

What Next for the UK Women, Peace and Security Agenda?

On Monday 9 November we [Women for Women UK] co-hosted a workshop with the new LSE Centre for Women Peace and Security and GAPS (Gender Action for Peace and Security) called 'What Next for the UK Women, Peace and Security Agenda'.

Throughout the conference, we distilled the key points from panel presentations and audience discussion into 12 recommendations for the UK government:

1. The UK Government (UKG) must recognise and implement Women Peace and Security (WPS) as a **human rights** framework and articulate long-term, sustained and demonstrable commitment to effectively implementing the fundamental human rights standards enshrined in WPS.
2. The UKG must strengthen engagement at the **micro level**: we must listen to local actors and tailor our responses accordingly. Regular and consistent conversations with communities are essential to understand the realities on the ground, develop effective approaches (e.g. security sector reform) and as important feedback mechanisms to support accountability. Working in partnership with local organisations is the most effective way to do this.
3. The UKG should work to provide **comprehensive support** to women affected by conflict: education, legal, social, economic and political. WfWI research showed that savings alone were not enough to support women's economic resilience and needed to be part of a wider economic rights and empowerment approach (numeracy, business skills, vocational training, etc.). Research also highlighted the importance of health education and literacy. Other speakers highlighted the importance of trauma and psychosocial healing and access to justice (rights awareness). This is not only a necessity for improving women's rights but also an effective foundation in order to support their political, economic and social participation.
4. The UKG must provide adequate dedicated **WPS funding**. Local organisations who are on the frontline are in dire need of core funding and it is these organisations that can effectively support women's economic resilience, women's access to education and justice, and economic empowerment (etc.)
5. The UKG's approach to conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction should be a **long-term investment**, which supports community cohesion and addresses gender inequality – including through stepping up working with men

and women in communities. Engaging with men and challenging harmful masculinities is an important part of promoting gender equality.

6. The UKG must strengthen its efforts to prevent, protect and respond to **violence against women and girls** (VAWG) in conflict-affected contexts. VAWG is wider than sexual violence and the majority of sexual violence in conflict-affected countries is not perpetrated by combatants, but family members and other community members. Response services (e.g. rape kits) must be in place from the outset of crisis response. The UK must prioritise the implementation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Gender-Based Violence guidelines.
7. Peace agreements are more sustainable when women are involved – the UKG must actively support the meaningful **inclusion of women's groups** and representatives in peace processes where it is active. Inter alia, this is likely to include supporting capacity building of women representatives and women's groups such as communication and negotiation skills, agenda preparation, or offering child care support.
8. **'Participation'** efforts must focus on meaningful participation and quotas could be used to work towards a critical mass and as an entry point for women's meaningful participation. Women's participation must be prioritised before, during and after peace processes. The UKG must therefore provide capacity building support (as above) to support more women to effective access opportunities to participate as well as supporting other governments (and in the UK) to actively provide more opportunities.
9. **Security sector reform** efforts by the UKG must be strengthened to be more gender-sensitive.
10. The UKG should work with women's groups and other civil society organisations (in the UK and abroad) to develop a **coherent narrative** that articulates the links between women's rights and empowerment, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Beijing Platform for Action, WPS and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
11. The UKG should incorporate **CEDAW** into its Women, Peace and Security policy and implementation.
12. The UKG should use its international influence at the **UN** to:
 - Continue to champion WPS and support political will for better WPS implementation.
 - Support the increase of numbers of women UN peacekeepers.
 - Conduct research and evaluations on the experiences and roles of women UN peacekeepers. UNSG's commitment to double amount of women peacekeepers is welcome but we need to know more about effective support, training and challenges.

- Support the UN to be more transparent around the peacekeeping data it does collect.
- Support the CEDAW committee to engage more with the UNSC on WPS.
- Improve screening processes for UN Peacekeepers.