## CONTENTS

### FOREWORD

| 4 |

### 1. PAST AND PRESENT

1.1. Women, Peace and Security – the current context  

1.2. Previous Action Plans: what have we learned?  

| 7 |

### 2. THE WAY FORWARD

2.1. Overall objective  

2.2. Specific objectives and pathways of change  

2.3. Outputs and activities  

| 23 |

### 3. OUR APPROACH

3.1. Partnership, roles and responsibilities  

3.2. Focus countries  

3.3. Country groups  

3.4. Monitoring and evaluation  

| 41 |

“JOINTLY, WE MUST RISE TO THE CHALLENGE”  

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon
We, the signatories of the Dutch National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, proudly present our third Action Plan for the period 2016-2019. This plan is an expression of our ongoing partnership and a contribution to the full realisation of the ambitions set out in all the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Together, we form a platform for cooperation between government and over 50 Dutch civil society organisations and knowledge institutions, with the joint overall objective of:

**CONTRIBUTING TO AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS, SO THEY CAN MEANINGLESSLY PARTICIPATE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, PROTECTION, RELIEF AND RECOVERY.**

We seek to help break down harmful gender norms, enhance protection, and give men and women equal leverage in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery. Women are active and crucial agents for change. Including women in peace and security efforts is not only the right thing to do; it also makes these efforts more effective and leads to sustainable solutions. Without the inclusion of women, there will be no sustainable peace.

The political ambitions set out by the Security Council are in stark contrast with reality. Without taking account of existing power relations, without fully including both men and women, there will be no peace. Despite the good intentions expressed, the political will shown and the progress made since the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 in 2000, women remain under-represented in peace processes, the security sector, the political arena and the judicial sector, hampering effective, inclusive and sustainable peacemaking. Worldwide, the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict situations has barely improved; in some areas it has even deteriorated. Full and meaningful participation by women in peace and security has not yet been achieved. There is still a lot of work to be done. The full realisation of the Security Council’s directives on Women, Peace and Security requires greater investment by us all. This National Action Plan aims to help us reach that goal.

To achieve real change, governments, civil society and knowledge institutions need to join forces. That is why ministries, the National Police, knowledge institutions and a wide range of civil society groups have jointly drafted this Dutch National Action Plan. Our partnership consists of a strong network of organisations in the Netherlands and all over the world.
The relationship between Dutch organisations and our partners in conflict and post-conflict situations benefits us all. By strategically coordinating our efforts and activities, we foster greater cohesion and work towards more lasting peace. WO=MEN, representing the civil society organisations and knowledge institutions, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to jointly coordinate all the activities in this third National Action Plan.

This partnership facilitates the development of new ideas and initiatives, drawing on a wide range of resources, and enables us to share work among us in accordance with our different areas of expertise and knowledge. While respecting each other’s roles and mandates, we believe that coordination and cooperation between government, knowledge institutions and civil society are mutually beneficial. The inclusive and participatory character of this plan is unique and in itself an excellent illustration of our commitment to realising our shared ambitions.

Local actors and women’s rights organisations in conflict and post-conflict environments and civil society worldwide are crucial partners in our efforts. These women and men can challenge the power relations that underpin current inequalities, and find ways to work with institutes and organisations to encourage the structural change needed to achieve gender equality. Their experience, views and ideas on empowerment and equal participation will play a leading role in our efforts. As we have learned from evaluating our previous Action Plans, ‘since gender norms are being reshaped at local level, connections with grass-roots initiatives for social change and gender equality become an absolute strategic pre-requisite when promoting gender equality objectives.’ We will work together, taking a conflict-sensitive approach.

While all the signatories share responsibility for this National Action Plan, governments have the primary political duty to implement the various resolutions of the UN Security Council on Women, Peace and Security. Therefore, simultaneously with the adoption of this plan, five Dutch ministers sent a joint policy letter to the Dutch parliament presenting a specific strategy for government action on Women, Peace and Security.

‘WOMEN ARE KEY ACTORS IN EXERTING INFLUENCE TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE PEACE. WE HAVE TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT TO ENSURING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING, PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACEBUILDING. I APPLAUD WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THE ADOPTION OF 1325.’

Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bert Koenders

The impact of violent conflict on women was first put on the international agenda in the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995. Subsequently, the global women’s movement lobbied extensively for the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

Resolution 1325 marked a turning point in history by embedding women’s rights and gender equality for the first time in the international peace and security agenda. It recognises that women have vital roles to play in achieving peace and security: as peacemakers, community leaders, breadwinners and combatants. The resolution has a transformative purpose: women’s participation can, and should, draw more attention to conflict prevention and encourage non-violent conflict resolution. Its adoption also demonstrated a shift from the previously dominant concept of national security towards a recognition of the importance of human security.

