

The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

Learning from the Nigerian Experience



**The Nigerian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security is domiciled with the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development*

Issue 1: NSRP Learning Series

January 2016

www.nsrp-nigeria.org

nsrp
NIGERIA STABILITY
AND RECONCILIATION
PROGRAMME



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In Nigeria, as in other countries affected by violent conflict, women and girls have paid a heavy price in conflict and violence. They bear the brunt of violent conflict, but are largely excluded from formal conflict-management mechanisms and peace processes. Their voices are rarely heard and their experiences often not addressed. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, governments, civil society, donors and the international community have paid increasing attention to the ways in which women and girls experience and contribute to peace and security over the past twenty years. In Nigeria, the government passed its 3 year National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) in August 2013. With focus now shifting onto developing the next iteration of the NAP, the time is right to take stock, record what has happened to date, reflect on what lessons can be gleaned from the process and determine the way forward.

Drawing on four years of working on the development, implementation and monitoring of the NAP and deliberations with government and civil society, the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP)¹ has developed this paper to contribute to knowledge on the subject matter.² The paper begins with a background on the women, peace and security agenda, and goes on to discuss NAPs and the Nigerian experience in its development and implementation. It outlines progress on and challenges to implementation, the role of civil society and key lessons and concludes with recommendations for the future. This paper aims to support the development of the next NAP in Nigeria. In addition, it purposes to

enrich global documentation on the women, peace and security agenda towards engendering meaningful and sustainable impact in the lives of women, men, boys and girls in communities affected by violent conflict.

Women, Peace and Security

Girls, women, boys and men experience conflict and violence differently and are often subject to different forms of violence. Women and girls are more likely to experience sexual violence while men and boys are more likely to be detained by security forces and drawn into gangs and militia. Violent conflict curtails access to services, freedom of movement and physical security for women and girls. It exacerbates existing levels of violence against them, sometimes resulting in additional gender-based violence and affecting the mental health of women and girls. Also, issues such as displacement, extra judicial killings, torture, food insecurity and trauma affect women and girls in different ways than men and boys.

Experience has shown that policies, practice and programmes around peace and security often do not address realities of women and girls. For example, only 16 percent of peace agreements concluded between 1990 and 2010 mention the word 'women' and of these, many are in relation to restriction on their rights, stating what women can and cannot do.³

1. The Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme aims to reduce violent conflict in Nigeria by supporting Nigerian institutions, organisations and individuals to manage conflict non-violently and, in so doing, reduce its impact on the most vulnerable and marginalised. Please see <http://www.nsrp-nigeria.org/>.

2. This paper was written by Chitra Nagarajan and Eleanor Nwadinobi of the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme with input from Wynyfred Achu, Buba Amin, Bamidele Fagbite and Nuhu Ndahi.

3. C. Bell and C. O'Rourke, 'Peace Agreements or Pieces of Paper? The Impact of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Peace Processes and Their Agreements,' *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 59(4) 2010 941-980

This is not surprising considering that only 4 percent of signatories to peace agreements between 1992 and 2011 were women.⁴

However, women are not passive victims of conflict. They make significant impact whenever they take action or their voices are heard. This applies whether they are part of formal conflict management mechanisms, or mediating disputes between families, using their traditional roles or forming inter-religious alliances. Women's activism depends on the demography, nature of the violent conflict and the opportunities available to them to organise.⁵ In Nigeria's Delta region, women have organised against environmental degradation. In the 'Middle Belt' they have formed alliances across religious lines. In the northern states, women leaders have joined formal mechanisms or used their traditional roles to further peace. For example, women have organised multiple marches calling for peace, justice and human rights in Maiduguri, the epicentre of ongoing violence.⁶ Further, women are mothers and sisters of those recruited into armed groups or suspected by security forces of being militants. They are in the best position to monitor movements of family members and warn them against being used by politicians and others in power.

Gender norms and roles can drive conflict or shift conflict into violence.⁷ For example, men and boys can experience pressure to prove they are 'men', which may add to frustrations of inequality and corruption and drive them to join armed groups. Women can both exhort the participation of others in violence as their

wives, mothers and sisters and take direct and supporting roles themselves.

