



THE UNITED STATES  
NATIONAL ACTION PLAN  
ON WOMEN, PEACE,  
AND SECURITY

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# The United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security

## Foreword

The United States Government is deeply committed to the participation of women in advancing peace and security around the world. Consistent with this commitment, in December 2011, President Obama released the inaugural United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)—a document that has helped chart a course for the United States Government to accelerate, institutionalize, and better coordinate efforts to advance women's inclusion in peace negotiations, peacebuilding activities, and conflict prevention and response; to protect women and girls from gender-based violence; and to ensure safe, equitable access to relief and recovery assistance in areas of conflict and insecurity. The 2016 updated United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security will help the United States Government continue building on this strong foundation.

Following a comprehensive review of policy, programming, challenges, and lessons learned during the first three years of implementing our inaugural National Action Plan, as well as ongoing consultation with civil society stakeholders, we have identified important progress across all five National Action Plan objectives. Since the Plan was adopted, the United States has opened all occupations and positions in the U.S. military previously closed to female service members; advanced the participation of more than 60,000 women in peacebuilding processes; and reached more than 4 million survivors of gender-based violence and persons at risk of violence to provide vital services in more than 40 countries. We also have helped build new grassroots networks to mitigate the effects of conflict, and launched important new initiatives dedicated to addressing the disproportionate vulnerabilities of women and girls in humanitarian emergencies.

Our review and consultations also have identified areas that call for new or renewed focus, so the updated National Action Plan includes a refreshed roadmap for action. The United States Government will further emphasize monitoring and evaluation that can identify best practices and assess the long-term impact of WPS initiatives. We will enhance relevant United States Government programming to empower women and girls to prevent and respond to challenges associated with violent extremism. We also will strengthen coordination across the United States Government's gender policy priorities, and maintain sustained leadership on the WPS agenda at the highest levels of the United States Government.

As we look forward, we reaffirm our commitment to an enduring and foundational principle: States and societies are more peaceful and prosperous when women are empowered to realize their full potential through full and equal rights and opportunity.

## Statement of National Policy

The goal of the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security remains as simple as it is profound: to empower half the world's population as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace in countries threatened and affected by war, violence, and insecurity. Achieving this goal is critical to our national and global security.

Deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peacebuilding and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their voices heard, and their perspectives taken into account.

As directed by Executive Order 13595 in 2011 entitled Instituting a "National Action Plan on Women", Peace, and Security, this Plan describes the course the United States Government will continue to take to accelerate, institutionalize, and better coordinate our efforts to advance women's inclusion in peace negotiations, peacebuilding activities, and conflict prevention; to protect women from gender-based violence (GBV); and to ensure equal access to relief and recovery assistance, in areas of conflict and insecurity. The Plan remains guided by the following five principles:

First, the engagement and protection of women as agents of peace and stability are central to the United States' efforts to promote security; prevent, respond to, and resolve conflict; combat violent extremism; and rebuild societies.

Second, by building on the goals for gender integration described in the United States National Security Strategy and the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, the United States' efforts on Women, Peace, and Security complement and enhance existing initiatives to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, ensure respect for human rights, and address the needs of vulnerable populations in crisis and conflict environments.

### Gender Integration

The U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security builds upon the goals for gender integration described in the U.S. National Security Strategy (2010, 2015) and the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (2010, 2015). Gender integration involves identifying and addressing, in all our policies and programs, gender differences and inequalities, as well as the roles of women and men. The goal of gender integration or "mainstreaming" is to promote gender equality and improve programming and policy outcomes.

Third, in executing this policy, the United States is guided by the principle of inclusion, seeking out the views and meaningful participation of a wide variety of stakeholders—women and girls, men and boys, and members of marginalized groups, including youth, ethnic, racial or religious minorities, persons with disabilities, displaced persons and indigenous peoples, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals, and people from all socioeconomic strata.

Fourth, in order to maximize the impact of this Plan, the United States seeks to ensure that activities in support of Women, Peace, and Security are coordinated among all relevant departments and agencies

of the government, integrated into relevant United States foreign policy initiatives, and enhanced by engagement with international partners.

Finally, United States Government departments and agencies are accountable for the implementation of the policies and initiatives endorsed in this Plan.

Above all, this National Action Plan expresses the United States' unqualified commitment to integrating women's views and perspectives fully into our diplomatic, security, and development efforts—not simply as beneficiaries, but as agents of peace, reconciliation, development, growth, and stability. We welcome this opportunity to work with our international partners to make the promise of this commitment real, to advance implementation of United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and to make significant progress toward the goal of sustainable peace and security for all.

## The Case for Women in Peace and Security

### Women as Equal Participants in Conflict Resolution and Mediation



Secretary Kerry and Ambassador Russell pose with the 2016 International Women of Courage Award Winners” (Source: Department of State)

More than half of all peace agreements fail within five years of signature. In many countries, high levels of violence continue to afflict communities long after wars have officially ceased. Peace accords are too often negotiated only among the small number of armed combatants who originally fought the war—groups whose experiences on the battlefield are not easily transferred to the difficult task of building peace.

Evidence shows that peace agreements are more likely to be secured—and are more likely to endure—when women are meaningfully involved. When included as mean-

ingful participants, women enlarge the scope of agreements to include the broader set of critical societal priorities and needs required for lasting and just peace. In Northern Ireland, for example, women negotiators secured commitments in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement to involve young people and victims of violence in reconciliation to accelerate the release and reintegration of political prisoners and to ensure an integrated education system and integrated housing. In the 1990s, Guatemalan women involved in negotiations to end a 36-year civil war secured important protections for labor and indigenous rights as well as guarantees of a balance in civilian and military power. They also enshrined commitments to women’s equal rights and participation in the peace accords. In post-apartheid South Africa, more than 70 organizations united under the Women’s National Coalition to outline fundamental rights for women in the “Women’s Charter for Effective Equality.” The charter directly resulted in a constitution that not only protects women’s equal rights, but also contains many important additional rights that apply to all members of society: the right to education, the freedoms of religion and expression, and the right to security of person. In 2003, Liberian women acting largely outside of formal negotiations brought their demands into the streets and reinforced mediators’ efforts to secure a peace that would end the country’s devastating civil war. That peace endures to this day.

Even when peace processes have failed to end conflict conclusively, women have positively influenced efforts to advance security and stability via negotiations. Women from Darfur, Sudan, who provided gender expertise to African Union-mediated talks in 2005, shined a spotlight on the need to provide protection for the vulnerable and displaced and highlighted a wide range of critical gender concerns related to land rights and physical security. These women inserted critical issues into the talks that negotiators had previously ignored. In 2006, Ugandan women involved in peace talks between the Ugandan government and representatives of the Lord’s Resistance Army secured a compensation fund for victims of violence, including GBV, and ensured that health and education for former combatants were addressed explicitly in negotiated protocols. Although the accord was never implemented, women’s priorities have been reflected in Northern Ugandan recovery efforts and women have continued to push for transparency in reconstruction

### **Institutionalizing Our Commitment to Women as Agents of Positive Change**

As noted in the U.S. National Security Strategy, “Experience shows that countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women are accorded full and equal rights and opportunity.” In order to bring about the peace and prosperity we seek, the United States is promoting better understanding and integration of gender issues across all our departments and agencies.

The Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) continue to implement reforms initiated through the 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review related to support for women and girls abroad in the realms of policy and program development and coordination, budget planning, staff capacity-building, and evaluation and learning. The Department of State’s Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues and USAID’s Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment ensure that the rights and concerns of women and girls remain at the core of U.S. foreign policy. The 2011 National Action Plan and corresponding USAID Implementation Plan (2012) are integral parts of the Agency’s architecture for advancing gender equality and female empowerment, serving as USAID’s roadmap for promoting the empowerment and protection of women and girls in crisis and conflict situations. National Action Plan implementation has been supported by USAID’s adoption of a comprehensive Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (2012) with a clear set of requirements and responsibilities for gender integration, including mandatory gender analysis for country-level strategies and project-level design, and basic gender training for all Agency staff involved with programming. USAID has trained more than 9,000 technical and program staff to integrate gender in strategies and programs; established specialized training courses on WPS and gender integration in crisis, conflict, and transition environments; provided tools, technical assistance, and incentive funding for WPS-related programming in the field; and created an agency-level award to recognize individuals and teams performing exceptional work to advance WPS objectives. Both State and USAID also require that all partners have codes of conduct consistent with the IASC Six Core Principles on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and will soon require that all partners submit implementation plans as part of their standard application process. Finally, State and USAID continue to use budget planning categories and foreign assistance indicators to track specific investments and results related to gender equality and female empowerment, gender-based violence, and women, peace, and security.

