership of women and diverse groups in disaster preparedness in national and local mechanisms. Two significant recommendations are: Priority 4, recommendation 3 (b) the call to address underlying inequalities and risk factors including access to resources, which are necessary for building back better; and (c) to allocate resources for women-led, gender responsive early-warning, preparedness and recovery policies, plans and programmes (cf. UN Sendai Framework 2015: 23, para 36a (i)).

CHAPTER 2.

TOWARD AN INTEGRATED WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY FRAMEWORK

The challenges of violent extremism, mass displacement and climate change provide an opportunity to better respond to emergencies and to build early warning and prevention systems. The WPS agenda provides a framework to take up this opportunity. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Kyoto Protocol do not address issues of human security; while the 1952 UN Refugee Convention did not anticipate the substantial displacement flows from conflict, natural disaster and environmental change. The Sendai framework on disaster risk reduction, however, echoes UNSCR 1325's focus on gender-inclusive approaches to conflict-prevention. It states that, "there has to be a broader and a more people-centred preventive approach. Disaster risk reduction practices need to be multi-hazard and multi-sectoral, inclusive and accessible in order to be efficient and effective" (UN Sendai 2015, para 7).¹⁸ Thus, there is a need to integrate national and international commitments from a gender perspective at national and regional levels with the adoption of multiple frameworks addressing gender equality, security, displacement and climate change (especially the SDGs, CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030).

With a broad, all-encompassing approach to the drivers of gendered insecurity, new generation WPS NAPs could enable such an integrated, gender-sensitive approach to sustainable security and

peace. The NAPs developed by individual nation-states or regional organisations could integrate and implement the four Sendai Framework priorities for action, SDGs 5, 13 and 16 within and across the participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery pillars of 1325 consistent with women's rights and gender equality goals in CEDAW and the Beijing Platform. There is also the potential for integration between WPS NAPs and other NAPs for example on EAW, CVE/CT, climate change, SDGs, and disaster management at regional, national and subnational levels. Bringing together the strengths of all frameworks could generate powerful commitments to women's participation, protection and roles in prevention.

INSTITUTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

There are opportunities (and constraints) for new generation NAPs to address the global challenges of violent extremism, mass displacement and climate change tailored to local conditions and priorities. The WPS agenda (UN Women 2015), provides a platform for national and regional level frameworks and initiatives. Governments in Asia-Pacific have accepted the need to prevent and counter violent extremism and this presents an opportunity for developing WPS NAPs **focused on violence prevention**. Policymakers in the region need to recognise and support women and women's organisations as prevention actors,

as highlighted in the recent UNSCRs 2122 (2014) and 2242 (2015).¹⁹ These resolutions note the lack of adequate frameworks for recognising and supporting women's roles in peace and security at the state/country level. WPS NAPs could enable the **recognition of women's diverse prevention roles** not just as mothers but as community and religious leaders, frontline workers such as teachers and health professionals, government officials, and policy analysts. Moreover, NAPs could facilitate coordination among the range of prevention actors on the ground in their efforts to counter/challenge/resist fundamentalism and/or the earliest expressions of extremism conducive to violent extremism and terrorism.

There is an opportunity within WPS NAPs to build on **women's knowledge and experiences in families and communities to develop an early warning approach involving preparedness and rapid response to violent extremism, to climate-induced disasters and displacement**. Such an approach could prioritise partnerships with communities and CSOs in which women participate and also lead. Community organisations and families may have better access to vulnerable individuals than government actors and may be able to lead broad grassroots movements to protect against disaster and to prevent fundamentalism and violence. In several experiences in Asia-Pacific, the resilience of women's CSOs in responding to 'non-political' disasters have enabled them to come together to drive peace processes. Crisis-responses can create positive spillover effects in bringing together humanitarian/development/security actors (see Faxon *et al* 2015; Lee Koo 2012, Le Billon and Waizenegger 2007). With respect to the prevention of violent extremism, the UN Secretary-General argues that "in order to build counter-narratives and counter-strategies and pave the way for reparations and redress ...it is critical to invest in the capacity of women's groups to lead grass-roots efforts to counter extremism and youth radicalization" (UNSG CRSV 2016, para 22). This could be achieved through using popular culture and local media to counter stereotypes and promote diversity and gender equality (cf. UN Women 2015: 230)