The mobilisation of women from different conflicts in parts of the world who found they shared similar experiences has led to some changes in policies and practice. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed its Resolution 1325, pushed forward by Namibia and Bangladesh - countries that had experienced violent conflict themselves. The UNSCR 1325 requires its members to support women's participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction, to take action to prevent violence against women and girls, to respect women's rights and mainstream gender in all work around peace and security. The Security Council has passed a further eight Resolutions that deepen and expand this commitment.

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa commits African Union countries to take measures to ensure increased participation of women and to protect women particularly from violence rape and other forms of sexual exploitation. Countries around the world are increasingly integrating the women, peace and security agenda into their national law and policymaking. Although this growing focus at the policy level is welcome, an implementation gap between rhetoric and reality still exists. Increased commitment and resources are needed to foster meaningful and sustainable impact on the lives of women and men.



4. P. Castillo Diaz et al, *Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence*, 2nd edition, (UN Women, 2012)

5. Please see S. Maguire and E. Nwadinobi, *The Role of Women and Girls in Peace Initiatives in Nigeria*, (NSRP, 2013) for more information.

6. In addition to taking action around violent conflict, women all over Nigeria have been fighting for the realisation of their rights. For example, over 10,000 women have held demonstrations over violation of their rights in marriage and divorce in Kano in the North West of the country. In Eastern Nigeria, women have protested against harmful traditional practices ranging from widowhood rites to female genital mutilation (FGM). In Bayelsa state, their work has ensured the passage of the Widows Protection Law.

7. Please see C. Nagarajan, *Masculinities, Conflict and Violence*, (NSRP/ V4C, publication forthcoming) for more information on how this manifests in Nigeria.

National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security (NAPs)

As of March 2015, 53 countries (17 in Africa), had adopted NAPs. Although governments in 47 countries reviewed NAPs in 2014, only 11 have budgets attached for its implementation⁸

In 2012, NSRP commissioned a desk study to glean lessons from 31 existing action plans to inform the way forward in Nigeria.⁹ Key points of the review are as follows:

- The very existence of NAPs demonstrate increased efficacy of women's collective advocacy for inclusion in peace processes.
- NAPs have led to more women being included as independent advisors/observers on technical panels in on-going peace negotiations (e.g. in Liberia, Burundi, Nepal and Philippines).
- The rate of implementation of NAPs reflects wider gender issues such as the lack of women in decision-making positions in central ministries.
- Women may be reluctant to enter the political arena even when space is opened if they perceive politics as corrupt or unproductive.
- It is necessary to focus on both improving women's involvement in peace-building processes and the protection of women's and girls' rights.
- It is necessary to set up an inter-ministerial working group to monitor implementation of the NAP.
- Although important laws on violence against women and girls (VAWG) are being enacted and amended, NAPs have not yet had demonstrable impact on prevalence and associated impunity. Difficulties in translating policy and legal commitments into practice remain.
- NAPs often do not address conflict-related sexual and gender based violence against men.
- In developing countries, NAPs have not attracted donor funding directly. Many donors prefer to fund women's project/programmes rather than to support NAPs and other women, peace and security strategies or advocacy efforts for implementation. NAPs of European countries have led to increased financial support for NGOs



working on gender issues in conflict-affected countries.

- NAPs in troop-contributing countries such as Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have led to training modules on women, peace and security for personnel deployed to conflict-affected countries. It has also led to an increase in efforts to recruit female personnel to missions and field offices.
- Inter-country liaison through regional civil society can be particularly positive. For example, Femmes Afrique Solidarités has been instrumental in the NAPs of DRC, Liberia, Burundi and Rwanda.
- Time-bound indicators help to make the NAP realistic and to monitor implementation and impact.
- NAPs should be clear about the delineation of responsibilities between government machineries and civil society. The NAP should lay out responsibilities of central ministries so the NAP becomes an 'all-government' plan.
- The NAP should integrate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, with adequate resources.
- Financial planning is key. A lack of earmarked budget is one of the key obstacles to implementation.

These lessons were shared with government stakeholders to inform the process.

