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The Women, Peace and Security Agenda – Canada prepares to renew its National Action Plan by Monique Cuillerier

It has been over fifteen years since the first United Nations Security Council resolution (1325) to specifically address the women, peace and security agenda. In that time, sixty-three countries have developed National Action Plans (NAPs) — and sixteen new ones are in progress — to provide frameworks for viewing their approach and work in women, peace and security.

Canada's first national action plan expired at the end of March 2016 and there has been a gradual process to develop the next one. The process was delayed while related federal government consultations — on international assistance and defence policy — took place over the summer of 2016.

Canadian civil society — particularly in the form of the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada (WPSN-C) — has been eager to participate in crafting a NAP that addresses the shortcomings of the first C-NAP and learn from the lessons of other countries who have taken different approaches. During the first few months of 2017, a consultation process — funded by Global Affairs Canada, administered by the World Federalist Movement - Canada, and organized by the WPSN-C — took place. The process was multi-faceted and included online and in-person components. The online aspect included a series of webinars — addressing defence policy, refugees, and feminist foreign policy and international assistance; background documents from both GAC and WPSN-C; a hosted Twitter conversation; and a survey. At the end of April, a two-day in-person consultation was held in Ottawa. More than seventy-five individuals, from both government and civil society, attended.

The form of the in-person consultation was influenced by previous work by the WPSN-C that examined the best practices and varying approaches of other countries. A roundtable was held in Ottawa in September 2016 by the Embassies of the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, and WPSN-C with specific support from the Nobel Women's Initiative. Following this discussion, WPSN-C produced a comparative document looking more broadly at the structure and content of NAPs (and their accompanying consultation processes, when held) from a number of countries, including Australia, Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and the United States.

Having considered different elements of the other donor country NAPs — their goals and objectives, focus countries, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks — and outreach to civil society

representatives in a number of these countries, trends for improvement were identified. For example, there was general disappointment in consultation processes in the drafting of NAPs and ongoing civil society engagement and funding. Civil society representatives also felt that indicators were generally weak (this held true across different countries' chosen indicators) and that the lack of a dedicated budget weakened the quality of implementation. As well, few NAPs included representation and/or involvement of diaspora and refugee women. (This was something particularly taken into consideration during the Canadian consultation. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada participated in the in-person consultation, along with civil society representation from refugee and diaspora communities. As well, one of the webinars specifically discussed refugees.)

Having reflected on these successes and challenges from other countries, the two days of discussion alternated between panel discussions with representatives from government and civil society and 'work sessions' in which participants brainstormed ideas, priorities, and suggestions and the topics covered included:

- Reviewing and consolidating understanding of the key lessons from the previous C-NAP;
- Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the previous C-NAP, from the perspectives of the participants;
- Identifying priorities for the new C-NAP, including emerging issues and Canadian comparative advantages;
- Discussion on the scope and structure of the new C-NAP with participating government departments;
- Priority objectives for participating government departments as a result of small discussion groups with both government and civil society; and
- Identifying strategies and possible indicators on possible C-NAP objectives.

Additionally, Hannah Bond from Gender Action for Peace and Security - United Kingdom (GAPS-UK), Mavic Cabrera-Balleza from the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP, New York) and Jacqueline O'Neill of Inclusive Security (Washington) participated in the consultation on two panels: Context and Opportunities for Canada and Lessons Learned on Building Effective WPS NAPs. Both of these panels are available to watch at cnapconsult.org.

A report summarizing the results of the consultation process, *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Report of the Joint Government - Civil Society Consultation on a New Canadian National Action Plan (C-NAP) for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, is available at <http://cnapconsult.org/report/>

For resources related to the Canadian National Action Plan on WPS visit wfmcanada.org/mondial-links

Monique Cuillerier is WFM-Canada's Membership & Communications Director.

Documents, links, and other items referenced in the June 2017 issue of *Mondial* are available at <http://www.wfmcanada.org/mondial-links-june-2017/>