Integrating humanitarian, IDP protection and WPS frameworks could enable a more effective, long-term response to structural gender inequalities, which are among the root causes of conflict, displacement and violent extremism. For example, WPS NAPs are weak on the recognition and protection of women's socio-economic rights, which is the basis for women's participation in peace and security, and an important conflict and violence prevention strategy. However, **some aspects of IDP protection go further than WPS action plans and have the potential to strengthen their operationalisation, such as by focusing on the need to secure socio-economic rights** in the areas of housing, land and property. This focus is crucial for protection from SGBV and women's rights in post-conflict relief and recovery in particular.

In the Asia-Pacific region, women and other civil society actors are already challenging policy frameworks that do not take account of climate-induced displacement, and are contesting fundamentalist interpretations of religion that seek to control women's bodies and mobility. The Global Study (UN Women 2015: 230) refers to efforts to train women religious leaders to work as mentors in their communities as one such initiative. In Indonesia, for instance, there are initiatives within Islamic communities to promote gender equality and provide leadership training for female preachers and directors of Islamic boarding schools (*Pesanteran*) as a way of modelling and furthering a moderate, tolerant Islam (Muhummad *et al* 2007; Rinaldo 2011; Kull 2009). Women's organisations are also engaged in supporting displaced women, and their economic livelihood and political decision-making roles within IDP camps and in resettlement. While there are significant challenges in getting representatives of women's groups to the peace table, they are frequently the groups on the frontline of crisis response, and committed to remaining in-country for recovery and reconstruction **despite resource-based constraints limiting the use of crisis response funds for long-term prevention and preparedness** (Higelin and Yermin 2015; GenCap 2015).

Thus, there are **opportunities for local and national governments through WPS NAPs to create networks among local initiatives** where requested, and to assist with scaling-up the effectiveness and influence of these initiatives. This is especially important given how difficult it is for policymakers to access the local/private realm of the home/household, religious school, and community, and particularly women's roles in these institutions. This is a major constraint for the CVE/CT agenda but less so for the WPS agenda given the established network of women's civil society initiatives. WPS NAPs could address this constraint by prioritising support for initiatives that aim to cultivate respect for women's rights and equality and in this way counter fundamentalist ideas as part of public debate. Monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives should identify effective strategies and opportunities for scaling up successful activities.

A major constraint for integrating emerging issues within WPS NAPs may be **the lack of a knowledge-base on the causal connections** between women's participation and leadership, and structural gender inequality on the one hand, and reduced incidence of violent extremism and mass displacement, enhanced disaster preparedness and climate mitigation on the other. While the development of an Asia-Pacific region-wide evidence base connecting systemic gender-based discrimination and extremism, for instance, is emerging, we cannot wait until the time it is fully established before supporting the development of more effective, gender-aware national and regional counter-terrorism policies in Asia-Pacific. The same could be said with regard to the evidence that women's empowerment and leadership help to prevent or mitigate the effects of disasters.

WPS NAPs that recognise the challenge of preventing or reducing the risks associated with climate change, displacement, and violent extremism should enable immediate responses to discriminatory practices and incidents. A 'benefit of the doubt' approach should be applied

based on past cases which show that structural preconditions, such as systemic gender inequality and discrimination, are often precursors to violence. Programmes based on emerging research on gendered risk factors for violence carry the risk of violent extremism or terrorism not 'playing out'. However, they also carry additional benefits to states in being assisted with empowering women in their local political, economic and social institutions, increasing community well-being, social inclusion and economic productivity beyond the prevention of violent extremism.