Development of the NAP in Nigeria

The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development (MOWASD), has developed a National Action Plan (NAP) for the Implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1820. Covering 3 years from 2013 to 2016, the NAP includes five pillars referred to as the '5 Ps' that lay out plans to:

1. **Prevent** all types of violence against women and girls, enact and strengthen utilisation of existing laws
2. **Protect** women and girls from all types of violence including sexual and gender based violence during and after conflict
3. **Promote** dissemination of the NAP and develop strategies for awareness, ownership and funding of the NAP
4. Ensure women's full **participation** in all activities in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery processes at all levels
5. Strengthen **prosecution** and ensure quick trial of perpetrators of gender-based violence to end impunity

The Nigerian NAP lays out a clear process for monitoring and evaluation, committing to participatory analysis and annual planning with actionable annual plans and budgets. It constitutes a technical monitoring and evaluation task force with experts from government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and civil society organisations with responsibility for developing mechanisms to ensure compliance. The document stipulates that the MOWASD will give yearly reports on implementation status to the President while State MOWASDs (which have responsibility for monitoring and evaluation at the state level) are expected to give interim progress reports after 18 months to State Governors. A final report is to be presented to the President and National Assembly at the end of the 3 years.

The MOWASD led the process of development of the policy, informed by consultations across federal and state government institutions and civil society. The Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS), NSRP and UN Women supported these processes!¹⁰

Consultations in all 36 states of Nigeria were planned to ensure the NAP reflected conflict dynamics and realities for women and girls in the country and included people from different states. However, the process was fast tracked through consultations in the six geo-political zones to meet up with the launch of the NAP in time for the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security in October 2013. In this way, drafters aimed to inform the NAP with analysis around women's experiences of peace and security that was regionally and culturally specific and to validate activities outlined for implementation.

The government launched the NAP on 27th August 2013 to an audience including officials from government MDAs, civil society and representatives from the media. Despite efforts, the opportunity to ensure the NAP became embedded into the consciousness and work of all government and security agencies rather than be seen as 'a woman's thing' was somewhat missed. The Minister for Petroleum Resources was the only minister apart from the Minister for Women's Affairs and Social Development present. Officials from the Ministries of Defence, Justice and Finance did not attend. Although representatives of the Naval Officers Wives Association, Police Officers Wives Association and Road Safety Officers Wives Association were present, military and security officials themselves were absent from the event. Commissioners of Women's Affairs from only three out of the 36 states attended the launch. A few months after the launch, these Commissioners were replaced. This shift in appointments has meant those who had been part of the process with the political will to drive implementation forward, were no longer in the position to do so. New officials were therefore unaware of the NAP and their responsibilities towards its implementation.

10. ECOWAS provided initial funding in 2009 to identify people with the requisite skills and expertise in women, peace and security to draft the NAP. In addition to the review of other NAP processes mentioned above, NSRP supported consultations in the geopolitical zones and provided funds to print the NAP once ready. UN Women supported the validation process. NSRP and UN Women co-funded the production and launch of the NAP.

Progress on Implementation

Since its launch in August 2013, the government has taken some action towards implementation with NSRP providing strategic support. Key highlights are as follows:

- MOWASD convenes a multi-stakeholder steering committee that meets quarterly and comprises of representatives from all relevant MDAs, including line ministries for Defence, Justice, Humanitarian Affairs and Finance and security agencies. In 2015, government invited civil society representatives to join the committee.
- The Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act was signed into law on 25th May 2015 by President Jonathan. Nigeria now has comprehensive legislation covering violence against women and girls.¹¹
- Inclusion of a gender section in the National Security Strategy and provisions of the National Action Plan and relevant UNSCRs included in the revised National Peace Policy¹² ensure policy coherence and renewed commitment to take action on gender, peace and security.
- The Ministries of Health and Women's Affairs and Social Development prepared the Gender Based Violence in Nigeria: National Guidelines and Referral Standards in 2014. Based on experiences of sexual and gender based violence survivors in North East Nigeria, international best practice and documentation by national and international agencies, the guidelines apply in post-conflict situations, post-insurgency situations and during administration of humanitarian relief support to survivors.
- State Action Plans (SAPs) with budgets have been passed in Bayelsa, Borno, Delta, Plateau and Rivers states ensuring state ownership and contextualisation to state conflict dynamics. In Rivers and Plateau, these budgets have been defended with the Budget Office in the annual state budget. In Kano, the State Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development inaugurated a

committee to draft a SAP in November 2015, increasing the possibility that Kano will be the sixth state to pass a SAP.

- In Plateau state, the SAP was disseminated in communities, leading to further domestication and development of a community specific Local Action Plan (LAP) in Wase LGA. The local government authority takes responsibility for its implementation. A local women, peace and security (WPS) network has been established there to monitor progress.