Effective peacemaking, in particular preventing conflict, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, requires that these processes are inclusive at all levels. It also requires all actors involved to adopt a gender perspective when working on matters of peace and security. The resolution recognises the significance of women and calls for a gender perspective in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, refugee camp design, peacekeeping operations, security sector reform and the reconstruction of war-torn societies.

Between 2008 and 2015 the Security Council adopted seven more resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. These resolutions establish international norms and build upon the international human rights framework. Taken together, the resolutions constitute the overarching Women, Peace and Security international policy framework. They guide work to promote women’s participation and protect women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict situations by recognising the negative impact of sexual violence on peace and security. The resolutions define sexual violence as a tactic of war and a war crime that must always be prosecuted in all circumstances, and mandate peacekeeping missions to protect women and children from violence during armed conflict. Their call to action extends from the international to the local level, from intergovernmental bodies to member states and local women’s movements, emphasising the need to address the root causes of armed conflict and the security risks that women face.

TIME TO ACT

All the resolutions on Women, Peace and Security illustrate normative changes and advancements made during the last 15 years in often challenging contexts. The UN Security Council regularly addresses the issue of Women, Peace and Security. Many countries and regional organisations have adopted National Action Plans, policies and programmes and organised training courses to solidify their commitment to implementing the resolutions. There is international case law on sexual violence as a war crime that international courts and tribunals should prosecute.

There is growing awareness among UN member states and international and regional organisations of the fact that women’s participation increases the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of peace and security efforts. Since 2000, we have seen a growing number of consultations in peace processes with civil society and women’s groups and of related provisions in peace agreements.
However, despite impressive normative advances, implementation and results in conflict and post-conflict environments must be improved. While recognising the importance of raising awareness and reaching consensus, we believe we should not get bogged down in debates and discussions on the importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The Dutch National Action Plan partners commit to taking part in more concrete activities at country level through tailor-made programmes, in addition to diplomacy and sharing of experience at regional and international level. We seek to remedy the systematic lack of implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

1.1 WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY – THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Current conflicts are characterised by upsurges of violence in which human rights and humanitarian law are violated – often at the hands of a growing number of non-state armed actors as well as illicit groups operating on the periphery of armed conflicts without qualifying as parties to them. Conflicts often have multiple complex drivers and are influenced by cross-border and transnational developments. Among other factors, geopolitical complexity, extreme violence and the use and reach of new technologies have triggered a need for new approaches to conflict resolution. Several reviews and studies conducted in 2015 highlight the need for more attention to prevention and peace maintenance and a focus on the root causes of conflict in order to avoid relapse, escalation and protracted crises. This means understanding root causes like societal and cultural inequalities and gender norms and altering the dynamics of conflict-prone societies. Understanding the influence of other factors – like environmental challenges, Ebola and other epidemics, and climate change – is also crucial.

THE IMPACT OF WAR AND ARMED CONFLICT ON GENDER RELATIONS

War and armed conflicts affect men and women differently and transform gender roles in society. While often many men leave their communities for combat, women tend to become their families’ breadwinners and heads of household. Women’s participation in the labour market in times of conflict is ‘commonly characterised by low-paid, low-skilled jobs, self-employment in the informal sector or unpaid family (farm) labour’. When conflicts come to an end, most gender roles change (back) again, while other roles do not alter. These gender dynamics during and after conflict often entail wider societal change that puts traditions in question. This can create opportunities for change.

As mentioned above, conflict leads to human rights violations. The way it impacts on women and men differs and can lead to increased gender inequality. Violence, and
specifically sexual violence, is used as a weapon of war to disrupt societies and terrorise vulnerable groups, including women and ethnic and religious groups. Men and women who challenge existing gender norms, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and men who are unwilling to participate in violence, are exposed to threats. Survivors often have limited access to health care, education and safety. Alleged perpetrators of war crimes are rarely prosecuted due to a lack of resources, knowledge, institutional capacity or political will. In conflict zones, many perpetrators are survivors of earlier violence or were forced at gunpoint to rape family members.

By mid-2015, according to reports, the number of refugees was approaching its highest level in 20 years. The number of refugees has been increasing steadily for four years now, and by the end of 2014, according to UNHCR, 59.5 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. About half of the world’s refugees are women and girls, and they are often exposed to exploitation, abduction, sexual violence, and other dangers to their physical and mental health. Displaced women and girls are often forced to adopt new roles as a result of displacement, and their rights and responsibilities are often overlooked. Displaced women and girls need to be recognised as survivors of gender violence and given access to their rights and services.

Displaced women and girls are often exposed to exploitation, abduction, sexual violence, and other dangers to their physical and mental health. They need to be recognised as survivors of gender violence and given access to their rights and services.
The level of women’s participation in security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and other peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts, remains very low. Many approaches to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration reaffirm gender stereotypes and confirm the perception of women as victims, potentially undermining the empowering leadership roles that women can play and reducing the space for women to reconsider the gender norms that prescribe certain behavior. Furthermore, there are still barriers, such as negative images and security risks due to cooperation with security forces, to women’s organisations working with the security sector. Greater participation by women in the security sector will require a fundamental shift in perceptions on peace processes and gender roles.