The Department of Defense (DOD) has dedicated staff responsible for addressing gender considerations in keeping with DOD’s mission. Within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy coordinates the development and implementation of DOD’s efforts on Women, Peace, and Security. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness coordinates the Department’s efforts on sexual assault prevention and response, and combating trafficking in persons. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness also provides policy guidance and oversight of the Military Departments on policies related to the recruitment, retention, treatment, and integration of women into U.S. Armed Forces. Foremost among the Department’s accomplishments is the integration of WPS objectives into key policy, strategy, and planning documents to include the National Security Strategy, the Guidance for the Employment of the Force, and the Joint Service Capabilities Plan. Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) have incorporated WPS objectives in Theater Campaign Plans, which are plans that prioritize, organize and integrate the Command’s steady state activities in a comprehensive manner. GCCs have also updated headquarter instructions and staff training programs to include WPS. For example, U.S. Africa Command’s Newcomers’ Orientation Course includes a WPS briefing, which aims to provide staff with an awareness of why WPS topics are important through an

overview of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the National Action Plan. DOD's five regional centers also have infused WPS strategies into their work. For example, the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies released a strategy document in support of the National Action Plan with objectives that include ensuring WPS elements are incorporated into the curriculum, promoting and maintaining a WPS community of interest, and achieving a goal of 25 percent female participation in all resident courses. The GCCs, regional centers, Military Departments, and Senior Service Schools have established WPS leads that work to enhance WPS coordination, implementation, and accountability within specific sectors and contexts. In addition, the Marine Corps' Female Engagement Teams and the Army's Cultural Support Teams are providing new avenues for female Marines and soldiers to support ongoing operations and engage women in local populations.



U.S. Marines with Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan and members of a Female Engagement Team (FET) use an interpreter to interact with Afghan women and children in Helmand province, Afghanistan. *Photo Credit: Sgt. Evan Barragan/U.S. Marine Corps*

Despite this positive record, between 1992 and 2011 women have been under-represented in major peace processes as only two percent of chief mediators, four percent of witnesses and signatories, and nine percent of negotiators, numbers that have not markedly improved since the passage of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000. While the number of women heading UN field missions has increased, too few women have been appointed as mediators by the UN. In country after country, women who risked their lives to confront and persuade armed actors to join peace negotiations and foster

the trust necessary to initiate negotiations have found themselves sidelined once official talks began. This exclusion is as much a blow to peace and international security efforts as it is to women.

The voices and concerns of women who endured violence and supported communities during conflict, and who will carry much of the burden of healing and rebuilding communities in peacetime, are routinely absent from or overlooked at the negotiating table. This exclusion often carries over into related post-conflict efforts to rebuild, to strengthen peace through security sector reform, and to redress past grievances and abuses. Peace agreements that focus solely on ending the fighting fail to address the vital tasks necessary for sustaining a genuine peace, including: providing security and basic services, reintegrating combatants into society, building trust amongst opposing parties, fostering institutions that can uphold the rule of law, and promoting legitimately-elected leadership.

Evidence from around the world and across cultures shows that integrating women's leadership and gender considerations into peacebuilding processes helps promote democratic governance and long-term stability. Research also shows that the quality of women's participation in these processes is critical. Women must play meaningful and active roles, including as leaders, in building and participating in the

full range of decision-making institutions in their countries. These institutions, from civil society to the judicial and security sectors, must also be responsive to and informed by women’s demands.

**Promoting Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding and Governance: Colombia**

Inclusion is a fundamental theme of U.S. efforts to support Colombia’s journey toward peace, and the United States Government has worked to empower women as conflict mediators, peace builders, and change agents in this transitioning society. Through a program coordinated with the United States Institute for Peace, USAID provided support to help empower emerging Colombian women leaders as conflict mediators in their respective regions. To date, 33 core women mediators were trained in a series of workshops across the country. These women represented a sample of Colombian society, from ex-combatants and victims, to ethnic minorities, civil society leaders, and local government actors. Utilizing their new skills, these women have modeled conflict mediation practices under real circumstances in communities across the country: gathering to advocate for water resources in La Guajira, organizing a 1000+ woman march in Putumayo for victims of sexual violence in the conflict, and negotiating with the FARC for the return of children forcibly recruited in Cauca. Though the program has ended, these women continue to lead training of trainer replicas on conflict mediation with a further 88 women in conflict-affected regions. Furthermore, these women mediators have developed ten new projects, a methodology guide, and three informational videos for dissemination and implementation in 2016.

Additionally, USAID has supported and strengthened women’s networks as critical allies in improving victims’ access to legal and psychological services. Women belonging to these networks received training and became effective promoters of women’s rights and prevention of gender-based violence in the most conflict-affected areas. In Quibdó (Chocó), for example, USAID grantee Red Departamental de Mujeres Chocoanas trained 30 women “change agents,” who reached 600 women and 13 men across 72 neighborhoods. This initiative expanded to other municipalities in Chocó building the capacity of an additional 82 change agents.

**Protections for Women During and After Conflict**

The updated U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally<sup>1</sup> acknowledges that, regardless of its form, such violence not only violates the rights of those who suffer from it, but by suppressing women’s participation in civic, social, political, and economic life, also undermines the security, livelihood, and health of nations. In countries affected by conflict, violence, and insecurity, even as we work to include more women in peace negotiations, we must make stronger and more comprehensive efforts to protect women and children from violence. Nearly two decades into the 21st century, civilians bear the overwhelming brunt of today’s conflict and political violence. Moreover, violent conflict, violent extremism, starvation, and disease often prey primarily upon women, children, and the elderly.

Amidst such suffering, in many conflict zones around the world women and girls are deliberately targeted and attacked, many times with impunity. Violent extremists often promote the enslavement of

1. The updated (2016) U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally notes that “gender-based violence” is an umbrella term for any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived biological sex, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity.

women and girls, forced and underage marriages, and other abuse and exploitation targeting women and girls. Forced displacement associated with crisis and conflict exposes refugees and internally displaced persons, particularly women and girls, to additional risks of violence and exploitation. Violence against women, particularly in the form of sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault, mutilation, forced prostitution, and sexual slavery), is increasingly recognized as a facet of many recent conflicts, from the Balkans to Africa to the Middle East. Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons are often targeted and made vulnerable to violence on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

GBV in conflict and situations of extreme violence is at times deployed as a deliberate tactic for purposes of humiliation, terror, societal destruction, and ethnic cleansing. In other circumstances sexual violence can be purely opportunistic.

In places where wars have officially come to an end or conflict has subsided, women and girls often continue to be plagued by high levels of violence and insecurity; widespread impunity and breakdowns in the rule of law can contribute to high rates of GBV, including domestic violence. Additionally, homophobia and transphobia contribute to high levels of violence against lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, including sexual assault and murder. Increased violence against women and children can be a cause and a consequence of a societal breakdown. When countries are not experiencing active conflict, evidence shows that violence against women can be a primary indicator of a nation's stability, security, and propensity toward internal or external conflict. This indicator may be as telling as levels of democracy or wealth.

### **Protecting Women and Girls from Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

The United States continues to implement the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security in coordination with the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally and the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls. This includes working to develop staff capacity to integrate GBV prevention and response programming effectively within development and humanitarian sectors through mandatory training and enhanced elective training. The National Action Plan and GBV Strategy play a critical role in elevating and institutionalizing gender in the U.S. Government's work, giving life to new initiatives and reinforcing existing efforts to support women and peacebuilding, as well as work that specifically addresses GBV. New efforts aligned with the GBV Strategy and National Action Plan include the March 2016 release of the Adolescent Girls Strategy, which addresses the range of challenges affecting adolescent girls around the world such as lack of access to education and health care, and gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices including early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

In crisis- and conflict-affected environments, the United States Government is marshaling expertise and capacity to prevent and respond to GBV through local partnerships, stronger service provision, and improved accountability to ensure that judicial systems appropriately address perpetrators.

The Department of State through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) are committed to providing tailored, specialized

services to GBV survivors, improving coordination on the ground and globally, supporting cutting-edge research on GBV, and developing meaningful policies on GBV prevention and response in humanitarian emergencies. Typical GBV services include case management, referral services, health care, legal assistance, counseling, emotional healing and learning activities and child and women's safe spaces. PRM and USAID/OFDA are also supporting efforts to improve global, collective accountability on GBV. Improving the humanitarian community's ability to prevent and respond to GBV requires that all levels of stakeholders hold each other accountable to action. They hold regular consultations with key public international organization and donor partners to foster this accountability.

In 2014, USAID/OFDA reached at least 2.2 million people through 44 GBV-related humanitarian programs, collectively valued at more than \$21 million. In 2015, USAID/OFDA amplified its commitments to meet increased demand for emergency GBV responses worldwide. Through approximately 80 field-level projects and 14 global initiatives, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$41.2 million in support of GBV service provision, research, and policy initiatives. OFDA's partners are providing services for GBV survivors and other vulnerable women and girls in 13 countries, including Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine.

The Department of Justice, through its human trafficking and justice-sector development programs, has actively promoted efforts to increase the commitment and capacity of partner countries to investigate, prosecute, and deter gender-based exploitation. The Department of Homeland Security counters human trafficking; exploitation, harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting, and gender-based violence against women by administering humanitarian immigration benefits, collaborating with law enforcement abroad, and promoting international partnerships and public awareness. In recent years, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have brought public health and epidemiologic principles to the aid of women and girls affected by complex humanitarian emergencies around the world by documenting the magnitude and risks of GBV and using data to improve programs and inform policy-making. In collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), CDC has employed enhanced surveillance systems to monitor GBV cases in humanitarian situations through the development of the UNHCR health information system, which has reached millions of refugees around the world.