In a tangible way, WPS action plans could assist with the integrating of SGBV protection and women's empowerment for a more effective response to displacement and disaster as well conflict. Collating reporting, evidence and data collection across these various settings would educate decision-makers and support crisis responses.

CONCEPTUAL AND IMPLEMENTATION TENSIONS IN NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

Five tensions between our understanding of what WPS means and the implementation of WPS goals in NAPs are identified, and need to be taken into account when designing new generation WPS NAPs.

Firstly, there is a concern that bringing together WPS and CVE/CT agendas may lead to WPS being subsumed in the far larger and better resourced CVE/CT agenda (Cf WIIS Global 2016: 2). There is a tension between the common focus of the WPS and CVE agendas on the prevention of violence, and the concern that such integration may instrumentalise women and the WPS agenda and lead to their militarisation (UN Women 2015). Past implementations of CVE/CT agendas involving militarised responses in Asia-Pacific communities have sometimes been associated with brutal acts of violence, including against women and girls. Violence by state armed groups may serve to heighten grievances and, ironically,

to increase the support for extremist groups. Problems for women and women's organisations in civil society arise with the inconsistent approach by the state, including the police and security sector, toward extremist groups who carry out violent threats in everyday public life. In some countries in the Asia-Pacific region, hate crime recognition and legislation is not clear or strong, nor does it recognise the agency of women. There are examples of government actors effectively condoning extremist groups on matters of women's rights. Thus, as the Global Study (UN Women 2015) argues, efforts to counter violent extremism must not compromise women's rights in any way. Rather, they must empower women as part of efforts to foster greater resilience in families and communities as stressed in UNSCR 2178 (2014).

Secondly, CVE, disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation and WPS or broader gender equality and anti-violence against women programming may have similar conceptual goals when the focus is on women's empowerment and creating safe spaces for traditionally excluded and marginalised women to be heard, and to develop their agency to create positive change within their communities. However, implementation tensions arise given that engaging with women leaders and women's and community organisations is an unexplored area of the Counter-Terrorism agenda. It is clear from groups such as Sisters against Violent Extremism (SAVE), that women's voices may be compelling when they speak out, either on their own, on behalf of family members and friends who are victims or survivors of terrorist attacks, or as partners and family members of terrorists and fighters. These narratives have the power to dispel the notion that fighting is "cool." Such an approach to supporting women's prevention roles and narratives is better positioned within the WPS agenda and NAP.

Thirdly, the integration of WPS and CVE agendas could address the potential tensions in utilising the role of mothers in prevention activities. As well as being a potentially powerful prevention

strategy, highlighting the maternal agency of women may also limit their agency and constrain the leadership roles women can take on to prevent violence and promote tolerance. A WPS NAP could address this tension with measurable targets to ensure that women participate in security decision-making and leadership roles, and that the roles women play in preventing violence are adequately resourced. However, it may be difficult to get representatives of women's groups to decision-making forums because they are generally viewed as implementers rather than as leaders, and because there are often physical or safety barriers to accessing these forums.

Fourthly, connecting the displacement and conflict agendas within the WPS framework may be challenging on the ground because of the tension between short-term humanitarian response, the medium-term peacebuilding and reconstruction agenda and long-term prevention and preparedness work. It is crucial to learn how to make emergency intervention transformative for long-term resilience and gender equality. Displacement and climate change can be entry points to reduce risks to engage in gender equality programming that is about prevention and preparedness at national and local levels.