The current challenges facing the Women, Peace and Security agenda require a coordinated and more participatory approach by governments and civil society actors worldwide. The Dutch government and more than 50 partners – civil society organisations and knowledge institutions – have jointly implemented previous two National Action Plans. These plans have been evaluated by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (POID) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which established the relevance of the National Action Plan, ‘Women, Peace and Security’. In 2011, this report assesses the progress made in putting the relevant UN Security Council resolutions into practice, not only by examining the contents of the National Action Plans that were agreed in 2007 and 2011 and the activities undertaken by the signatories. The lessons learned presented in this chapter are taken from this report and various other evaluations.

12. PREVIOUS ACTION PLANS: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

The current challenges facing the Women, Peace and Security agenda require a coordinated and more participatory approach by governments and civil society actors worldwide. The Dutch government and more than 50 partners – civil society organisations and knowledge institutions – have jointly implemented previous two National Action Plans. These plans have been evaluated by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (POID) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which established the relevance of the National Action Plan, ‘Women, Peace and Security’. In 2011, this report assesses the progress made in putting the relevant UN Security Council resolutions into practice, not only by examining the contents of the National Action Plans that were agreed in 2007 and 2011 and the activities undertaken by the signatories. The lessons learned presented in this chapter are taken from this report and various other evaluations.

PREVIOUS ACTION PLANS:

By the end of 2007, the first National Action Plan was adopted and outlined the strategy to support the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and its follow-up resolutions. The first National Action Plan was rather broad and did not prioritise specific interventions or countries. The second Action Plan focused on women’s political participation and female leadership. Geographically, the plan selected six focus countries (Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan) and the Middle East and North Africa region. To finance the implementation of the second National Action Plan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated a budget of €4 million a year for the period 2012–2015 for support to joint projects undertaken by an alliance of signatories in each country. Organisations that signed up for this task received a modest budget for activities covered by the second Action Plan. In each country group, signatories have met, exchanged knowledge and experience, and drafted joint proposals for country-specific activities. Several projects have been implemented in cooperation with the embassies concerned. The fund ‘Small Seeds for Big country programmes under the second National Action Plan are being implemented through 2017. This country-specific cooperation between government bodies and civil society organisations proved both successful and challenging. It brought together organisations that are able and willing to help achieve our common goals.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

The space for civil society and the current political and economic environment influenced the definition of the first National Action Plan. The plan had a broad scope and aimed at improving the conditions for women’s political participation by guiding and enabling them to access decision-making positions. The plan was implemented in 2008, and the first National Action Plan was briefly evaluated in 2010. The evaluation showed that the plan had a positive impact on the political participation of women, particularly in conflict situations. Women’s political participation increased in many countries, and women were more likely to be elected as members of parliament and local councilors. However, the evaluation also highlighted that the plan had several limitations.

The second National Action Plan, which was implemented in 2012, focused on women’s political participation and female leadership. The plan selected six focus countries (Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan) and the Middle East and North Africa region. The plan aimed to support women’s political participation and female leadership by providing training, capacity building and other support services. The plan was implemented in 2012–2015, and the second National Action Plan was briefly evaluated in 2016. The evaluation showed that the plan had a positive impact on women’s political participation and female leadership. Women were more likely to be elected as members of parliament and local councilors, and women were more likely to be appointed as ministers and other senior positions.

THE PATTERNS OF COUNTRY-FOCUSED CO-OPERATION

The second National Action Plan was implemented in six focus countries (Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan) and the Middle East and North Africa region. The plan aimed to support women’s political participation and female leadership by providing training, capacity building and other support services. The plan was implemented in 2012–2015, and the second National Action Plan was briefly evaluated in 2016. The evaluation showed that the plan had a positive impact on women’s political participation and female leadership. Women were more likely to be elected as members of parliament and local councilors, and women were more likely to be appointed as ministers and other senior positions.
with different kinds of skills and knowledge, with the aim of stepping up strategic cooperation on Women, Peace and Security in both the Netherlands and the focus countries. According to the IOB, however, the country groups focused mainly on the activities and the division of funds, and far less on strategic cooperation. The partnerships should not be reduced to donor-implementer relationships, with the ministry as donor and civil society organisations as implementers.

The country groups are a key platform for cooperation, and we will continue and step up our collaboration in these groups. Nevertheless, our ambitions should extend beyond joint projects. Therefore, we will strengthen our cooperation by developing and implementing joint country strategies, including not only joint projects but also information-sharing and advocacy. In 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs intends to issue a call for proposals in support of the future development and implementation of programmes promoting women’s meaningful participation in peace and security.