Other efforts include training provided by The Nigerian Army Peacekeeping Centre for troops deployed to the North East and overseas. Troops have a code of conduct and general rules of engagement that includes clauses on zero tolerance for VAWG.

The presence of champions within MDAs, particularly the MOWASD, combined with high-level political will by the Minister for Women's Affairs and Social Development herself has facilitated these achievements. The desire to follow global best practice and report progress inspired urgency in the development of the NAP. The technical and financial support given by NSRP and UN Women to MOWASD to develop NAP content and strategy for implementation and enable production and launch of the NAP helped translate this commitment into action as did monitoring and oversight by civil society organisations working through WPS networks. Indeed, the WPS networks have been instrumental in ensuring action at the state level. Despite the turnover of key officials, continued engagement with their replacements (including through building personal relationships) has helped to sustain momentum. Finally, advocates within and outside MDAs have sought to translate increased political and media attention on women and girls in conflict (attributable to the heightened visibility of women and girls being abducted and female suicide bombings in the North East) into tangible action.

11. This landmark legislation was made possible due to sustained efforts of champions within the National Assembly, government and civil society, most particularly the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women and Girls (LACVAW).

12. Section 5.1.7 of the National Peace Policy provides as follows: **Gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding** *Gender discrimination and gender-based violence are a factor in the Nigerian society. Government shall ensure the entrenchment of gender sensitive policies at all levels in the society through deliberate and conscious strategies to ensure a reasonable balance between males and females, particularly in public institutions and politics, consistent with UNSCR 1325 and the NAP for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions in Nigeria.*

Challenges to Implementation

Although much has been achieved since the NAP was launched in 2013, this has been largely at the level of policy processes rather than impact. There is also the need for more action to increase women's meaningful participation in decision-making. A number of significant challenges have hindered progress from rhetoric and policy development to meaningful and sustainable impact in the lives of girls, women, boys and men living in communities affected by violent conflict. These are discussed below:

Insufficient high-level buy-in and political will from government and security stakeholders

The case for mainstreaming gender into conflict and security policies, programmes and practice, ensuring women's meaningful participation and taking action on violence against women and girls often needs to be made repeatedly. Although there are advocates in government and security MDAs, this often does not translate to the highest levels. Many continue to see issues of women, peace and security as 'a woman's concern' rather than a matter of national security. As a result, their efforts tend to be tokenistic.

Low support for and levels of women in decision-making

The culture and politics of non-inclusion of women in

decision-making is mirrored in peacebuilding institutions and initiatives. In 2015, only 5.6 percent of current National Assembly legislators and only 6 out of 36 Ministerial nominees are women. Low numbers of women are appointed to investigative committees and involved in peace negotiations. The most recent Panel of Inquiry on conflict headed by a woman in Nigeria was in 1992 when Hon Justice Rahila Hadea Cudjoe headed the Zango-Kataf (Market), Kaduna State Riots Judicial Commission of Inquiry.¹³ Although qualified women with the right skills, knowledge and influence exist, this lack of women in political decision-making processes makes achieving progress on women's participation in peacebuilding difficult.

Delays in budget allocation and release

Lack of adequate resourcing for the women, peace and security agenda is not limited to Nigeria. However, here as in other contexts, this has severely hindered implementation of the NAP. Those charged with its implementation often have to strategise how to do so without funding. They have to carry forward plans requiring no or low resourcing or rely on the support available from development partners. Not only does this hinder adequate planning and reduce impact, but it also affects the level of government ownership of the agenda.



13. E. Nwadinobi and S. Maguire, *The Role of Women in Peacebuilding Initiatives*, (NSRP, 2013)

Lack of knowledge of key officials and high turnover

Some of those charged with facilitating implementation lack knowledge of the women, peace and security agenda and what this means for their work. Civil society organisations are often the ones who inform government officials about the very existence of the NAP and their role in its implementation. This is exacerbated by turnover of key personnel in the civil service and of political appointees and the lack of processes to ensure smooth transition. This recurring attrition means that officers whose capacities have been built in WPS may be moved leaving a capacity gap.

Lack of clarity as to priorities and concrete plans for implementation

At present, the NAP consists of a long list of actions covering most aspects of the women, peace and security agenda. While this holistic approach is commended, when matched with lack of resourcing and insufficient political will at the highest levels, it is not realistic to implement the whole scope of the NAP as it presently stands. Sequencing in order of priorities may be more achievable.