Finally, there are investments in separate agendas and resources and resistance among humanitarian, security and development agencies to working together on the ground: who should be included and who is implementing may not be agreed upon despite the recent joint declaration of agencies at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Women's organisations engaged in policy, advocacy and service roles in crises may experience difficulties in implementing all these roles simultaneously; being present on the ground and in decision-making fora, for example. Moreover, competition among agencies and mandates can hinder the realisation of WPS goals. The WPS NAPs must provide the shared set of normative and operational principles that mandate agencies to work together and to clearly state who needs to

CHAPTER 3.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The WPS agenda was intended to address the different and unequal gender impacts of war, conflict and insecurity by engaging with national and international institutions, as well as local networks where women are present to achieve transformative outcomes for peace and security. The WPS agenda bridges the local, national, and global sites of peace and security but engages multiple problems of insecurity from the bottom-up, i.e. from the perspective of women's lives. At the ground level, the lack of access to clean water or safe housing, fear of sexual or gender-based violence or the need to flee one's home, all create insecurity whether caused by natural disaster, climate change, armed conflict or rising extremism. As such, all drivers of insecurity and conflict, and threats to peace need to be addressed in the WPS agenda and the NAPs designed to implement this agenda.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a universal framework for achieving peaceful and sustainable development. However, the SDGs are largely an aggregation of agendas, and gender equality is just one goal. 'Women, peace and security' is not explicitly mentioned in SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. The **WPS NAP could therefore serve to integrate rather than aggregate common goals between peace and security, other agendas, and the SDGs, such as those addressing displacement, climate change, conflict prevention and violent extremism** (as well as upholding government's commitments to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the WPS

agenda). The recommendations below provide practical approaches to create integrationist NAPs, taking into account the institutional opportunities and challenges for implementation based on research and perspectives from the Asia-Pacific region.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON EMERGING WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (WPS) ISSUES AND NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAPS)

For Member States:

- Review existing national policies and plans (for example, on VAW, CVE, development and economic empowerment, SDGs) and identify opportunities to align frameworks with the WPS-NAP to develop an integrated WPS framework for action, incorporating climate change, mass displacement, and violent extremism.
- Set targets for gender-responsive financing in line with the UN Secretary-General's recommendation that 15 percent of funding be allocated to peacebuilding initiatives that address women's specific needs, advance gender equality or empower women (S/2010/466): by guaranteeing a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism, displacement, disaster-risk-reduction and climate mitigation are committed to projects that address women's specific needs and advance women's prevention roles and empowerment.

- Invest in gender-sensitive research, data collection and information-sharing on the impact of violent extremism and terrorism on women and their roles in both supporting and preventing it, to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses, and raise awareness of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) as a long-term CVE measure.

For UN and donors:

- Develop a tool that measures women's and community resilience by consolidating resilience indicators for gender security threats, and integrate baseline data on gender equality and women's empowerment, conflict, governance, livelihoods and ecosystems to identify weak capacities and develop targeted, evidence-based policy and programming responses.
- Conduct local gender and conflict analysis that includes environmental and disaster preparedness assessments.
- Establish forums and avenues for women's ground level learning on emerging issues to be brought into the peace and security policy and programmatic arenas, emphasising learning on women's leadership and strategies on issues of global security, and promote the diffusion of this learning.

For NAP-WPS actors including civil society organisations (CSOs) and women's organisations:

To ensure that WPS-NAPs are an integrated framework for action that incorporate current threats to security, including conflict, disaster, violent extremism, displacement and climate change actions, under the existing four pillars of the WPS agenda through inclusive processes and the engagement of diverse groups of women:

Prevention

- Prioritise WPS-NAP actions within the prevention agenda that engage in upstream prevention across conflict, atrocities, violent extremism and terrorism, disasters, climate change, violence against women and children, and conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (cf. UN CVE Plan of Action 2015), including through the development and implementation of tailored early warning systems that draw on women's knowledge and experience.
- Develop inclusive and gender-sensitive economic planning and alternative strategies for livelihoods that enable communities to mitigate climate change and repeated cycles of displacement, and promote adaptation and preparation for future changes.
- Establish platforms for CSOs and women's organisations to build networks and engage in local, national and regional dialogues on preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism.
- Engage in adaptive monitoring and evaluation approaches that identify effective strategies to respond to emerging issues within the WPS framework and as stand-alone initiatives.