GENDER ANALYSIS
Under the second National Action Plan, joint country programmes were drawn up and implemented. The IOB evaluation recommends that country-specific strategies should be based on a gender-specific analysis, looking at men’s and women’s different roles and underlying power relations in times of conflict. Political exclusion and social and physical abuse cannot be effectively addressed if we only focus on women. We need to understand the context and the conflict-specific notions and ideals behind both men’s and women’s behaviour and roles if we want to contribute to gender equality. We will therefore conduct broader gender analyses and include perspectives on masculinity in our country strategies.

Men’s roles and the grey area between formal and non-formal authority in conflict and post-conflict settings need to be taken into account to help create an enabling environment for women’s meaningful participation. Gender inequality can be a catalyst and early warning sign of conflict, and is often a manifestation and consequence of violent conflict. The more patriarchal a society, the more men are taught that their masculinity entitles them to power, with dominance, control and violence being justified as means of obtaining or retaining power.

GRASSROOTS
In the periods covered by our previous two Action Plans, we worked extensively with grassroots organisations in conflict and post-conflict countries. Local women’s rights organisations in conflict and post-conflict environments represent agents of change that can challenge the power relations underpinning gender inequalities. Gender norms are
The lessons learned from the previous two National Action Plans, together with the insights gained from our analysis of current challenges, will be the guiding principles for our joint efforts going forward. The next chapter will describe in detail our approach over the next four years.

CONCLUSION

The lessons learned from the previous two National Action Plans, together with the insights gained from our analysis of current challenges, will be the guiding principles for our joint efforts going forward. The next chapter will describe in detail our approach over the next four years.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Evaluations of the two previous Action Plans have shown the need for a sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, with clear and tangible objectives for social change and gender equality. Therefore, connections with grassroots initiatives for social change are a strategic prerequisite to promoting gender equality.5 The JDB turned out not to be feasible for the coordinating partners WO=MEN and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We learned from the JDB evaluation that the NAPs have not provided guidance on how to translate the resolution’s objectives into actions that are responsive to contextual gender realities.6 Developing and applying a suitable monitoring and evaluation system will allow signatories to measure their impact in the focus countries.

The IOB evaluation of our second Action Plan confirms this, and recommends we maintain our strong emphasis on the role of local women’s rights organisations. Supporting these organisations is crucial when pursuing an agenda of sociopolitical change in conflict-affected environments.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Evaluations of the two previous Action Plans have shown the need for a sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, with clear and tangible objectives for social change and gender equality. Therefore, connections with grassroots initiatives for social change are a strategic prerequisite to promoting gender equality.5 The JDB 21 turned out not to be feasible for the coordinating partners WO=MEN and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We learned from the JDB evaluation that the NAPs have not provided guidance on how to translate the resolution’s objectives into actions that are responsive to contextual gender realities.6 Developing and applying a suitable monitoring and evaluation system will allow signatories to measure their impact in the focus countries.

The IOB evaluation of our second Action Plan confirms this, and recommends we maintain our strong emphasis on the role of local women’s rights organisations. Supporting these organisations is crucial when pursuing an agenda of sociopolitical change in conflict-affected environments.
22) Based on a forthcoming publication by Laurel Stone, whose summary findings were cited in Ibid., 41-42.
23) Ibid., 179-180.
25) Ibid., 123.
26) Ibid., 125.
Impact & Vision
Together we contribute to an enabling environment for women’s participation and empowerment in conflict and post-conflict environments, so they can meaningfully participate in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, protection, relief and recovery.

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

**SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY FOR EVERYONE**

- **ENHANCED PROTECTION**
  - Increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation of women in security and justice sector development

- **DECREASE OF HARMFUL GENDER NORMS**
  - Increased understanding of gender based violence and the protection of women

- **EQUAL LEVERAGE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, RELIEF AND RECOVERY**
  - Women are agents of change and have increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

- **CAPACITY & RESOURCES**
  - Improved political will and increased awareness, knowledge and skills for (existing) inclusive and non-violent conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

- **ATTITUDES & BELIEFS**
  - Local non-violent strategies and approaches of conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery are increasingly re-enforced and incorporated in policies and regulations

- **LAW & POLICY**
  - Improved (implementation) of policies and regulations for the participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

**TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS**

- **INCREASED LINKAGES BETWEEN LOCAL, NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL**
  - We share information and knowledge (Information sharing)
  - We develop and implement programmes (Programmes)
  - We influence all levels in local and (inter) national organisations (Advocacy)

- **INCREASED INVOLVEMENT OF MEN AND BOYS AS CRUCIAL ACTORS**
  - Women are agents of change and have increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

**COOPERATION**

- **We share information and knowledge**
  - (Information sharing)
- **We develop and implement programmes**
  - (Programmes)
- **We influence all levels in local and (inter) national organisations**
  - (Advocacy)
‘WHAT’S HAPPENED IN PEACE AND SECURITY IS THAT WE’VE COMPLETELY NEGLECTED HALF OF THE POPULATION, AND SO, WE THEN BECOME SURPRISED THAT PEACE ISN’T SUSTAINABLE… AND THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SOMETHING SUSTAINABLE IS TO MAKE IT INDIGENOUS, TO MAKE IT A CULTURAL CHANGE.’

