

Securing Equality, Engendering Peace:

A guide to policy and planning on women,
peace and security (UN SCR 1325)



The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women promotes applied research on gender, facilitates information-sharing, and supports capacity-building through networking mechanisms and multi-stakeholder partnerships with UN agencies, governments, academia and civil society.

*Securing Equality, Engendering Peace:
A guide to policy and planning on
women, peace and security (UN SCR 1325)*
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Executive Summary

What must be done in order to transform written words into reality? One of today's greatest development challenges is turning policy into practice. This is especially the case in the realm of women's rights and gender equality, where the commitments made at the international and national levels remain far from the day-to-day realities of women's lives.

This guide examines one of the crucial steps on the path towards the full implementation of existing laws, namely the formulation and implementation of concrete policies and plans. More specifically, this guide concentrates on the creation of action plans on the issue of women, peace and security (WPS).

The purpose of this guide is to help facilitate the development of realistic action plans on women, peace and security through the provision of good practices, specific recommendations and a six-step model process. The guide is designed as a resource for governments, United Nations and regional organisations as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who are interested in developing plans and policies on women, peace and security issues.

Understanding Women, Peace and Security Issues

Women, men, girls and boys experience and take action differently in the context of armed conflict, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and reconstruction. Women and girls in particular have become strategic targets in armed conflict. However, rather than portray all women as helpless victims of war and violence, it is essential to take into account the active roles that they play as combatants, peacebuilders, politicians and activists.

Women continue to be excluded from positions of decision-making in the sphere of peace and security. In response to this reality, many calls to action have been issued. Women's full and equal participation and gender mainstreaming in all peace and security initiatives are two of the central demands. Alternatively, the call for the implementation of the three "Ps": conflict **P**revention, the **P**articipation of women in peace and security, and the **P**rotection of civilians with consideration of the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys, is increasingly gaining ground.¹

In this realm, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) is one of the most important international mandates. This ground-breaking resolution calls for the full and equal participation of women in all peace and security initiatives, along with the mainstreaming of gender issues.

Though it has been nearly six years since its adoption, the implementation of SCR 1325 has been inconsistent, with varying results. Only recently have efforts been made to draft action plans for the effective implementation of the resolution and at this point there is a growing debate regarding the utility of creating such plans as well as practical questions about formulation and implementation processes.

Why Create a Women, Peace and Security Action Plan?

As Member States of the United Nations, we should all consider developing national action plans and coordinated strategies on the implementation of Resolution 1325 - Canadian Statement to the UN Security Council (2005)

Though many initiatives exist around the world on women, peace and security issues, mandates such as SCR 1325 are not being systematically or sustainably implemented. The creation of an action plan can provide the necessary space to analyse

1. NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, et al., "Report on Security Council Roundtable: Peace Support Operations: Consolidating Progress and Closing Gaps in the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325" (New York: NGOWG, July 2004).

the situation, consult with stakeholders, and initiate strategic actions. More specifically, the advantages to creating an action plan include increased:

- ☐ **Comprehensiveness**
- ☐ **Coordination**
- ☐ **Awareness-raising**
- ☐ **Ownership**
- ☐ **Accountability**
- ☐ **Monitoring and evaluation**

Global Overview of WPS Policy and Planning

Though policy and planning that includes women, peace and security issues have long existed, with the passing of SCR 1325 as a binding international mandate there has been increasing demand for SCR 1325-specific policies and plans of action.

Largely the result of the mobilisation and advocacy of women's civil society organisations, this demand has led to the creation of a variety of women, peace and security policies and plans at the organisational, national and regional levels. Rather than create separate national plans of action on SCR 1325, the resolution has been integrated into national policy and legislation in countries such as Colombia, Israel and Fiji.

On the other hand, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Canada and Switzerland have all made the decision to create national action plans on SCR 1325. Within the UN system, a *System-Wide Action Plan for the Implementation of SCR 1325* was recently launched. In addition, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations all have individual gender action plans. At the regional level, organisations from the European Union to the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development have passed resolutions and created WPS action plans.

Learning from Gender Equality Action Plans

It is important to realise that even though very few women, peace and security action plans exist at this point, gender action plans have been around since 1975. The lessons we can learn from a quick analysis of gender equality action plans are highly valuable in order to avoid the same stumbling blocks and to learn from their successes.

To summarise the broad recommendations gathered from years of gender equality action plans, future action plans on WPS should include:

- 1. Realistic objectives for the near future that can be monitored and evaluated.**
- 2. A clear understanding of specific responsibilities, resources needed and timelines.**
- 3. The participation and shared responsibility of leaders and representatives from all areas and divisions of the institution/organisation.**

How to Create a Women, Peace and Security Action Plan

Depending upon the type and number of actors involved, the specific regional, national or community context, and the available resources, the planning process will be considerably different. There is no one-size-fits-all planning process or model action plan, however this guide provides an introduction to the basic steps.