In 2014, the State Department launched the Gender-Based Violence Emergency Response and Protection Initiative (GBVI), a public-private partnership that, through 11 regional hubs, provides short-term emergency assistance to survivors of extreme acts of GBV. This initiative offers targeted prevention and/or protection assistance to GBV-focused NGOs and is strengthening a global network of GBV first responders. In the last year alone, the GBVI has supported more than 130 women and girls who survived Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) captivity in Iraq. The GBVI takes a holistic approach to combating gender based violence; it also supports integrated, community-based training for governments, judiciary, and key civil society stakeholders to implement countries' existing GBV laws. Trainings have occurred in five countries with an additional five countries scheduled for the remainder of 2016. In addition, the GBVI coordinates an international network of partners to raise awareness and advocate for GBV issues.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the United States has provided legal advice and care and treatment services for well over 100,000 GBV survivors. These services include mobile clinics that expand the reach of services for survivors of sexual violence, as well as programs that engage men and boys in challenging norms and practices that contribute to rape and domestic violence in their communities.

Additionally, this support has funded the training of a total of 745 doctors and other medical personnel, lawyers, and judges on the use of forensic analysis to improve the investigation and prosecutions of sexual violence cases in the DRC. The United States has made efforts to improve accountability by promoting national-level legal reforms, such as the adoption of the 2006 Law Against GBV and reform of the Family Code, advocacy, and increasing access to legal services to survivors through mobile courts. Instructors from DOD's Defense Institute of International Legal Studies provide training to the Congolese military on compliance with international human rights standards, identifying and preventing GBV, and prosecuting cases through the military court system. In addition, the United States has provided support to the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) for its Prosecution Support Cells, which assist Congolese prosecutors with cases, and its Joint Protection Teams and Joint Human Rights Office to strengthen the protection of victims, witnesses, and judicial officials in cases involving serious abuses of international law. In Pakistan, USAID's Gender Equity Program has supported eight women's shelters, four crisis centers and eleven helplines in order to support the needs of GBV survivors, from identification to rehabilitation.

Despite these critical investments, GBV remains a terrible reality for communities in conflict-affected countries. We are committed to expanding our efforts to identify and build on successful programs, and work with partners to scale up their impact.

No society can restore peace or stability when its population lives in daily fear of rape, sexual assault, or other forms of gender-based violence—especially when the perpetrators of such crimes are not held accountable for their actions. We must take strong, unified action to ensure that victims and their communities have access to justice, that those responsible for these crimes are held accountable, and that those who contemplate violence against civilians understand that their actions will carry consequences. Sexual violence in conflict is a security issue that must receive the same level of attention as other threats to individuals in conflict situations. The safety of women and their families must be a top priority for security efforts around the world.

### **Women and Conflict Prevention Efforts**

Measured in lives and livelihoods, stopping cycles of conflict and preventing wars before they occur is the most important way to ensure stability and prosperity around the world. Socio-economic and cultural analyses must inform any effort to forecast and counteract emerging drivers of conflict, violent extremism, and political violence; examining how risk factors affect men, women, boys, and girls differently improves our understanding of the root causes and consequences of conflict, extremism, and violence, including vulnerability to mass atrocity. From Kosovo to Rwanda, societies have witnessed rising discrimination and violence against women as early indicators of impending conflict. Tracking and better understanding how these indicators relate to the potential for instability should inform the international community's best practices in preventing widespread political violence or conflict before it begins.

### Understanding the Roles of Women in Countering Violent Extremism

Recognizing that the roles of women vary greatly—from perpetrators to victims of violence—is an important first step by security actors to take into account women’s different experiences and perspectives in decision-making related to peace and security. A narrow understanding of women’s roles in this context unduly limits policy options and perpetuates strategic blind spots, such as failing to recognize women’s agency as potential mitigators and perpetrators of violence, and “securitizing” women’s roles in countering violent extremism (CVE). These blind spots hinder a thorough examination of how both men and women are affected by and influence the promotion and the prevention of extremist violence in CVE policies and programs. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 helps address these blind spots in CVE by requiring both the participation of women and a gender perspective in policies and programs related to international peace and security. As such, the resolution offers analytical tools to help CVE practitioners analyze the complex issue of violent extremism through a gender lens. A gender perspective helps to reveal solutions and courses of action that may otherwise be overlooked in highly localized, context-specific, socially and culturally sensitive conflicts.

As violent extremism has evolved into crisis proportions in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia, USAID is conducting regional research and analysis to improve our understanding of the key issues impacting and influencing women and girls as related to violent extremism, including the positive and negative roles women and girls may play. These case studies will explore push-pull factors around violence and extremism and attempt to answer important questions such as: What are the diverse and differential recruitment strategies for men and women by groups prone to violence? What is the role that gender plays in such strategies? What are the key economic and social conditions that play a part in radicalization and violence? What ultimately are the approaches and activities women and girls, men and boys use in the prevention, mitigation and countering of radicalization and violent extremism? The research and resulting recommendations will help USAID better address key gender and violent extremism challenges. Learning from these research activities will inform USAID’s integration of gender-based approaches into broader CVE programming, as well as the development of stand-alone gender and CVE activities.

USAID is addressing the drivers of violent extremism through a holistic, community-based approach, such as through initiatives providing assistance to communities in Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso designed to reduce risks of instability and increase resilience to violent extremism. These initiatives address socioeconomic, political, and cultural drivers of violent extremism and focus particularly on addressing the concerns of young men and women, who are at greatest risk of being targeted or recruited by violent extremist organizations. USAID’s efforts aim to empower young men and women through activities and trainings focused on civic education, vocational and entrepreneurial skills, and leadership, and to foster moderate voices—both men and women’s—and attitudes through radio, social media, civic education and conflict resolution events.

The Department of State is helping integrate women into its counterterrorism and CVE efforts through capacity building, participation, protection, and engagement. For example, State has supported projects promoting women’s involvement in CVE efforts, including a global network of women committed to countering violent extremism in their communities to train other women to recognize the signs of radicalization, and to mediate conflict within their communities in order to reduce violent extremism; training for female civil society leaders and dialogues with law enforcement personnel, in partnership with

local women’s networks, to devise CVE strategies and pilot prevention activities; a documentary film tour highlighting the devastation and tragedy faced by Somali diaspora communities in Europe whose youth are recruited to fight with al-Shabaab; and, in northern Nigeria, a Hausa-language multimedia platform that provides alternative messaging to political violence and violent extremism, and promotes inter-ethnic and interfaith tolerance.



In January 2015, Myanmar convened the opening round of the Union Peace Conference, the country’s national-level peace process. Weeks later, the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process hosted the first public briefing on women and the peace process in Myanmar, highlighting that women were only 7 percent of the 700-person UPC’s first session.

Frequently, women have held critical knowledge about impending or escalating conflict, as well as increasing risks of violent extremism, but were overlooked or were unable to report safely their concerns. In Kosovo, women observed the growth of arms caches, but had no one to whom they could report their concerns. Similarly, women in Sierra Leone knew of plans to attack UN peacekeepers, but threats to their personal safety prevented them from relaying that information.

With these examples in mind, we will strengthen our efforts to monitor the status of women, and ensure that conflict early warning, atrocity prevention, and conflict mitigation and management endeavors incorporate gender analysis. For example, stateless

women and their children face high levels of discrimination and abuse, and their particular risk factors should be assessed and potentially used to determine broad patterns facing the displaced. Additionally, women and girls may join, support, or reject violent extremist groups for reasons distinct from men and boys and can help inform on the broader societal pressures communities are facing to counter violent extremism. And gender-specific migration patterns or precipitous changes in the status or treatment of women and girls may serve as signals of broader vulnerability to the onset or escalation of conflict or atrocities. Maintaining this focus will help to ensure that conflict prevention efforts, including countering violent extremism, are responsive to gender-based violence and that our approaches are informed by differences in the experiences of men and women, girls and boys, and individuals with diverse gender identities. Further, we will seek to better leverage civil society, including women’s networks and organizations, in activities aimed at arresting armed conflict or preventing spirals of violence.

Finally, the United States understands that successful conflict prevention efforts must rest on key investments in women’s economic empowerment, education, and health. A growing body of evidence shows that empowering women and reducing gender gaps in health, education, labor markets, and other areas is associated with lower poverty, higher economic growth, greater agricultural productivity, better nutrition and education of children, and other outcomes vital to the success of communities.

### **Advancing Conflict Prevention by Investing in Girls' Economic Empowerment, Health, Education, and Access to Technology**

The United States is committed to amplifying the critical role women can play in conflict prevention and mitigation by participating in early warning systems, leveraging women's networks, and building bridges across divided communities. We also recognize that successful conflict prevention efforts require long-term investments in women's economic empowerment, health, access to technology, and education. USAID recently launched a new multi-year initiative to support game-changing programs that remove barriers to women owning and managing small and medium-sized enterprises, including legal, social, education and economic barriers, along with rigorous impact evaluation of these efforts.

Digital financial services pose particular promise for women as tools for empowerment and economic opportunity. Digital platforms not only facilitate access to traditional financial services, but also provide consumers with new ways to interact with, qualify for, and manage formal financial relationships. Women constitute the bulk of those who would not be reached except through these new pathways. USAID is fostering the growth of these services and the underlying digital infrastructure that has made financial inclusion a realistic possibility for the first time.