In partnership, we have formulated a joint response to the current challenges facing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In this chapter we describe our joint objectives and outputs, and trace the pathways of change that we believe are necessary to advance the role of women in peace and security. A visualisation of this theory of change can be found on the previous page.

2.1. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

We start from the basic premise of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325: that women’s participation in conflict resolution and peace and reconstruction processes at all levels of decision-making has a positive impact on sustainable peace. However, as concluded from the previous chapter, there are still structural barriers to women’s full and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security. Most of these obstacles are linked to existing norms, values, laws and institutions that perpetuate gender inequalities. Structural transformation of these norms, values, laws and institutions is a prerequisite for sustainable progress in protecting women’s rights and achieving gender equality. To achieve this transformation, a multifaceted approach by governmental and non-governmental actors is needed, so that we can help create an enabling environment for women’s participation in peace and security.

That is why the signatories of the Dutch National Action Plan will work towards the following overall objective:

CONTRIBUTE TO AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS, SO THEY CAN MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, PROTECTION, RELIEF AND RECOVERY.

2.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND PATHWAYS OF CHANGE

The previous chapter listed the current challenges to women’s meaningful participation. It emphasised the brutality and risks that women in fragile and conflict environments face, such as psychological and sexual violence. Protecting women is therefore one of the specific objectives of our third National Action Plan. Chapter 1 also highlighted the need to subvert harmful underlying gender norms in order to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Another important conclusion was that women’s leverage and agency should be enhanced on all issues of peace and security. Women are agents of change and should be able to fully participate in peace processes and contribute to sustainable peace.

To help create an enabling environment, we have defined the following three specific goals:

1) Better protect women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations from violence and violations of their rights;

2) Subvert harmful underlying gender norms, which are obstacles to sustainable peace;

3) Ensure that women have equal leverage in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery at all levels, and that their efforts are acknowledged and supported.
Progress towards these specific goals will be achieved through three parallel approaches, or ‘pathways of change’. Our three pathways of change constitute the main structure for our interventions and are closely interrelated. In all of these interventions it is essential to involve all actors that are relevant to the specific context of the conflict, such as governments, non-governmental organisations and civil society. Gender analysis is of crucial importance in identifying the relevant stakeholders for each activity.

1. **Facilitate capacity building and provide resources** to support the empowerment and participation of women and men who strive for gender-sensitive approaches to peace processes.

Participating in peace negotiations and engaging with national and international actors to increase women’s participation often demand specific knowledge and skills and access to sufficient resources. It is important that all relevant actors in conflict and post-conflict environments have the capacity and skills needed to overcome major obstacles in those environments. By strengthening the capacity of women and men who are promoting gender-sensitive approaches to peace processes, the signatories aim to help create an enabling environment for women’s meaningful participation.

2. **Understand and positively influence attitudes and beliefs** that maintain and perpetuate the exclusion of women.

All human societies and cultures have gender norms that prescribe women’s and men’s behaviour and determine people’s beliefs about gender roles in society. Such norms can disadvantage women and can be used to legitimate institutionalised unequal treatment. Norms, attitudes and beliefs are not fixed but vary with cultures, however, and can change over time. Understanding and challenging norms, attitudes and beliefs is essential for women’s inclusion and structural change.

3. **Influence the development and implementation of laws and policies** that weaken obstacles to women’s participation and protection.

International human rights law and international humanitarian law form part of the normative legal framework needed to promote the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda at international, regional, national and local level. Often, however, these laws are not applied and impunity prevails. During and immediately after conflicts the rule of law is often disrupted, non-functional and/or non-existent. Institutions, legislation, gender and other policies, legal provisions and even constitutions have to be adopted or recast. Influencing the development and implementation of laws and policies that weaken obstacles to women’s participation is the last pathway of change.
2.3. OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

The pathways of change, overall objective and specific goals of our third National Action Plan can be translated into a set of outputs. Each of the activities to be carried out in several focus countries aim to produce one or more of these outputs, thereby contributing to our overall objective. The activities can be divided into three types of interventions; (1) knowledge sharing, (2) advocacy and (3) joint programming. The relation between the outputs and the activities is explained in detail in this section. The signatories will develop country strategies and select a specific focus from the following activities.