Three core methodologies serve as the foundation for the planning practices and procedures suggested in this guide: strategic planning, participatory planning and gender/socio-economic analysis.

1. Building Political Will: Advocacy and Awareness-Raising

Informing and educating decision-makers and the general public on WPS issues in order to build a foundation of support is crucial for the successful implementation of a future action plan.

Media campaigns, leaflets, workshops, discussion groups and other methods are effective initiatives for increasing the level of awareness and support for women, peace and security issues. This first step does not have a strict end point. Ideally this process should continue during and after the formation of the action plan.

2. Getting Organised

Once momentum and political will have been established through awareness-raising and advocacy work, the key stakeholders can join forces to begin targeted efforts to initiate a WPS action plan.

Around the world, one of the most important steps towards taking action on WPS issues and/or SCR 1325 has been the gathering of diverse organisations into formal and informal networks or umbrella organisations. Often these collaboration groups primarily include NGOs working on gender, women, peace or development issues, however examples exist of committees including representatives from the government and academia as well as civil society.

One of the first steps to be taken from within the government or organisation is to establish an inter-agency/inter-departmental/inter-ministerial taskforce in order to initiate and oversee the process of developing an action plan.

3. Plan for Planning: Terms of Reference

The inter-agency taskforce may begin to take concrete steps towards developing the action plan by holding a meeting to create a 'plan for planning.' The outcome of this meeting should be terms of reference for the development of a WPS action plan. At this stage, the acquisition of funding and the development of a preliminary budget for the preparation and implementation of the action plan are essential. Even before the process formally begins, all actors should have a clear idea of the budgetary constraints and the resulting limitations.

4. Women Peace and Security Assessments

One of the essential steps in the development of a WPS action plan is the completion of an assessment or audit of the general context of women, peace and security issues (external) and the government or institution in question (internal). A WPS assessment can help in the identification of priority areas and initiatives, as well as serving as a baseline for the development of indicators and future monitoring and evaluation processes.

5. Planning Meetings or Workshops

Participatory planning methods are crucial in order to create an action plan that truly represents and addresses the needs and interests of all stakeholders. In addition, involving actors from all different sectors of an institution or government can help build a sense of collective ownership, teamwork and accountability.

Different approaches are common, including:

- Separate planning workshops for each department or sector, at which specific ground-level action plans are developed and then later consolidated into an institution-wide action plan.
- A series of planning meetings for the taskforce at the end of which a comprehensive action plan for the institution is developed.

- One participatory workshop for all stakeholders to give suggestions that are then included in a separate action-plan development process by the taskforce.

6. Drafting the Action Plan

Depending upon the type of organisation or country developing the action plan, the plan's components and length will vary. However, there are certain basic parts that are often included in action plans and help create a clear and concise document:

1. Introduction

This section can provide a short introduction to women, peace and security issues and a description of the process of developing the action plan.

2. Rationale

Here reference should be made to WPS mandates such as SCR 1325, the importance of women, peace and security issues, and how they relate to the institution or state in question.

3. Long-Term and Short-Term Objectives

Though discussing the relative importance of different WPS mandates and then prioritising certain areas of action, short-term objectives can be determined.

4. Specific Initiatives

Initiatives should be directly linked to the objectives and/or specific mandates from SCR 1325. The specific actor responsible for implementation as well as indicators, deadlines and resources (human, material and financial) should be specified.

5. Timeframe

A general timeframe for the completion of the entire plan, a timeframe for each specific initiative, or a timeframe for monitoring and evaluation can be included.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

In addition to the timeframe and indicators, other M&E mechanisms can be included such as yearly reporting or the creation of a monitoring body.

7. Budget

A dedicated budget is essential to ensuring the concrete and sustainable implementation of even the most modest action plan.

Towards Implementation

Drafting and launching an action plan on women, peace and security is only the first step in putting UN SCR 1325 into practice. Without the effective implementation of the plan, it will remain words on paper.

Common challenges to the implementation of women, peace and security plans and policies include:

- **Lack of funding**
- **Lack of political will**
- **Lack of capacity**
- **Lack of coordination**
- **Lack of monitoring and evaluation**

Taking these challenges into account and investing in awareness-raising, capacity-building, coordination, M&E and advocacy initiatives is essential for the successful implementation of women, peace and security action plans.

It is the responsibility of not only United Nations Member States but of all the individuals, organisations and countries that work with peace and security issues to go beyond gender awareness to gender action. It is not enough to be conscious of the existence of UN SCR 1325, now is the time to take concrete steps to implement this ground-breaking resolution. Creating a WPS action plan is a first step towards turning international policy such as SCR 1325 into practice. A first step towards gender equality, peace and security for all.