USAID's digital development programs recognize that investments in improved mobile and Internet access, and the use of information and communication technologies tools have intrinsic and instrumental value for women and adolescent girls' rights, participation, access to knowledge and services, increased voice, and empowerment. In developing countries, women are 25 percent less likely than men to be online and have lower rates of mobile access. USAID aims to bridge the digital gender gap and ensure the digital security of women and girls by supporting projects that work towards increasing women's mobile access and usage in low and middle income countries, improving sex-disaggregated data collection, and increasing women and girls' digital literacy.

The United States is also working collaboratively with conflict-affected countries to ensure that women are beneficiaries of priority global development efforts such as the Global Health Initiative and Feed the Future— both for their own well-being and because of the centrality of women to the health and prosperity of families and communities. The Global Health Initiative, for example, aims to reduce maternal mortality by 30 percent in assisted countries through a range of targeted investments including prenatal care and services, obstetric care, voluntary family planning, HIV testing and counseling, nutritional support, and safe water, sanitation and hygiene interventions. Women are also at the forefront of President Obama's Feed the Future food security initiative, which extends training and finance to women small farmers to increase their productivity, reduce unpaid work, and improve their families' nutritional status. By 2014, over 2.5 million women were applying new agriculture technologies through Feed the Future.

Gender-equitable education can also mitigate the effects of conflict and provide the basis for long-term economic growth and stability. Out of 70 million primary school-aged children not in school, nearly 40 million live in countries affected by armed conflict. It is therefore critical to restore education sites, services and system-wide capacity for children and youth, particularly girls, in conflict-affected or insecure environments. We are working to improve educational outcomes for millions of children and youth, including those with disabilities, who are living in crisis and conflict-affected environments.

## Women's Equal Access to the Means for Recovery

Women and girls are particularly affected by conflicts, comprising the vast majority of forcibly displaced persons around the world. In many cases, gender roles and norms mean that women are the primary caregivers for families and communities in crisis situations. Women's perspectives are important for ensuring that relief and recovery assistance addresses the needs of the entire affected population. For example, women's participation in camp management committees helps to ensure that displacement camps are safer and assistance programs are more accessible for vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI populations.

### Addressing GBV in Emergencies: Safe from the Start and Call to Action

Safe from the Start (SFTS) is a joint U.S. Department of State and USAID effort to help humanitarian actors prioritize GBV prevention and response and deliver quality programs from the onset of an emergency or crisis. Safe from the Start represents the United States Government's Commitment to the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies – a groundbreaking initiative that brings together governments, donors, and humanitarian responders to coordinate our collective efforts on GBV prevention and response in humanitarian emergencies. From 2013-2015 the United States committed nearly \$40 million to projects and activities in support of Safe from the Start. The Call to Action and Safe from the Start asks all stakeholders to make and meet their commitments to take action to address GBV from the start of humanitarian emergencies. This means that both specialized and mainstreamed programming are resourced and established from the outset of emergency response. As part of its commitments to realizing the objectives of Safe from the Start, State and USAID have supported partnerships with UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNICEF, and NGOs in strengthening GBV support services, implementing comprehensive programming, sharing new research and best practices, and in developing guidance needed to prevent and mitigate the effects of GBV.

A successful offshoot of SFTS has been the launch of the Real Time Accountability Partnership, through which six organizations have committed to working together to test a model response to GBV in two current crises. This partnership aims to demonstrate that a collective, timely, and effective prevention and response effort is feasible, even in complex, resource-constrained environments. Going forward, the six partner organizations will use the results from this effort to establish for the humanitarian community clear benchmarks regarding action and accountability.

The United States will continue to make specialized funding available for GBV interventions, GBV coordination, protection mainstreaming, and programming to reduce the risk of GBV, and advocate for greater prioritization of GBV programming and risk reduction efforts in close coordination with international organizations and state partners. As an active member of the Call to Action and its donor stakeholder working group, the United States will ensure improved coordination among donors, international organizations, and civil society partners and aim to increase membership through the recruitment of at least twelve new Call to Action partners by the end of 2017, with a particular focus on the Global South.

Women and girls also have distinct needs and vulnerabilities that should be addressed within assistance programs. For example, women, particularly survivors of sexual violence, require access to clinical care and reproductive health services such as family planning, HIV testing, counseling and treatment, and maternal health. Women’s and girls’ vulnerabilities are often exacerbated in crisis contexts. While participating in activities such as food distribution, firewood collection, and travel to and from latrines and water points, women and girls may be separated from protective family structures and face increased risks of trafficking, GBV, including sexual exploitation and abuse, or other harm. Rape in conflict situations can stigmatize its survivors, further amplifying a survivor’s economic and social vulnerability. Conflict also increases the incidence of disability, and women with disabilities can face increased vulnerabilities, including social stigma and isolation, difficulty accessing humanitarian assistance, unmet health care needs, and higher rates of GBV and other forms of violence during and after conflict. In addition, homophobia and transphobia exacerbate the vulnerability to violence for lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, and undermine their ability to report violence or access medical assistance and relief efforts, particularly in states in which homosexuality is illegal.



In Adamawa, Nigeria, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance is supporting activities to help survivors of Boko Haram-related violence sheltering at international displaced persons camps. The survivors have reported experiencing abduction, familial separation, and physical and sexual violence, as well as witnessing the murder of family and community members.

Finally, women and girls act as combatants and in other capacities associated with armed forces, but demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) programs, as well as those involving reintegration and rehabilitation for former violent extremists often fail to take into account their distinct needs. Ex-combatants and former violent extremists, who are women are often grouped with those who have been kept as “wives”, despite their distinct experiences and recovery needs. Women who have played a leadership role in a military structure are often reluctant to return to the traditional roles that are expected of them when conflict ends, and women and girls associated with armed actors in any capacity may require appropriate support to return to different roles, recover from physical and psychological trauma, and rebuild their lives successfully.

For all of these reasons, it is vital that relief, recovery, and rebuilding efforts meet the distinct needs of women and girls in crises, while preventing sexual exploitation and abuse by those meant to help. Critical protection activities including prevention and response to GBV should be prioritized in emergencies alongside other life-saving assistance. Women and girls must be able to access all humanitarian assistance programs safely and equitably, from water and sanitation to food aid and shelter, along with education, reproductive health care, and livelihood activities. This effort begins by ensuring women’s participation in the design of relief and recovery projects, which helps secure the explicit and systematic integration of gender and protection issues and perspectives into response efforts. Women also must have the opportunity to shape agendas and inform priorities for transitional justice and accountability, for the reconstruction of infrastructure and restoration of basic services, and for rebuilding economies in ways that offer opportunity for themselves and their families.

### **Integrating Climate Change into the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda**

Although climate change affects everyone, women and girls in the developing world are disproportionately vulnerable to its effects in their roles as small-scale farmers, water and fuel collectors, and caregivers in their families and communities. When natural disasters, such as floods, cyclones, and droughts strike, women are five times more likely to die than men. Women and girls often face limitations in escaping their homes without being accompanied by male family member due to cultural norms; they have less access to early warning systems and trainings; their style of dress often restricts easy movement, making it difficult to swim or run; and women often experience increased levels of domestic and sexual violence following disasters.

At the same time, women draw on diverse skills and experiences to help address the effects of climate change, such as knowledge of local ecosystems, agriculture, and natural resources management. Women also often lead the way in mitigating climate change impacts by optimizing energy efficiency, using low-footprint energy sources and techniques, and influencing consumption patterns. Studies on women and disasters show that when women are engaged as decision makers in resilience and disaster mitigation plans, they are better able to adapt and manage the impacts of disasters and shocks.

USAID's global climate change programs work to build resilience in disaster and crisis-prone countries by reducing risks to the world's most vulnerable populations. A sustainable and thoughtful response to the impact of climate change is one that simultaneously promotes peace, democracy, human rights, good governance, and accessible social services. As we promote women's participation in peace and political processes, it is critical to empower women to draw on their holistic view of threats to their community – including natural disasters and environmental effects caused by climate change. To that end, USAID is establishing a creative new partnership that addresses WPS and climate change agendas to tackle the critical intersections of gender, climate, security, and resilience. This partnership will aim to promote women's participation and leadership in efforts to address climate-related shocks and challenges linked to recurrent crisis, conflict, or insecurity.

## Developing and Updating the National Action Plan

In instituting this National Action Plan, the United States joined countries around the world in accelerating the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), the first resolution adopted by the Security Council to recognize the crucial role of women in restoring and maintaining peace and security. Resolution 1325 and its subsequent, related resolutions—1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), and 2242 (2015)—aim, inter alia, to increase women’s participation in all efforts related to peace and security and to strengthen the protection of women in situations of armed conflict. The United States drafted and presented three of these resolutions, including Resolution 1888, which established the position of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and remains a strong supporter of international and multilateral efforts to support the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. The updated U.S. National Action Plan expands on efforts at the Security Council by addressing the agenda’s core pillars, to include taking action in a broad array of situations which do not necessarily fall within the scope of that body’s mandate..

The updated Plan also represents ongoing government-wide efforts to leverage U.S. diplomatic, defense, and development resources to improve the participation of women in peace and conflict prevention processes, protect women and girls from GBV, and help ensure that women have full and equal access to relief and recovery resources.

We remain committed to the National Action Plan’s priorities for advancing women’s equality and empowerment in peace and security. We are confident that the actions contained in the updated Plan are necessary, achievable, high-impact, and appropriately informed by relevant experience, including that of those charged with implementation on the ground.