2.3.1. BETTER PROTECT WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS AGAINST VIOLENCE AND VIOLATIONS OF THEIR RIGHTS

As part of the specific goal on better protection, this Action Plan defines three different outputs to which the signatories will contribute.

Output 1: Increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation by women in security and justice sector development

The first output emphasises that the protection of women and girls can be improved by providing increased capacities, skills, knowledge and resources for women’s equal leverage in the security and justice sector development. The actors that will be targeted are relevant justice, defence and government bodies and women’s organisations in the Netherlands and the focus countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform government actors in the Netherlands and the focus countries about context-specific best practices and barriers to women’s meaningful participation</td>
<td>Civil society organisations (CSOs), knowledge institutions and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect justice and defence actors in the focus countries with Dutch defence actors to exchange context-specific best practices and knowledge on the barriers to women’s meaningful participation</td>
<td>CSOs, knowledge institutions and local CSO partners, Ministry of Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support training courses on protecting women for police and other security sector actors in the focus countries</td>
<td>CSOs, police, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Security and Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include women’s CSOs in the implementation of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Rule of Law (RoL) programmes in the focus countries</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate gender-sensitive SSR and women’s participation in it</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the inclusion of gender expertise in Dutch civilian and military contributions to international missions</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Output 2: Increased understanding of gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it

The second output will be produced by activities that will eventually increase understanding of gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it at all levels. Signatories aim to conduct research and share the outcomes with specific target groups, such as government actors and the broader public, through social media campaigns and public events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct context-specific research on gender-based violence</td>
<td>Knowledge institutions, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share knowledge on gender-based violence with policymakers</td>
<td>Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange knowledge on context-specific gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it</td>
<td>Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Security and Justice, police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support women human rights defenders (WHRD)</td>
<td>CSOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise and facilitate public events in the Netherlands and focus countries on conflict-related and context-specific gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it</td>
<td>CSOs, knowledge institutions and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct online campaigns in the focus countries on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it</td>
<td>Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Output 3: Improved (implementation of) policies and regulations on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it

Exchanging knowledge on policies and legislation will help signatories work strategically towards the development and implementation of policies and regulations. These activities and interventions will be coordinated through the country strategies and will target governments and civil society in the focus countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange knowledge on policies and regulations on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it with local CSO partners in the focus countries</td>
<td>CSOs, knowledge institutions and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage (the implementation of) legislation in the focus countries on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate signatories’ interventions on gender-based violence and ways of protecting women from it through a country strategy</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.2. SUBVERT HARMFUL UNDERLYING GENDER NORMS, WHICH ARE OBSTACLES TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE

As part of the specific goal on subverting harmful gender norms, this Action Plan defines three different outputs to which the signatories will contribute.

Output 1: Increased capacity, skills, knowledge and resources for gender equality

The first output will be produced by activities that increase capacity, skills, knowledge and resources for gender equality. Signatories will gather data and promote and disseminate research on how harmful gender norms lead to gender inequality in peace and security contexts. They will exchange this knowledge with their local CSO partners and use gender-specific conflict analysis to examine harmful gender norms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange best practices and knowledge on subverting harmful gender norms</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather data, promote and disseminate research on the impact of harmful gender norms on peace and security</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct gender-specific conflict analysis in the focus countries</td>
<td>Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Output 2: Increased understanding of gender equality and gender norms
The activities described under output 2 will increase people’s understanding of gender equality and gender norms. Signatories will exchange knowledge on the variety of gender roles and ways of avoiding gender stereotyping. The Action Plan website will be redesigned and used as a platform for exchanging knowledge and best practices on gender equality and gender norms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate knowledge sharing between signatories from civil society,</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their local CSO partners and policymakers on gender equality and gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>norms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate knowledge sharing on the variety of gender roles and ways of</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoiding gender stereotyping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesign the Action Plan website to enable exchange of knowledge and</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best practices on gender equality and gender norms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and facilitate pre-deployment training courses on gender</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equality and context-specific gender norms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share knowledge and expertise on gender equality and gender norms with</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilian experts (civilian capacity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate a thorough analysis of gender equality, gender norms and</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masculinities into all programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan and facilitate public events in the focus countries to showcase</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local expertise on gender equality and gender norms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Output 3: Increased involvement of men and boys in implementing legislation that contributes to gender equality
Harmful gender norms can only be subverted if men and boys are involved in implementing legislation that contributes to gender equality. Signatories will support male role models who are contributing to gender equality and the subversion of harmful gender norms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the use of a masculinity perspective in the implementation</td>
<td>Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of legislation in the focus countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include men and boys in developing and implementing legislative</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support male role models who contribute to gender equality and subvert</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harmful gender norms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.3. ENSURE THAT WOMEN HAVE EQUAL LEVERAGE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, RELIEF AND RECOVERY AT ALL LEVELS, AND THAT THEIR EFFORTS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED AND SUPPORTED

As part of the specific goal on equal leverage, this Action Plan defines three different outputs to which the signatories will contribute.