Uncertainty on what the NAP contributes to existing responsibilities

The extent to which the NAP presents something new or merely outlines existing government undertakings is unclear. If the latter is the case, the NAP's value would be limited in this instance to uniting government's responsibilities. However, the NAP seeks to contribute much more – to drive action on the women, peace and security agenda forward. This dynamic also presents difficulties for monitoring - some activities may not be documented as 'NAP activities' as they were on-going activities initiated independent of the NAP. This presents a challenge in assessing the extent to which the NAP has galvanised government action on the women, peace and security agenda.

Competing priorities of those involved in NAP development and implementation

Experience has shown that the implementation of the NAP is often linked to political will, contextualised state priorities and availability of funds. This implies that

priority goals will differ across each state of the country. Achievement of goals and objectives is therefore variable and attained at differing paces.

Legal status of the NAP and SAPs

At present, NAPs and SAPs are policy not legal documents.¹⁴ This means that officials are not mandated to implement them and sanctions do not exist for non-adherence.

Gap between federal and state action

Given that Nigeria operates a federal system of government with certain powers and functions devolved to the state governments, implementation of the NAP requires action at federal, state and local government levels. Although progress has been made in raising awareness at the federal level, this has yet to translate to all 36 states of the country. The only states with SAPs are those with strong civil society coalitions driving advocacy forward.

Though this is testament to the work of civil society, a more sustainable mechanism is necessary.

Lack of a culture of peer learning

Nigeria does not have a practice of peer influencing where states within the same geo-political zone learn or benefit from best practice in neighbouring states. This means that replication of what works vis à vis the NAP or other policy and practice on the women, peace and security agenda does not happen. There is a need to share plans and lessons on successful approaches both vertically and horizontally to facilitate cross-learning across state and federal levels.

Gap between expectations and realistic achievements

Fundamental transformation is required to adequately implement all parts of the women, peace and security agenda to have meaningful impact in conflict-affected communities. However, due to the challenges outlined above, the scope of what is realistically achievable falls short of this.

14. Please note that there are plans for the Plateau state legislature to pass its SAP as law.

The Role of Civil Society

Civil society Women Peace and Security (WPS) networks at the federal level and in eight conflict-affected states¹⁵ monitor NAP implementation, engage in advocacy, raise awareness of and take action on women, peace and security issues. The WPS networks have been critical to the passage of implementation plans at state level.

In Yobe and Delta states, the networks focus on working with community leaders and cultural associations to reduce incidences of early marriage and propagate the importance of keeping girls in schools. In Bayelsa, the network organised a forum on widows' rights. In Rivers, a 'safe space' was organised where women and girls who had experienced gender-based violence could report their experiences and receive support.

In Kano, the WPS network was the only civil society coalition invited to make input at the Governorship debate where they seized the opportunity to raise awareness on the need to implement the NAP. Women were also mobilised to participate in the elections in five communities in the state and sensitisation around issues of women and decision-making was carried out via the media. Due largely to advocacy efforts of the network, the number of women on the State Executive Council has increased from 1 to 2 out of a total of 14 members¹⁶. Sustained engagement has also led to increased commitment from the Emirate Council on eradicating child marriage and divorce. Working with the Hisbah Board has ensured better reporting of and response to violence against women and girls in the state.

Preventing Election Related Violence

The Women's Situation Room in Rivers focused on tackling all forms of gender-based violence around the elections and worked to increase women's participation in the Governorship elections. Rivers State witnessed various forms of violence such as burning of card readers, arson, physical violence, snatching of ballot boxes, armed violence and seizure of electoral materials. The Women's Situation Room recorded incidents, directly mediated in conflict, provided counselling and relevant support during the period. In one instance, a call operator mediating in conflict between two groups succeeded in preventing a community leader from mobilising community members to retaliate against another community that had attacked them previously.

15. These states are Bayelsa, Borno, Delta, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, Rivers and Yobe.

16. Please note that, as of November 2015, in addition to there being 2 women Commissioners out of 14, women head three parastatal bodies in the state – the State Library Board, Radio Kano and ARTV.