## National Objectives and Action Framework

As directed by Executive Order 13595, the U.S. National Action Plan is targeted at meeting the following five high-level objectives:

- **National Integration and Institutionalization:** Through interagency coordination, policy development, enhanced professional training and education, and evaluation, the United States Government will institutionalize a gender-responsive approach to its diplomatic, development, and defense-related work in conflict-affected environments.
- **Participation in Peace Processes and Decision-making:** The United States Government will improve the prospects for inclusive, just, and sustainable peace by promoting and strengthening women's rights and effective leadership and substantive participation in peace processes, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, transitional processes, and decision-making institutions in conflict-affected environments.
- **Protection from Violence:** The United States Government will strengthen its efforts to prevent—and protect women and children from—harm, exploitation, discrimination, and abuse, including gender-based violence and trafficking in persons, and to hold perpetrators accountable in conflict-affected environments.
- **Conflict Prevention:** The United States Government will promote women's roles in preventing conflict, mass atrocities, and violent extremism, including by improving conflict early-warning and response systems through the integration of gender perspectives, and invest in women and girls' health, education, and economic opportunity to create conditions for stable societies and lasting peace.
- **Access to Relief and Recovery:** The United States Government will respond to the distinct needs of women and girls in both natural and conflict-affected disasters and crises, including by providing safe, equitable access to humanitarian assistance.

To guide our efforts, the Action Framework below details the outcomes we seek, as well as the coordinated, exemplary actions that departments and agencies plan to pursue in order to achieve our objectives, recognizing that agencies may implement additional actions as appropriate.

### 1. National Integration and Institutionalization

Through interagency coordination, policy development, enhanced professional training and education, and evaluation, the United States Government will institutionalize a gender-sensitive approach to its diplomatic, development, and defense-related work in conflict-affected environments.

UNITED STATES NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
<b>Outcome 1.1</b> <b>Departments and agencies establish and improve policy frameworks to support achievements in gender equality and women's empowerment throughout our diplomacy, development, and defense work.</b>	Incorporate NAP objectives in strategic and operational planning, such as Bureau and Mission Resource Requests (BRRs and MRRs) and Operational Plans, as appropriate. Disseminate guidance to all operating units on gender integration.	State, USAID
	Support, as appropriate, implementation and review of the USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (2012) and Automated Directive System guidance on gender integration, including through country- and project-level gender analysis, in countries affected by conflict, crisis, and transition.	USAID
	Support, as appropriate, continued implementation and review of the U.S. Department of State Policy Guidance: Promoting Gender Equality to Achieve Our National Security and Foreign Policy Objectives.	State
	Incorporate NAP objectives into appropriate DoD strategic guidance and planning documents.	DoD
	Training, as appropriate, for relevant Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) project staff, implementing partners, and contractors on gender and social inclusion considerations, trafficking in persons, and GBV.	MCC
<b>Outcome 1.2:</b> <b>Departments and agencies enhance staff capacity for applying a gender sensitive approach to diplomacy, development, and defense in conflict-affected environments.</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Actions</b></p> Ensure all relevant U.S. personnel and contractors receive appropriate training on Women, Peace, and Security issues, including instruction on the value of inclusive participation in conflict prevention, peace processes, and security initiatives, international human rights and international humanitarian law, protection of civilians, prevention of GBV, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and combating trafficking in persons (TIP). Training mechanisms may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory gender, LGBTI, and C-TIP training for all USAID Foreign Service and Civil Service Officers, Personal Service Contractors, and Foreign Service Nationals, and other appropriate staff categories, and specialized training focused on gender integration in crisis, conflict, and transition environments for relevant personnel.</li> <li>• Training for Department of State Foreign Service and civil service personnel, including senior management, and envoys and mediation team members.</li> <li>• Pre-deployment and in-theater training for members of the U.S. military and civilians, as well as Professional Military Education, including Commanders' courses, and intermediate and senior service schools.</li> <li>• Training for CDC personnel working in conflict-affected countries to mainstream gender considerations into the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of CDC research and programs.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementing Department or Agency</b></p> State, USAID, DoD, CDC
	Provide technical assistance to decision-makers in headquarters and in the field on how to develop gender-sensitive programs.	State, USAID, CDC

<b>Outcome 1.3: Departments and agencies establish mechanisms to promote accountability for implementation of their respective gender-related policies in conflict-affected environments.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
	Designate one or more officers, including senior-level officials as appropriate, as responsible for coordination of implementation of the NAP, as well as other gender-related policies and strategies.	State, DoD, USAID, MCC
	Establish an annual award to honor individuals or operating units performing exceptional and innovative work to address gender equality and female empowerment in conflict-affected environments, and to promote the principles embodied in UN Security Council Resolution 1325.	State, USAID, USUN
	Incorporate an assessment of gender integration into after action reviews (for USAID, those after action reviews pertaining to crisis response), and establish processes for addressing cases where gender issues are not being adequately considered in crisis response and conflict prevention environments.	State, USAID, CDC
<b>Outcome 1.4: Departments and agencies establish processes to evaluate and learn from activities undertaken in support of WPS initiatives.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
	Utilize innovations in foreign assistance coordination and tracking systems where appropriate, including gender cross-cutting indicators, sector-specific gender-sensitive indicators, and gender-related key issues to support budgeting, operational planning, and performance management related to the NAP.	State, USAID, CDC
	Develop and improve data collection mechanisms to track and report progress on WPS objectives, assess lessons learned, and identify best practices from existing programs.	USUN, USAID, State, DoD
	Identify and share with U.S. Government departments and agencies lessons learned and best practices from multilateral development banks' experiences in post conflict and transitioning countries.	Treasury



Women leaders from the Punjab province of Pakistan map key policies and stakeholders in their province related to countering violent extremism efforts. These women are part of a coalition called Amn-o-Nisa formed in 2010 by Inclusive Security and Pakistani NGO PAIMAN Alumni Trust to collectively mobilize against violent extremism and promote social cohesion in the country.

## 2. Participation in Peace Processes and Decision-making

The United States Government will improve the prospects for inclusive, just, and sustainable peace by promoting and strengthening women's rights and effective leadership and substantive participation in peace processes, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, transitional processes, and decision-making institutions in conflict-affected environments.

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	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
<p><b>Outcome 2.1: More women are effectively engaged in peace negotiations, security initiatives, efforts to counter violent extremism, conflict prevention, mediation, peacebuilding—including formal and informal processes—and decision-making during all phases of conflict prevention and resolution, and transition.</b></p>	<p>U.S. Government delegations serve as a model for the inclusion of women in talks and negotiations concerning conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and/or political transitions; and advocate for the integration of women and gender perspectives in processes in which the U.S. is involved.</p>	<p>State, USAID, USUN</p>
	<p>Advocate for the inclusion of women in senior positions throughout UN headquarters, as well as in UN missions and regional peacekeeping operations.</p>	<p>State, USUN</p>
	<p>Support the participation and leadership roles of women from all backgrounds, including minorities, women with disabilities, and persons of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity in peace negotiations and mediation, donor conferences, security sector reform, countering violent extremism efforts, transitional justice and accountability processes, and other related decision-making forums including those led by the UN and other international and regional organizations, and including capacity building for such actors as female candidates, female members of government, women in the security sector, and women in civil society.</p>	<p>State, USAID, USUN</p>
	<p>Assist partner governments in improving the recruitment and retention of women, including minorities and other historically marginalized women, into government ministries and the incorporation of women’s perspectives into peace and security policy.</p>	<p>State, USAID, DoD</p>
	<p>Provide assistance to support women’s political participation and leadership in fragile environments and during democratic transitions, including assistance to address risks of violence against women in politics, focusing on capacity building for such actors as female candidates, female members of government, women in the security sector, and women in civil society.</p>	<p>State, USAID, USUN</p>
	<p>Provide common guidelines and training to assist partner nations to integrate women and their perspectives into their security sectors.</p>	<p>State, DoD, USUN</p>
	<p>Provide support for NGOs to track, analyze, and advocate on behalf of the engagement of women and women’s organizations in peace processes.</p>	<p>State, USAID</p>
	<p>Expand emphasis on gender analysis and support to local organizations, including women’s peacebuilding organizations, in strategies and programs related to conflict mitigation, reconciliation, and countering violent extremism, with specific attention to mitigating the risks and challenges women peacebuilders may encounter in undertaking such work.</p>	<p>State, USAID, USUN</p>
	<p>Leverage the participation of female U.S. military personnel to encourage and model gender integration and reach out to female and male populations in partner nations.</p>	<p>State, DoD</p>
	<p>Increase partner nation women’s participation in U.S. funded training programs for foreign police, judicial, and military personnel, including professional military education (PME), as well as exchange programs, conferences, and seminars.</p>	<p>State, DoD</p>
	<p>Mobilize men as allies in support of women’s leadership and participation in security-related processes and decision-making.</p>	<p>State, USAID, USUN, DoD</p>
	<p>Utilize public diplomacy and engagement to advocate for women’s leadership and participation in security-related processes and decision-making, and to overcome related barriers.</p>	<p>State, USAID, DoD</p>

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	Actions	Implementing Department or Agency
<p><b>Outcome 2.2: Laws, policies, and practices in partner states promote and strengthen gender equality at national and local levels.</b></p>	<p>through high level diplomacy and technical assistance, encourage nations to develop laws and policies that promote and protect women's rights, and expand women's inclusion and participation in decision-making processes, including through the development, adoption, and revision of National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security; the criminalization of gender-based violence and adoption of effective procedural laws; as well as through laws and policies that advance women's participation in parliaments, the judicial sector, and other political, peace, and/or security decision-making bodies, including those calling for affirmative measures, where appropriate.</p>	<p>State, USAID, Justice, MCC</p>
	<p>Provide diplomatic, development, and technical assistance to build the capacity of legislative, judicial, and law enforcement actors to develop, implement, and enforce laws that promote and protect women's rights; and civil society to advocate for the development and implementation of such laws.</p>	<p>State, USAID, Justice, MCC</p>
	<p>Assist partner nations in building their capacity to develop, implement, and enforce policies and military justice systems that promote and protect women's rights.</p>	<p>State, DoD, DoJ</p>
	<p>Engage civil society entities, including male and female religious leaders, faith-based groups, and interfaith initiatives, to encourage grassroots support for laws and policies that promote and strengthen gender equality.</p>	<p>State, USAID, MCC</p>

### 3. Protection from Violence

The United States Government will strengthen its efforts to prevent—and protect women and girls from—harm, exploitation, discrimination, and abuse, including gender-based violence and trafficking in persons, and to hold perpetrators accountable in conflict-affected environments.