Output 1: Increased capacity, skills, knowledge and resources for women’s meaningful participation as agents of change in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery.

The described activities will increase women’s capacity, skills, knowledge and resources for meaningful participation. Signatories will facilitate exchange by connecting human rights defenders and local women’s rights organisations to political decision-making processes. Signatories will also establish a common database of Women, Peace and Security experts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange knowledge and experience on women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include the voices and perspectives of women’s organisations and women human rights defenders in pre-deployment training courses</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, police, civil society and their local CSO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish and/or contribute to a common database of Women, Peace and Security experts</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use capacity building programmes to introduce local CSO partners, such as women’s organisations and women human rights defenders, to political decision-making processes</td>
<td>Dutch CSOs and their local CSO partners, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate diplomatic and advocacy efforts for women’s meaningful participation in the country strategies</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the visibility of role models working on the local implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Output 2: Increased political will, awareness, knowledge and skills for inclusive and non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

The activities described in this output will increase political will, awareness, knowledge and skills for inclusive and non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery. Non-violent local approaches are central to all the activities described. Civil society will gather the knowledge and lessons learned and share these with governments and security sector experts. They will be encouraged to follow good examples of non-violent local approaches in their policies and decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather information on local inclusive and non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery</td>
<td>CSOs, their local CSO partners and knowledge institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange knowledge and best practices on non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness in focus country governments of the importance (and cost-effectiveness) of non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery</td>
<td>CSOs, their local CSO partners, knowledge institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Output 3.1: Stronger local non-violent strategies for and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery, which are incorporated into policies and legislation

Signatories will inspire and encourage governments and other relevant actors to incorporate local non-violent strategies for and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery into their policies and legislation. Measures and policies against violent extremism and terrorism will be developed in ways that avoid undermining gender equality and women’s organisations in focus countries. Signatories will also showcase successful and effective local non-violent strategies for and approaches to counterterrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share examples and good practices with governments on including non-violent local strategies in laws and policies</td>
<td>CSOs, their local CSO partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness of the usefulness for laws and policies of local non-violent strategies for and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery</td>
<td>CSOs, their local CSO partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and address CVE and counterterrorist policies to avoid undermining gender equality and women’s organisations in the focus countries</td>
<td>CSOs, their local CSO partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the integration of local non-violent strategies for and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery into peace agreements and new laws and policies</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the visibility of role models working on the local implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Output 3.2: Improved (implementation of) policies and legislation promoting women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery

Women’s participation can be stepped up by developing and implementing the right policies and legislation. Signatories will advocate improving policies and legislation at national and international level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELEVANT SIGNATORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange information and best practices on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange experiences and views on (the implementation of) policies and legislation that will increase women’s participation in the focus countries</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions through diplomacy and advocacy in the focus countries and multilateral organisations like the EU and UN</td>
<td>All signatories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. OUR APPROACH

11 Civilian capacity facilitates the secondment of Dutch experts to UN peacekeeping operations, EU CSOP missions and UN and other organisations in conflict areas and/or fragile states.
12 These training courses are aimed at preparing civilian and military personnel for international peacekeeping missions.
3.1 PARTNERSHIP, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A multi-stakeholder partnership can only be forged by linking all actors to one another at different levels so that their efforts complement and reinforce each other. Starting from our different mandates and organisations, we will jointly contribute to attaining the goals of this National Action Plan.

CIVIL SOCIETY
The signatories from civil society are development, peace, human rights and diaspora organisations that operate at local, regional, national and international level. They are connected with civil society all over the world and have a long tradition of international solidarity in defence of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Civil society signatories and their local partners are well positioned to act at grassroots level, where they can conduct and facilitate information sharing, dialogues, lobbying and advocacy. The capacity building programmes that civil society develops and facilitates help create an enabling social and political environment for women’s participation in peace and security. In its watchdog role, civil society can hold parties accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities under UNSC resolution 1325 and the follow-up resolutions. They can document and report human rights violations and cases of sexual and gender-based violence during conflicts, and press governments and the UN to improve policies and frameworks for the effective implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

GOVERNMENT
The government in its turn is well equipped to operate at national, regional and global level by engaging in gender diplomacy at the UN, at missions and in its partnerships with governments and civil society in conflict and post-conflict countries. The government has distinct responsibilities and is carrying out distinct activities, described in its Women, Peace and Security strategy under the various resolutions. It is for example obliged to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in its peace and security policies, and should ensure that its own policy frameworks recognise women’s special needs in conflict-affected environments and contribute to women’s equal participation in peace and security processes. The government, in particular the police and the Ministry of Defence, also addresses gender in Security Sector Reform training courses and programmes, in close cooperation with civil society. Dutch embassies can play a key role in implementing joint Action Plan efforts. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will allocate an annual budget for the implementation of this National Action Plan.
KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTIONS

Knowledge institutions are indispensable in filling gaps in knowledge of gender and conflict. They play a key role in our joint learning efforts by, for example, conducting policy evaluations, collecting and presenting best practices, and increasing our understanding of how gender norms and relations interact with the dynamics of conflict and other forms of inequality. They can also contribute to the development and implementation of the country strategies, as discussed below in this chapter.

