

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

In the face of persistent and complex violent conflict and a rising backlash against women's rights, the **Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)** is committed to keeping the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda at the core of its work. The Department mobilizes voluntary contributions from Member States through its Multi-Year Appeal (MYA), which calls for \$135 million for 2020 to 2022. The scale of the current challenges to the WPS agenda requires commensurate resources. MYA funding is critical in upholding our WPS commitments.

WHY IT MATTERS?

- Gender equality is the number one predictor of peace;
- Inclusion and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding processes is fundamental to the full realization of their human rights;
- Peacemaking strategies that include women and civil society are more likely to generate ownership and last longer;
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development enshrines the participation of women in electoral and political process as a vital contributor to more stable and prosperous societies;
- Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), in turn triggers violence that - beyond having serious consequences for survivors - can undermine peace efforts.

HOW DOES DPPA ADVANCE THE WPS AGENDA?

2020 is a year of important anniversaries of the core policy frameworks to achieve gender equality. DPPA is redoubling its efforts to implement the priorities set by the WPS policy issued by USG Rosemary A. DiCarlo in June 2019:

1. Conduct gender-sensitive political and conflict analysis;
2. Promote inclusion and women's meaningful participation in all peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts;
3. Promote women's participation in electoral and political processes;
4. Prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence as a priority for peace.



HOW DOES DPPA TRACK AND MONITOR ITS WPS COMMITMENTS?

- Including WPS deliverables in senior leadership compacts;
- Improving gender-sensitive political and conflict analysis, including in DPPA's reporting to the Security Council and the General Assembly;
- Strengthening WPS performance indicators in the Results Framework accompanying the Strategic Plan 2020-2022;
- Including mandatory gender marker for all projects;
- Gender budgeting to track resource allocation and the overall investments to advance WPS commitments;
- Including a gender marker and a risk-management approach in all MYA projects;
- Devoting at least 17 per cent of the annual MYA budget towards WPS initiatives.

WOMEN'S ADVISORY GROUPS

A CREATIVE WAY TO ENSURE WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ARE HEARD

Inclusive peacemaking should involve the equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. However, it is often challenging to secure women's direct participation around the peace table. In processes without or with few women on negotiating delegations, mediators need to continue to promote women's direct participation, whilst also thinking creatively about other means to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered. The **Women's Advisory Groups (WAGs)** have proved to be an effective way to ensure women's perspectives are heard where and when it matters the most.

WHAT ARE THE WOMEN'S ADVISORY GROUPS?

The legitimacy of peacemaking and mediation processes must be enriched by the inclusion of the perspectives of women and women's civil society organizations. The WAGs are inclusion mechanisms to further enhance women's participation and contribution to peacemaking work of DPPA and its Special Political Missions (SPMs). DPPA supports WAGs in the context of Syria, Yemen and Iraq, and plans to use the experience of these three mechanisms to inform its support to other processes, whether through consultative bodies or other means to encourage the direct participation of women.

EXAMPLES OF WOMEN'S ADVISORY GROUPS

In Syria, the former Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, was the first UN mediator to establish a women's advisory board (WAB) as a formal inclusion mechanism. The WAB provided access to a diverse range of Syrian women's perspectives to strengthen understanding of dynamics on the ground; and essential contacts and information to better define operational and funding priorities in Syria. Special Envoy Geir O. Pedersen and Deputy Special Envoy Khawla Matar have continued to engage with the WAB on a regular basis - including at critical junctures in the political process such as the launch of the Constitutional Committee on October 2019. In addition to advocating strongly for Syrian women's participation in the Constitutional Committee at a minimum of 30 per cent - which was nearly achieved - the WAB presented the UN and other key stakeholders with a range of concerns and recommendations regarding the humanitarian, political and economic situation in Syria. In 2020, the Special Envoy will continue to regularly consult the WAB and seek its support to strengthening linkages with diverse women's civil society organizations and networks.

In Yemen, Special Envoy Martin Griffiths established the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in June 2018 to provide him with technical support and gendered analysis. On the sidelines of the Sweden Consultations in December 2018, the TAG held meetings with the Special Envoy, the two parties and the international community. During 2019, the TAG participated in informal consultations with the Office of the Special Envoy to build their capacities and improve their knowledge of the peace process - including key issues such as power-sharing agreements. In 2020, the TAG will continue to promote inclusion and women's meaningful participation through the provision of substantive technical advice at all stages of the UN-led peacemaking efforts in Yemen.

In Iraq, the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) created a WAG in January 2019 to provide expertise and advice to the SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. Since its establishment, the WAG's mandate and focus has expanded to include direct lobbying and engagement with the Government of Iraq, the legislature and other stakeholders, including the international community, to advance women's political representation and participation. In 2020, the WAG will continue to contribute to the government's political and electoral reform initiatives, through its direct participation in the parliamentary and presidential constitutional reform committees; and its advice to UNAMI's senior leadership.