	Actions	Implementing Department or Agency
<p><b>Outcome 3.1: Risks of GBV in crisis and conflict-affected environments are decreased through the increased capacity of individuals, communities, and protection actors to address the threats and vulnerability associated with GBV.</b></p>	<p>Work to improve the capacity of the UN system and key protection and humanitarian actors, including members of the Humanitarian Cluster system, to prevent and respond to GBV in conflict and crisis settings, including development and implementation of training, guidance, and other operational tools; and promote better coordination and sharing of information across UN country teams in order to develop and implement holistic strategies on GBV.</p>	<p>State, USAID, CDC, USUN</p>
	<p>Advocate for UN peacekeeping missions to have strong mandates on protection of civilians (POC), including on GBV; provide diplomatic support for initiatives in the UN General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) and budget committees to build the capacity and provide operational tools for POC and prevention of GBV; and work to ensure effective GBV modules are included in all appropriate U.S. training provided to troop contributing countries.</p>	<p>State, USUN, DoD</p>
	<p>Incorporate modules on protection, rights, and specific needs of women in conflict into training provided to partner militaries and security personnel.</p>	<p>DoD</p>
	<p>Require U.S. Government humanitarian assistance implementing partners to have Codes of Conduct consistent with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) core principles on protection of beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse, and monitor and promote partner compliance.</p>	<p>State, USAID</p>
	<p>Support education and awareness initiatives for U.S. Government civilian contractors and aid workers on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in crisis and conflict-affected environments.</p>	<p>State, USAID, DoD</p>
	<p>Support research, programming and learning on the use of technology with the potential to improve the safety of women and girls in conflict and crisis settings (e.g., solar lighting, solar or methane-conversion cook stoves, provision of cell phones as part of an early warning system, and mobile justice mechanisms), consistent with available best practices and international guidelines.</p>	<p>State, USAID, USUN</p>
	<p>Provide support for a range of appropriate services and tools to assist and empower vulnerable women and girls, including medical services, psychosocial services, and legal services, as well as opportunities for livelihood training, education, and rest and recreation (e.g. athletics, art, and play); promote equitable access to these services for vulnerable groups such as women and girls with disabilities and persons of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity.</p>	<p>State, USAID</p>
	<p>Issue updated public guidance for U.S. Government partners on addressing GBV in humanitarian assistance programming, including proposal guidance for GBV prevention and response programming in conflict and disaster situations.</p>	<p>USAID</p>
	<p>Collaborate with U.S. personnel abroad, embassy staff, and non-governmental and governmental international partners, as appropriate, to combat exploitation and violence against women and girls by sharing training resources, public awareness tools, and victim referral assistance.</p>	<p>DHS</p>
	<p>Develop an evidence base for context-specific risk factors for GBV using robust scientific, qualitative, and quantitative methods; and translate research findings into programs and policies.</p>	<p>CDC</p>
	<p>Evaluate the impact of programs and policies to prevent and respond to GBV to ensure that available resources are being implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible.</p>	<p>CDC</p>

### **Strengthening Women's Participation in Security Forces and Peacekeeping Operations**

The United States seeks to increase women's participation in security forces in order to prevent conflict and build peace in areas affected by war, violence, and insecurity. For example, the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) is a United States Government-funded security assistance program working to strengthen international capacity and capabilities to implement UN and regional peace operations. It builds the capacity of global partners and enhances their capabilities to meet the growing global demand for specially trained personnel required for peace operations. GPOI is primarily focused on military forces, but also contributes the development of formed police units through its support of Italy's Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units, complementing the efforts of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. To date, GPOI has trained over 320,000 personnel and facilitated the deployment of more than 230,000 personnel to 29 peace operations around the world. GPOI implementation is consciously structured to proactively address protection of civilians (POC). As a part of its focus on POC, GPOI emphasizes the prevention and remediation of sexual and gender based violence as well as child protection. In an effort to promote appropriate forms of behavior, conduct, and response, GPOI-funded peace operations training includes instruction on human rights, conduct and discipline including the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and POC including prevention of sexual and gender based violence and child protection. In 2015 alone, GPOI funded over 120 training events and courses that included instruction on these topics. In addition to specific courses/training activities, GPOI provides assistance supporting the development of United Nations materials and events on POC, such as: in-mission senior leader level table top exercises on POC and prevention of sexual and gender based violence; tactical-level guidance for POC and the prevention and remediation of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV); development and implementation of an integrated training course on preventing and responding to CRSV, and; development of training materials for Women Protection Advisors and Gender Advisors. For example, beginning in 2013, U.S. Southern Command, in partnership with the Naval Postgraduate School, created a specific GPOI-funded WPS program with the Chilean Peace Operations Training Center. The three-phase program aimed to advance GPOI goals of increasing protection and integration of women in peacekeeping and peace building operations. Chile has become a regional leader on gender integration in UN peacekeeping operations and is beginning to share its expertise with partner nations. Through the International Military Education and Training Program, the United States hosts annual seminars on GBV and women's health for foreign civilian and military personnel focused on patient centered care of rape victims, collection of forensic evidence, early marriage, FGM, recognizing/reducing human trafficking, and GBV in war and peacekeeping operations. Participant countries in 2015 included Sri Lanka, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Laos, and Pakistan.

The Department of Defense also works to advance gender integration in partner nation militaries through the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP), which includes 70 partnerships with 76 nations. The SPP links a state's National Guard with the armed forces of a partner nation in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship. For example, since 2008 the Colorado National Guard has conducted more than 15 engagements with women from the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) on issues including leadership development, empowerment, work/family balance, and sexual harassment.

More broadly, the United States Government has advanced the substantive participation of more than 60,000 women in peacebuilding processes in more than 20 countries through USAID programs designed to enhance women's leadership roles and address practical and strategic barriers to participation. The

State Department, through its Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs International Police Peacekeeping Operations Support (IPPOS) program, has also promoted the inclusion of female police peacekeepers. Since 2014, IPPOS supported six UN-led workshops in francophone African countries for over 650 female police officers to become eligible to deploy to UN missions. These workshops have led to 187 female peacekeepers being deployed within 3-6 months.

	Actions	Implementing Department or Agency
<b>Outcome 3.2: Laws, policies, and reconciliation, transitional justice, and accountability mechanisms designed to combat exploitation, abuse, discrimination, and violence against women and girls are developed and implemented at national and local levels.</b>	Support the development of effective accountability and transitional justice mechanisms that address crimes committed against women and girls and reduce impunity.	State, USAID, DoD, Justice
	Support through diplomatic efforts and development and technical assistance the creation of effective measures to investigate GBV promptly, effectively, independently, and impartially; and to bring those responsible for GBV to justice. Support the establishment of mechanisms for survivors and witnesses of GBV so that they can make complaints safely and confidentially, and build capacity, including that of civil society organizations addressing GBV issues, so that there can be appropriate follow-up to these complaints. Where appropriate, support compensation or reparations for survivors and their families.	State, USAID, Justice
	Use public diplomacy and outreach capabilities to help ensure that survivors of GBV understand the accountability options available to them and to disseminate the message that perpetrators of GBV are held accountable and that impunity will not be tolerated.	State
	Assist multilateral and international organizations in developing appropriate mechanisms for sexual assault prevention, response, and accountability, and codes of conduct to prevent SEA by their own personnel. Establish standard operating procedures for USG to follow up on cases of SEA by international personnel to ensure accountability.	State, DoD, USAID
	Collaborate with foreign law enforcement counterparts, as appropriate, in joint efforts to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations engaged in human smuggling and trafficking, including but not limited to forced child labor, and engaged in other forms of exploitation and abuse of women and girls.	DHS, Justice