Protection

- Implement gender-sensitive laws that promote sexual and gender-based violence protection across displacement, disaster and conflict contexts, and support CSOs to monitor their implementation.
- Provide local capacity-building to sensitise post-crisis security, police, and judicial institutions and personnel to gender issues, in the application and enforcement of the law, including those related to counter-terrorism.

- Conduct community consultations in contexts with military presence that engage women's organisations in designing and implementing UNSCR 1325 accountability mechanisms, including for sexual exploitation and abuse by military actors.
- Increase the participation of women in law enforcement and security prevention and protection agencies, including in counter-terrorism prevention and disaster-response institutions and civilian teams.
- Develop preparedness plans that incorporate women's labour and leadership in the care economy to promote mitigation and survival strategies developed from the family/household and community levels.
- Integrate gender mainstreaming assessments and gender budgeting into post-crisis (displacement, terrorism, disaster, conflict) financing and needs assessments, and conduct regular audits to ensure that resources on the ground benefit women and men equally.

Participation

- Set targets for the participation of climate-change and disaster-affected communities, especially women, in peace and security and governance processes including those related to peace building, land and natural resource management; and monitor and compile data on the presence and roles of women and men in post-crisis governance, with interventions implemented where women's presence is below one-third to increase their meaningful participation.
- Build the capacities of women and women's organisations to engage in and influence prevention and response efforts related to violent extremism and displacement, and involve cognate women leaders and women's organisations in the design of CVE/CT and recovery programs and policies.
- Create national and regional networks for women leaders and religious leaders to scale up their counter narratives of peace and tolerance (cf. UNSC 2016, para 91).

Relief and recovery

- Establish adequately financed programmes to enable women's access to economic resources and opportunities (cf. UNSCR 1889) in all recovery and reconstruction situations following conflict, disaster or displacement, with a focus on tailoring access to programmes and resources for female-headed households as a source of resilience in post-crisis communities.

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ENDNOTES

1. This paper was developed to inform the Asia Pacific Symposium on WPS National Action Plans co-organised by UN Women and the Embassy of Japan, July 11-13, 2016 and attended by representatives from governments, civil society, international organisations and universities in the region. It aims to identify the emerging peace and security issues that are currently absent from NAPs and are recommended for future inclusion, with a focus on thematic areas of particular significance to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in the Asia-Pacific region: climate change, displacement, prevention of violence and promoting a culture of peace and tolerance [CVE/CT].
2. See at <https://consultations2.worldhumanitariansummit.org/bitcache/50b4cd3ado7469f44235f8a4c60353dfda17dbbo?vid=581741&disposition=inline&op=view>
3. http://peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/WPS_HLR_open_debate_concept_note_October_2015.pdf
4. Tools other than NAPs for WPS implementation include, for example, specialised all parliamentary or legislative committees on women, peace and security as in the United Kingdom that monitor government legislation and policies from a WPS perspective; or the CEDAW reporting process that involves coordination across government agencies and civil society monitoring of government commitments and progress, including on General Recommendation 30 on conflict and post-conflict situations, through shadow reports
5. The United Nations Security Council determines the situations that the UN Agencies and Offices may refer to as 'conflict' situations
6. ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), the European Union (EU), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the League of Arab States, and the African Union (AU).
7. With respect to ASEAN, Davies (2016) highlights the compatibility of the WPS agenda with ASEAN's agenda but argues that the particularly traditionalist account of gendered agency shared by ASEAN elites is at odds with the WPS agenda's emphasis on women's political agency to address peace and security concerns. This lack of cultural, rather than institutional, fit may constrain the development of an ASEAN WPS action plan.
8. <https://medium.com/@UNOCHA/the-invisibility-of-women-and-girls-affected-by-humanitarian-crises-e7d66a7edo1f>
9. Ban Ki Moon referred to the "one common theme" of the 2015 reviews of UN Peace Operations, Peacebuilding Architecture, and Women, Peace and Security. See at http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52252#.Vh71_RARkU5. See also UN CVE Plan of Action 2015, para 6.
10. UN Security Council. 2016. Report of the Security-General on conflict-related sexual violence. (S/2016/361), 20 April.
11. Schmeidl S. 2015. 'Darkness at the Edge of Towns - The Plight of Young Displaced Women in Urban Afghanistan'. Human Rights Defender, vol. 24, no. 3, 15-20. 18, <http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/hurighdef24&id=1&size=2&collection=journals&index=journals/hurighdef>. Schmeidl S; Tyler D. 2014. 'Urban realities for displaced young women and girls', Forced Migration Review, vol. 2014, no. 46, Afghanistan's displaced people: 2014 and beyond, pp.37-38, <http://www.fmreview.org/en/afghanistan.pdf>