PLEDGES

Cooperation is not our final goal, but a means to achieve our overall objective while respecting each other’s distinctive roles and mandates. In order to understand these roles and mandates, each signatory will publish an individual pledge on this Action Plan, setting out the organisation’s vision, its intended contribution to the joint activities, and its role(s) in the partnership. These elements will be further elaborated in the country strategies. In the first meetings in 2016 we will discuss how best to work together and develop proposals.

3.2 FOCUS COUNTRIES

Our lessons learned show that our work on Women, Peace and Security should have a country-specific focus in order to have a greater impact. Social change and gender equality cannot be achieved through a single programme or activity with a short time span; it requires a long-term strategy and commitment from all signatories. We will therefore continue our work in most of the focus countries selected in our second National Action Plan. We have identified eight countries that meet most of the following criteria: (1) countries in conflict or fragile states, (2) countries that are the focus of a Dutch policy, (3) countries in which signatories have sufficient capacity, local partners and a relevant track record, and (4) countries in which the Netherlands participates in a multilateral civil and/or military mission.

The Action Plan signatories will focus on:
AFGHANISTAN, COLOMBIA, THE DRC, IRAQ, LIBYA, SOUTH SUDAN, SYRIA AND YEMEN

3.3. COUNTRY GROUPS

These focus countries will be at the heart of our partnership. Signatories and suitable external actors will meet at least every two months in country groups: context-specific forums in which signatories will share their perspectives on the situation from their different backgrounds, working with partner networks, embassies and staff in the region. The gender experts, country experts, policymakers and activists in these groups will develop a strategic plan with specific, quantifiable activities. Existing and new country groups will be formed or reconstituted during the first month after the launch of this plan.
Each country group will conduct a gender-specific conflict analysis. This analysis will identify men’s and women’s needs and roles, the root causes of conflict and gender inequality, and the country’s traditional and current power balances. Grassroots communities will be involved in developing the analysis, which will be adjusted over time to reflect the rapidly changing political landscape in many of the focus countries. These analyses will enable us to better assess the country’s conflict and gender dynamics and will guide the design and implementation of our activities, as set out in the country strategies. The country strategies will be an integral part of this Action Plan, contributing to the meaningful participation and empowerment of women.

3.4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Measuring, analysing and monitoring the impact of our National Action Plans have proven to be a challenging but important responsibility. To evaluate the impact of the activities in our focus countries, we will develop a context-specific monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system based on specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART) indicators. This will include the number of meetings conducted in the Netherlands and focus countries; the exchange of information; the number of joint training courses conducted by the signatories; the number of organisations involved in developing the proposals, and their contribution to implementing final projects. The Action Plan’s two coordinating partners, the Dutch Gender Platform W0=MEN and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will design a functioning M&E system based on the country strategies and theory of change.

By continuing this partnership, the Action Plan signatories will further contribute to creating an enabling environment for the effective and meaningful participation and empowerment of women, in all facets of peace and security processes in conflict and post-conflict environments.

33) The government’s policy letter on Women, Peace and Security will be published on 8 March 2016.
COPYRIGHT

Pag. 1: Photo made by Rieneke de Man - PAX
Pag. 2: Photo made by Oxfam Novib, to be found on the Afghan Summer Facebook
Pag. 4-5: Photo made by Marcel Vogel, International 1325 Conference
Pag. 9: Dutch Ministry of Defense
Pag. 11: Photo made by Guido Koppes, Jordan MENA - 2013
Pag. 13: Photo to be found on the Netherlands UN Flickr
Pag. 14-15: Photo made by Rieneke de Man - PAX
Pag. 18: Dutch Ministry of Defense
Pag. 20: Photo made by Rieneke de Man - PAX
Pag. 26: Photo made by Dorien Boxhoorn
Pag. 28: Dutch Ministry of Defense
Pag. 33: Photo to be found in the media library of the Dutch government
Pag. 34-35: Bert Kuiper - ICCO - NAP 1325 project Colombia
Pag. 37: Photo made by Rieneke de Man - PAX
Pag. 39: Photo made by Marcel Vogel, International 1325 Conference
Pag. 43: Dutch Ministry of Defense
Pag. 44: Photo made by Richard Koek, to be found on the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs Flickr.
Pag. 45: Photo made by Marcel Vogel, International 1325 Conference