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	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
<b>Outcome 3.3: Interventions are improved to prevent trafficking in persons and protect trafficking survivors in conflict and crisis-affected areas.</b>	Engage with international and/or civil society organizations to ensure that standard operating procedures are in place to prevent human trafficking, especially among refugees and internally displaced persons, including appropriate assistance and procedures for unaccompanied minors, to identify potential trafficked persons, and to refer survivors to appropriate service providers. As appropriate, provide support to international and civil society organizations to set up emergency care and reintegration services for trafficking survivors.	State, Justice
	Advocate for the inclusion of language in UN peacekeeping operations mandates directing a responsibility to report on trafficking, as appropriate.	State, USUN
	Promote establishment of local coalitions or taskforces comprised of relevant government authorities and civil society organizations to combat human trafficking as part of the justice reform measures in post-conflict areas.	State, USAID
<b>Outcome 3.3: Interventions are improved to prevent trafficking in persons and protect trafficking survivors in conflict and crisis-affected areas.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
	Implement the USAID Counter Trafficking Code of Conduct holding personnel, contractors, sub-contractors, and grantees to the highest ethical standards with regard to trafficking, and implement the USAID Counter-Trafficking in Persons Policy, which includes a focus on increasing anti-trafficking initiatives in conflict-affected areas.	USAID
	Implement agency-wide training to educate staff on ethical standards related to the USAID Counter Trafficking Code of Conduct and provide technical assistance to personnel to design, implement, monitor and evaluate effective anti-trafficking interventions, including in conflict-affected areas.	USAID
	Promote zero tolerance with regard to trafficking in persons for U.S. military and civilian personnel through updated policies relating to prohibited activities by contractor employees and monitoring of contractors' related performance.	DoD
	Advance collaborative efforts to prevent trafficking in persons by sharing training and public awareness resources with U.S. personnel abroad, embassy staff and other international partners, and by additionally sharing investigative resources with foreign law enforcement counterparts as appropriate.	DHS
	Implement MCC's Counter-Trafficking in Persons Policy to ensure appropriate steps are taken to prevent, mitigate, and monitor trafficking in persons risks in projects supported by the MCC.	MCC
Coordinate implementation of the anti-trafficking-related items of the National Action Plan with the ongoing work of the U.S. Presidential Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and the Senior Policy Operating Group on Trafficking in Persons.	State, DoD, Justice, DHS, USAID, MCC	
<b>Outcome 3.4: Men and boys are themselves better protected from GBV, when they are mobilized as partners in the prevention of GBV and other risks of harm, exploitation, and abuse in their communities.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
	Provide support for advocacy campaigns and programs designed to reduce family and community level violence.	State, USAID
	Increase attention to the needs of male survivors, particularly boys, in GBV prevention and response programs.	State, USAID, DoD
Develop programs that address harmful norms and practices contributing to GBV and other forms of exploitation and abuse, through the engagement of a broad range of potential allies committed to increasing accountability, including faith-based and traditional leaders, youth, the business community, women, men, girls, and boys.	State, USAID	



U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Sarah B. Furrel teaches Afghan girls to count numbers at a school in Now Zad, Afghanistan. *Photo Credit: Cpl. Albert F. Hunt/U.S. Marine Corps*

#### 4. Conflict Prevention

The United States Government will promote women’s roles in preventing conflict and mass atrocities, and countering violent extremism, including by improving conflict early-warning and response systems through the integration of gender perspectives, and invest in women and girls’ health, education, and economic opportunity to create conditions for stable societies and lasting peace.

	Actions	Implementing Department or Agency
<p><b>Outcome 4.1: Conflict early warning and response systems include gender specific data and are responsive to GBV, and women participate in early warning, preparedness, and response initiatives.</b></p>	<p>Integrate protocols and support opportunities to share best practices for gender analysis in conflict mapping and reporting, including for mass atrocity prevention, countering violent extremism, and stabilization funding. Review conflict early warning systems and methodologies for conflict assessments, including the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework and related frameworks, to assess and strengthen the integration of gender in these tools and approaches.</p>	<p>State, USAID, DoD</p>
	<p>Ensure the inclusion of a broad range of perspectives from women and youth to inform policy, strategy and programming decisions.</p>	<p>State, USUN</p>
	<p>Increase gender integration across efforts to build resilience to crisis, conflict, and insecurity in various contexts including climate change.</p>	<p>USAID, State</p>
	<p>Actively engage women in planning and implementing disaster and emergency preparedness and risk reduction activities, including regarding how police can better interact with women in their role as first responders.</p>	<p>USAID, DoD</p>
	<p>Provide diplomatic and development support for community-based early warning and response activities, such as empowering local communities to develop strategies in which women directly participate to prevent and respond to outbreaks or escalations of violence and conflict.</p>	<p>State, USAID, CDC</p>
	<p>Provide diplomatic and development support for women’s coalitions working to mitigate conflict, political violence, violent extremism, and related activity, helping to ensure active participation by minorities and other particularly marginalized women.</p>	<p>State, USAID</p>
	<p>Provide diplomatic and development support for activities such as livelihood and youth-led interventions that help promote viable alternatives to violent extremism and build community resilience to help address this challenge. Such support should also be extended to research on gender-related drivers of violent extremism and radicalization that may inform relevant field programming and activities</p>	<p>State, USAID</p>
	<p>Identify and share relevant multilateral development bank databases, such as the World Bank’s Gender Stats, a one-stop source of information on gender at the country level, drawn from national statistics agencies, UN databases, World Bank surveys, and other sources.</p>	<p>Treasury</p>

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
<b>Outcome 4.2: Women and girls participate in stabilization and economic recovery, and have increased access to health care and education services.</b>	Provide diplomatic and development support to advance women’s economic and social empowerment, including through cash for work programs, increased access to land, credit, savings, and other enterprise support activities.	State, USAID
	Promote access to primary, secondary and vocational education for children and youth in countries affected by violence or conflict, with special incentives for the attendance and retention of girls, taking into account related special protection needs.	State, USAID
	Support women’s and girls’ increased access to health services, including reproductive, HIV, and maternal health care.	State, USAID, CDC
	Advocate for the operationalization within the multilateral development banks of the relevant information on the role women can play both in preventing conflict and in promoting stability in post-conflict situations.	Treasury
	Create and strengthen private sector activities and new market opportunities through U.S. trade and investment programs, such as preference programs and Trade and Investment Framework Agreements, to assist women entrepreneurs in growing their businesses.	USTR
	Support women’s participation in efforts to de-radicalize men and women who have supported violent extremism, promote tolerance and pluralism in their communities, and advance stabilization and reconstruction activities.	State, USAID, DoD



Photo caption: The United States is supporting partners in Iraq who are implementing programs that address the protection of vulnerable people, including women and children. Protection activities include the threat of unexploded ordnance, family separation, excessive security screenings and detention procedures, armed conflict, and sexual violence, which remain widespread throughout Iraq. *Photo credit: UN OCHA*

### 5. Access to Relief and Recovery

The United States Government will respond to the distinct needs of women and girls in conflict-affected disasters and crises, including by providing safe, equitable access to humanitarian assistance.

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	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
<b>Outcome 5.1: Gender and protection issues are explicitly and systematically integrated and evaluated as part of responses to crisis and disaster.</b>	Promote women's, men's, and children's equal access to aid distribution mechanisms and services, including establishing or strengthening protocols for the safe and equitable delivery of humanitarian assistance.	State, USAID, DoD
	Support capacity building for local and international NGOs and multilateral organizations involved in disaster and crisis response to address the specific protection needs of women and girls, including preventing and responding to GBV.	State, USAID, CDC
	Support access to sexual and reproductive health services in emergencies and humanitarian settings.	State, USAID, CDC
	Promote safe access to education in emergencies consistent with international guidelines and best practices.	State, USAID
	Support measures for the social and economic empowerment of women as part of crisis and disaster response, including support for livelihood activities.	State, USAID
	Ensure that U.S. Government crisis response and recovery teams have access to appropriate gender and protection expertise, such as a designated gender advisor, to integrate gender considerations in U.S. Government-supported relief and recovery efforts.	State, USAID, DoD
	Ensure that USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team members deployed to crisis situations have been trained on protection of women and girls in humanitarian operations.	USAID
	Advocate that multilateral development banks' post-conflict assessments, country assistance strategies, and operational programs in countries prone to or emerging from conflict reflect sound gender analysis and address the specific needs of women and girls.	Treasury
	Advance inclusion of the most vulnerable, especially women and girls, in determining programmatic approaches and specific interventions during relief and recovery operations.	State, USAID, CDC
	Undertake joint needs analysis and prioritized, comprehensive humanitarian appeals and planning mechanisms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of funding provided to meet the unique needs of women and girls, and prevent and respond to GBV.	State, USAID

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	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
<b>Outcome 5.2: Relief and recovery assistance includes enhanced measures to prevent and respond to GBV in conflict and post-conflict environments.</b>	Provide support for survivors of conflict, torture, and GBV, to include persons with disabilities, their families, and communities, through direct services, including psycho-social support, trauma-informed mental health services and sexual and reproductive healthcare.	State, USAID, CDC
	Encourage international organization and NGO partners to integrate gender and GBV risk mitigation approaches across all sectors, as per international guidelines, such as the IASC Guidelines on GBV in Humanitarian Settings, the Sphere Project, and Standards Recommended by the IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in Humanitarian Crises.	State, USAID, CDC
	Make available to the public information and analysis on U.S. Government-supported gender-based violence programming in disaster contexts, post-conflict situations, and political transitions in order to promote learning and dissemination of best practices.	USAID
	Provide humanitarian protection through the administration of immigration benefits programs and other immigration mechanisms, as appropriate, to eligible individuals, including women and girls, in need of relief from persecution or urgent circumstances.	DHS
<b>Outcome 5.3: Reintegration and early recovery programs address the distinct needs of men and women.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
	Support return and reintegration programs for refugees and internally displaced persons that address the needs of female returnees.	State, USAID
	Support DDR programs, as well as reintegration and rehabilitation programs, including sustainable livelihood alternatives, that address the distinct needs of male and female ex-combatants and those associated with armed actors or violent extremists in other capacities.	State, DoD, USUN, USAID
<b>Outcome 5.4: Gender issues are systematically integrated and evaluated as part of responses to climate change.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Implementing Department or Agency</b>
	Promote the active participation of women in climate change negotiations; gender-responsive approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation at local, regional, or national levels, including equal land tenure rights for women and men; and the capacity and empowerment of women to fully participate in the energy sector, including women working in energy policy and as clean energy entrepreneurs.	State, USAID, Commerce