12. The 2015 Andaman Sea crisis showed an increase in the numbers of women irregularly crossing borders in SE Asia. UNHCR reported that of the 62,000 irregular migrants who departed the Bay of Bengal by boat and through the Andaman Sea towards Thailand and Malaysia in the first three quarters of 2014, 10 percent were women and children (UNHCR 2014). In the last quarter of 2014 there was a 4 percent increase in the number of female passengers to 14 percent of the total number of passengers on board boats departing from the Bay of Bengal (UNHCR 2015a) and by the end of 2015, female passengers made up 15 percent of all passengers to travel in that year (UNHCR 2016c). Pickering and Powell argue that this shows an increasing trend in the number of women migrating along this irregular pathway, which has a fatality rate three times higher than in the European migrant crisis experienced in the Mediterranean Sea (UN News 2016, UNHCR 2016c).
13. Due to the historical impunity for acts of VAW, we are only beginning to understand their scale and forms in Asia. The limited public awareness of VAW results from the significant under or non-reporting of this violence to authorities due to the societal stigmatisation associated with being a victim. Pervasive gender, ethnic, class, caste and other oppression attach the shame of sexual and domestic violence for instance with the (female) victim or survivor and not the (male) perpetrator. Victims may not report experiences of violence to avoid dishonouring themselves and their family. Moreover, VAW is frequently considered as normal or a male entitlement, such that its prevention or elimination is considered impossible (Fulu et al., 2013: 3).
14. Gender inequalities within states are already known to affect conflict and state behaviour in a range of ways; the instigation of conflict, the escalation and severity of violence during crises are all exacerbated in states with greater domestic gender inequality (Caprioli 2005; Hudson et al 2012).
15. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. 2013. 'Women and Terrorist Radicalization: Final Report.' February, 2013, <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/99919?download=true>. a planned good practices document on Gender and Countering Violent Extremism, led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), both of which will be endorsed by the GCTF at a Ministerial Meeting in the coming 2 years.
16. See at <http://www.un.org/press/eng/2015/sc12076.doc.html>
17. See for example, ICAN and Association for Women in International Development (AWID), 'Extremism as Mainstream: implications for Women, Development and Security in the MENA/Asia region, Washington DC, 2014'; Hedayah and the Global Centre on Cooperative Security, 'The Roles of Families and Communities in Strengthening Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism Meeting Note', May, 2014. Women's Peacemakers Programme (Joan B. Kroc Institute) – Defying Extremism – Gendered Responses to Religious Violence, Dialogue in Philippines, 20-23 February 2014; Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Rafia Barakat, 'Strengthening Community Resilience against violence and extremism – Roles of Women in South Asia'. Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, 2013.
18. Sendai Principle d): Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted. In this context, special attention should be paid to the improvement of organised voluntary work of citizens.
19. See also the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288) and the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674).

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports Member States in setting global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design the laws, policies, programmes and services required to implement these standards. UN Women stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on the following five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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