Campaigning for the Release of Abducted Women and Girls

The WPS network in Borno has actively advocated for action on women and girls being abducted by fighters of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lida'awati wal Jihad (JAS), commonly known as Boko Haram. This practice gained widespread attention in the aftermath of abductions in Chibok. The network was the first group to speak out after the Chibok abductions and their press statement was influential in increasing awareness and galvanising the wider movement. The network's efforts saw civil society and women's groups organising protests across the country to demand the release of the abducted girls. The group continues to work on this issue,

visiting communities where abductions have taken place and engaging with the state government on appropriate response. The WPS network also advocates for the passage of legislation on the NAP and works in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The WPS networks have also made links internationally. There has been increasing recognition regionally and internationally¹⁷ of their contribution to best practices around the NAP and the women, peace and security agenda, with members invited to share insights from their work in this area. Members have shared experiences and realities for women and girls in Nigeria at a regional conference on armed violence in Nairobi, made a presentation to the UN Security Council and invited the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security to visit Nigeria.

Moreover, a key focus of action has been on monitoring and evaluating implementation by government. A matrix developed by members, outlines every provision of the NAP against which members assess progress on a quarterly basis at the federal level and in the eight focal states. This assessment is collated and documented annually.



17. Their work has fed into a recent Report of the Secretary General on Women Peace and Security, published in September 2015

Key Lessons from the Nigerian NAP



- The process of developing a country's NAP is most successful if it is truly consultative and involves all government actors charged with peace and security in the nation. Involving Ministries of Defence and Finance and security agencies such as the Army and Police from the start ensures immediate and sustained ownership of the NAP.
- Consultation with civil society, especially those working in areas affected by violent conflict, is helpful in providing rich insight to inform governmental action. In the Nigerian experience, MDAs invited representatives of such civil society organisations to join the multi-stakeholder steering committee on NAP implementation with beneficial results.
- Setting mechanisms in place to ensure cross-government cooperation and prioritisation is vital. A cross-government committee on the NAP which meets regularly ensures information sharing between MDAs, maximises opportunities for collaboration, facilitates planning for tackling challenges, provides a platform for assessing progress and enables the establishment of programmes and plans to intensify action. It also serves as a forum to ensure peer learning and influence.
- Although identification of a lead agency is necessary, giving responsibility to other actors outside the agency dedicated to women affairs, is helpful to ensure widespread ownership and action. In this way, security agencies, human rights commissions, relief and recovery agencies can see NAP implementation as core to their work.
- Amending existing peace and security policies such as National Security, Peace and Defence Strategies is useful to ensure policy coherence and diffusion of the women, peace and security agenda across government. Ideally, revised policies will state an over-arching commitment to gender mainstreaming and implementation in line with the NAP in addition to citing relevant provisions of the NAP that fall within their remit. This will provide a viable basis for influencing action.

- Regular outreach and training for government officials on the NAP and SAP is crucial. This is because one of the key challenges to effective implementation has been rapid turnover of political appointees and key civil servants in several states.
- Government MDAs have found it difficult to make progress on NAP implementation without a dedicated budget and funding. Without adequate resourcing, the NAP is likely to have impact only at rhetorical and policy levels rather than on the lives of people living in areas affected by conflict.
- Civil society is key to ensuring action. The Nigerian experience indicates that the absence of civil society intervention may well mean the absence of SAPs. The presence of individuals, civil society organisations or networks with good convening power to drive advocacy is essential for change. The existence of such groups who are focused on the women, peace and security agenda is also crucial during transition periods as this provides a platform for briefing incoming officials upon assumption of office.
- Geographical representation is important for ensuring context specificity. Although the present NAP was not informed by consultations across all 36 states in Nigeria, representative consultations carried out across the six geo-political zones served to enrich the contents of the NAP whilst also ensuring sustained commitment by a wide range of actors.
- Ensuring state level ownership and action is essential for the development and implementation of SAPs. Action pertaining to the Nigerian SAPs was largely instigated by civil society – this points to the need for mechanisms to be put in place to ensure a more systematic approach.
- A clear monitoring and evaluation strategy is necessary from the start. Although the Nigerian NAP had a clear strategy from inception, it has been challenging to ensure that progress is monitored and evaluated since this task is often left to civil society alone.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The Nigerian government is to be commended for putting a NAP in place and taking increasing measures to mainstream the women, peace and security agenda into its work on conflict and security. The current NAP is well into its third and final year of implementation. Given the expiration date of August 2016 (after which a new NAP will be developed) it is imperative to reflect on experiences so far in order to ensure that the new NAP is more effective and impactful than the preceding version. The following recommendations are proffered for this purpose:

- A process of assessing achievements under the current NAP whilst also distilling key points for relevant adjustments is important. The proceeds of such a process as well as an updated gender and conflict analysis should inform the content of the next NAP. It will be beneficial for instance, to include an additional pillar on coordination and remedial response to emerging issues such as increasing involvement of young women and girls in suicide bombing.
- A full process of consultation should be carried out prior to the development of the next NAP. This consultation should include government MDAs, security agencies, civil society and other key stakeholders. Consultation should not be limited to the federal level but it should include states and communities, particularly those affected by violent conflict. Sessions should be planned as part of a process of engagement and synergy-building rather than one-off events.
- A process for tracking 'champions' (male and female) of the women, peace and security agenda would be beneficial. This would help identify and document their influence and impact for lessons-learning.
- Strategies to ensure closer cross-government working and to drive political will at the highest levels should be put in place. As part of this, government should consider appointing high-level champions for the NAP¹⁸ who sit on the Federal and State Executive Councils. All policies and strategies on peace and security should state an overarching commitment to implementing key tenets of the NAP in addition to detailing ways of mainstreaming women, peace and security analysis in practice.
- Government should consider effectual ways of facilitating peer-learning between states and closer communication and coordination across federal, state and community levels. This may entail for example, including discussions on the NAP at key meetings with wide stakeholder involvement or initiating annual meetings specifically to discuss progress on domestication, implementation and impact of the NAP. Such meetings should also field deliberations on strategies to overcome emerging challenges.
- MDAs should ensure frequent and robust consultations with civil society actors on an on-going basis. This will provide an opportunity for MDAs to benefit from the rich experiences and insight of relevant civil society groups.
- The upcoming NAP should pay more attention to ways of increasing women's meaningful participation in decision-making around peace and security. It will be beneficial for instance for the subsequent NAP for instance, to commit government to ensuring that women are included in future negotiations with militant or insurgent groups. It is also important that government prioritises women's rights in such negotiations and ensures that women's concerns (including the prohibition of sexual violence in ceasefire and peace agreements) are reflected in final agreements.¹⁹ It may be advantageous for government to adopt the Côte d'Ivoire model of establishing a women's observatory on gender equality and maintaining a compendium of highly skilled women.

18. Please note that Australia and Sweden have appointed high-level champions for the NAP.

19. The UN Guidance for Mediators on Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ceasefire and Peace Agreements requires that mediators a) discuss with parties the immediate termination of sexual violence when there are credible reports of its commission b) ensure consultation with and inclusion of women in the process and as part of mediation teams c) ensure that ceasefire and peace agreements prohibit sexual violence and ensure command and control structures and codes of conduct for security actors prohibit same and punish offenders.

- The subsequent NAP should focus on ways to increase the voice of women whilst also being responsive to the needs of women who are further excluded and marginalised. For example, women with disabilities find it more difficult to escape violent conflict, are not part of early warning and early response systems, have less access to essential services and are at greater risk of gender-based violence.²⁰
- The subsequent NAP should have a clearer system for allocating responsibility and monitoring action. MDAs should be assigned specific tasks with regular reporting to persons with oversight responsibilities such as the Senate Committee on National Security and Intelligence. This strategy will ensure that individual commitment translates to institutional prioritisation and action.
- A dedicated budget should be allocated and funds made available. This includes delineating specific portions of existing MDAs' budgets for NAP-related programmes. Government should consider supporting the newly established Global Acceleration Instrument that provides funding for women's rights organisations in conflict-affected communities.
- The NAP should be updated to ensure it reflects provisions of all eight UN Security Council Resolutions, including UNSCR 2242, passed in October 2015. The provisions of the NAP should also be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Government should focus on increasing dissemination of contents of the NAP. This may involve translation into Nigerian languages, electronic archiving of lessons and harnessing the potential of social media.



The Women, Peace and Security Network in Kano presents policy brief on the NAP to Professor Hafiz Abubakar, Deputy Governor of Kano State, June 2015

20. Please see G. Jerry, P. Pam, C. Nnana and C. Nagarajan, *What Violence Means to Us: Women with Disabilities Speak*, (NSRP, 2015) for more information.

Find out more

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January 2016