## Coordination, Implementation, Monitoring, and Reporting

The goals set forth in this National Action Plan are a work in progress toward effecting real and meaningful change. As directed by the Executive Order and National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, State, DOD, and USAID have designated personnel responsible for coordination and implementation, and have supplemented this Plan by submitting to the Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor agency-specific Women, Peace, and Security implementation plans. These implementation plans have established a full range of time-bound, measurable, and resourced actions that State, DOD, and USAID are taking to realize their commitments, and include meaningful strategies for monitoring implementation and evaluating results.

To ensure all departments and agencies involved in this effort act in close coordination as they work to implement the National Action Plan and, where appropriate, develop and execute their own agency-specific plans, the White House National Security Council (NSC) staff chairs an Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) dedicated to Women, Peace, and Security priorities. The IPC monitors and reviews actions taken in support of U.S. national objectives, and integrates the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in relevant national-level policies and strategies. For additional departments and agencies with actions listed under this Plan, the IPC maintains a mechanism to report progress. For countries of particular concern or countries that represent a unique opportunity, the IPC may coordinate government-wide country plans or provide a coordination function as individual departments and agencies elect to develop country-level plans. The IPC also has engaged in regular consultation with civil society representatives on the status of the National Action Plan's implementation. Participating departments and agencies with a field presence have established or maintained similar mechanisms to promote regular consultation with women and civil society organizations in relevant countries and regions.

Working through the IPC, departments and agencies will report on progress made toward achieving the goals and commitments contained in the National Action Plan and agency-level implementation plans, which the Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor will draw upon to provide an annual report to the President. As appropriate, State, DOD, and USAID will update their agency-level implementation plans to reflect updates to the National Action Plan and relevant lessons learned. Progress in implementing the objectives of the National Action Plan will continue to be monitored and evaluated against specific indicators and outcomes as identified by the IPC. Reporting on these issues to the National Security Council staff should be coordinated with reporting on other gender-related policies and strategies as appropriate.

This work has built upon numerous initiatives across the United States Government to ensure transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in our investments in diplomacy, development, and defense. We continue to analyze the success, through evaluation of relevant outcomes, of our own staff training, enhance our efforts to collect sex-disaggregated data in conflict-affected areas, and establish metrics to identify where women's participation is increasing and their protection is enhanced. All of these efforts continue to be informed by the work of multilateral partners, including UN agencies, and other countries, as we work to further develop rigorous monitoring and evaluation tools to advance the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. The Administration continues to seek to work with Congress to ensure support for initiatives under this Plan.

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This updated National Action Plan reflects an interagency-coordinated, comprehensive review of the 2011 National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, and involved consultation with international partners and relevant civil society organizations. In 2018, the National Security Council staff will coordinate the second comprehensive review of the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.

## Partnerships and Collaboration

The goals set forward in the National Action Plan can only be realized through partnership and collaboration with other governments, international organizations, and civil society actors, as well as innovative partnership with the private sector. Central among these partners are the women and organizations throughout the world working every day to build sustainable peace and security and to champion women as vital, equal partners. Together, we must continue to coordinate and leverage resources, learn from the successes and challenges of others, and design and implement inclusive assistance programs that build local capacity and promote sustainable outcomes.

### Promoting Women's Leadership in Burma

Ongoing democratic reforms in Burma have created unprecedented opportunities for a reevaluation of women's role in decision-making and public life. The November 8, 2015 elections in Burma have ushered in a number of significant changes to the country's political landscape. With the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi securing an overwhelming victory, winning 77 percent of parliamentary seats being contested, the election initiated the country's first democratic transfer of power in decades.

The elections also brought another significant change: an increase in the number of women candidates contesting the elections (from 127 in 2010 to 800 in 2015) and a near tripling of women's representation in parliaments at all levels. In the run-up to the November elections, USAID support, through IRI, to political parties included a special emphasis on empowering women to participate in the political process by equipping them with needed skills through a Leadership Training School (LTS). The LTS workshops focused on the roles and responsibilities of a candidate along with strategies to run a successful campaign. The goal of USAID's LTS was to build the capacity of women party members and encourage them to seek public leadership.

Nearly 200 women representing 47 political parties participated in the LTS program with 80 of them making the important decision to run for elected office. These 80 women represented approximately 10 percent of all the women who ran as candidates in the elections. Ten LTS participants were successful in their campaigns and now have the opportunity to apply their skills in new ways as elected officials. Many participants cited USAID-supported LTS workshops as an important first step in ensuring that their voices were represented in their respective parties and in enhancing their campaigns.

Specific to peacebuilding activities and the implementation of Burma's Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signed by a handful of warring factions in 2015, USAID supported the training of civilian ceasefire monitors, an important way to monitor the agreement and report any alleged violations. A substantial percentage of civilian ceasefire monitors trained to date have been women. Initial findings from evaluations in six ethnic states revealed a correlation between gender inclusion strategies and monitoring functionality. Women's involvement on these teams has broadened the type of violations being reported because women often have broader access than men to vulnerable community members, their view of conflict often differs from that of men. Above all, the research found that by failing to see and implement peacebuilding support through a gender lens our support risks omitting critical perspectives and missing opportunities to achieve a more lasting peace.

U.S. Government investments have helped cultivate women's leadership across multiple sectors and contributed to changing public perceptions of the role women can play in public life. The United States remains committed to supporting women.

Through our bilateral diplomacy, development assistance, and security cooperation in countries affected by crisis and conflict, we will continue to support existing national government efforts to protect and empower women as agents of peace and security, and advocate for greater inclusion and efforts in cases where the voices of women need to be amplified and supported.



USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance is providing safe drinking water and promoting improved hygiene at this camp for internally displaced persons in Adamawa, Nigeria. USAID is also working with partners to ensure that water points and latrines are placed in safe and accessible locations for everyone-- including women, children, older people, and people with disabilities. *Photo credit: Elizabeth Pender, USAID/OFDA*

We will continue to partner with other countries, both donors and those with specific experience dealing with the challenges of conflict, to amplify our bilateral assistance and advocacy efforts and ensure their efficient coordination. We will seek to expand our engagement with partner governments in order to, among other things, increase the number of governments that actively promote Women, Peace, and Security principles, including through active engagement with regional leaders and influencers. These partnerships should reflect the sound principles set forth in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, which underscore the importance of country ownership, donor coordination, inclusive partnerships, harmonization, alignment, results, and mutual accountability.

Through our multilateral engagement, we will continue our efforts to ensure that the work of the United Nations and other international, regional, and sub-regional organizations upholds the principle that women must have an equal voice in addressing challenges to peace and security. When these institutions are themselves engaged as actors in conflict- and post-conflict situations, we will, as appropriate, assist and cooperate with them to help ensure that development, humanitarian assistance, and peace and security operations integrate a strong gender perspective and effectively serve the interests of women and girls. And we will continue to support the efforts of The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) on this front.

In all our efforts, we seek collaborative partnerships with non-governmental organizations active at the national, regional, and international levels, as well as the private sector. We will continue working with academic and other research institutions and practitioners to understand and expand the information

available on the role of women in all aspects of peace and security, so that policy-makers across the government can reach more informed decisions on issues of peace and security, how best to invest our resources, and where to direct our efforts.

Finally we expect civil society, which informed the development of this Plan, to continue to hold us accountable to these commitments, to help us learn from activities and approaches implemented under the Plan, and to contribute to future revisions of the Plan.

## Call to Action



Delegates in the Security Council Chamber before the start of an all-day open debate on women, peace and security to review implementation of resolution 1325, the first resolution of the Council to address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. *UN Photo/Cia Pak*

Tragically, war remains a regular and recurring feature of the human experience. In many instances, conflicts have recurred or been prolonged in significant part because women—those who suffered the worst of the violence and bore the burden of reconstruction—were excluded from the negotiating table and the benefits of peace.

We must continue to ensure that women's voices, experiences, and needs play an equal role in promoting peace and security efforts around the world. We can facilitate this by strengthening protections for women from violence during and after war and ensuring their participation in peace negotiations and relief and recovery efforts.

And we must take proactive efforts to build women's capacities to help prevent war and promote stability - by providing girls and women safe access to tools such as education, economic opportunity, and health care.

The United States remains committed to ensuring that its National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security does not begin and end merely as words on paper. Today we rededicate ourselves to bringing the ideas and goals expressed in this document to life in our work around the world, and recommit the United States to the essential effort of empowerment and sustained, equitable peace for all.





