

## FEDERAL POLICY BRIEFING

### ***ADVANCING PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS***

WASHINGTON, DC  
MARCH 17-19, 2013

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#### **Women, Peace, and Security Sessions** Monday, March 18 – Tuesday March 19, 2013

##### **Working Group on Women, Peace and Security Lunch Briefing**

*Speaker:* Michelle Barsa, Senior Advocate and Afghanistan Team Leader, The Institute for Inclusive Security

Ms. Barsa opened by providing an overview of UN Resolution 1325 and an update on implementation of the U.S. National Action Plan. Resolution 1325 reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

The day before the Security Council met to discuss progress on 1325 over its first decade, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that the United States would write a national action plan. President Obama signed the plan (NAP) into law in 2011. U.S.-based civil society groups were actively engaged with this process. The U.S. Civil Society Group on Women, Peace, and Security formed in December 2010 and served as the main civil society contact.

The U.S. National Action Plan is targeted at meeting the following five objectives:

- 1) **National Integration and Institutionalization:** Through interagency coordination, policy development, enhanced professional training and education, and evaluation, the US Government will institutionalize a gender-responsive approach to its diplomatic, development, and defense-related work in conflict-affected environments
- 2) **Participation in Peace Processes and Decision-making:** The US 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
- 3) **Protection from Violence:** The US Government will strengthen its efforts to prevent—and protect women and children from—harm, exploitation, discrimination, and abuse, including

sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking in persons, and to hold perpetrators accountable in conflict-affected environments

- 4) Conflict Prevention: The US Government will promote women's roles in conflict prevention, improve 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
- 5) Access to Relief and Recovery: The US Government will respond to the distinct needs of women and children in conflict-affected disasters and crises, including by providing safe, equitable access to humanitarian assistance

Barriers to implementation:

- Lack of political will
- There is a lot of support at the very high level and at the staff level, but not in the middle, e.g. long time foreign service officers
- Difficult in Department of Defense and other places to promote that this is core to security, not a "women's issue". Relegated often to women's departments within larger agencies
- Fiscal uncertainty
- Limited technical capacity within departments and reluctance to set up mechanisms to engage with civil society

USAID has done the most work to implement NAP so far. Every dollar spent is now tagged, so funding to support women, peace, and security can be tracked.

There is possibly \$50 million appropriated by the U.S. Senate to support implementation, but the bill has not passed yet.

**Meeting at USAID with Donald Steinberg, Deputy Administrator and Carla Koppell, Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and a Senior Advisor to the USAID Administrator**

**Update on U.S. implementation of NAP:**

- The U.S. NAP was released in December 2011
- In January 2013 USAID submitted its first report on implementation to the White House
- USAID created USNAC within a broader frame – its new gender equality policy; new counter trafficking in persons policy; strategy on preventing GBV; and vision on child marriage.
- Gaps recognized and addressed through this new frame: emphasis on women's leadership, attention to closing gaps in status of men and women in particular area and population sub sections
- USAID just passed the one year anniversary of its gender policy writ large
- Few things emerged:
  - Area of women, peace, and security has had largest uptake in support among areas listed above
  - Seen themes emerge across different countries (interesting as country missions all have autonomy)

- Gender based violence and child marriage strategies are more recent. Now USAID attention is focused where it should be on these issues. Before they were working in the “right” countries but weren’t always focusing on the “right” forms of violence
- Has been interesting to see where women, peace, and security is of particular interest to individual champions who had been doing this work all along but USAID hadn’t been asking for that information before

### **Key Challenges to Implementing NAP**

1. **Institutionalizing these issues.** E.g. Establish Carla’s position as a permanent position at USAID. Institutionalize Sarah Mendelson’s work. USAID is still largely dependent on individuals doing this work; it has been harder to cement in into its way of doing business. One success with institutionalization to date is that all project proposals must include gender impact statements.
2. **Take these issues to scale.** USAID has done remarkable projects on a case-by-case basis. E.g. safe schools – high schools that include dormitories so that girls don’t have to walk; each child has cell phone to report abusive administrators anonymously; spaces where girls can nurse. Approximately 100 schools exist right now, but there is need for many more.
3. **Keep up momentum.** Secretary of State Kerry does not wake up every morning “what can I do about gender today”? Hillary Clinton did.

### **How USAID is Institutionalizing NAP**

- Establishing points of contact and gender advisors in all missions worldwide and forming working groups on trafficking, SGBV, peace and security. Trying to support staff other than gender advisors being involved with these working groups. This has been most successful with the counter trafficking working group.
- Have conducted live in person trainings on gender and have created online trainings. Gender 101 will be mandatory for most areas of specialization within USAID.
- Mandatory mission orders on how to institutionalize NAP exist (50% have put in place to date).

### ***Afghanistan***

Several members of the group expressed interest in working to ensure that women and girls do not lose the gains made in Afghanistan or be subject to further discrimination and exclusion after the U.S. military presence ends.

- USAID will give \$350 million to women in Afghanistan. The Afghan government refuses to sign this, saying that USAID is over prioritizing that sector.
- Afghanistan is an area where funders can help. There have been huge strides in women’s empowerment over the past 10 years: decreases in maternal mortality; more girls in school; average life expectancy increased by 15 years (47-62) in a decade. There is a tendency for development funding to decline when military involvement declines. There should be a focus on girls graduating school and empowering the next generation.
- The Ministry of Women’s Affairs is concerned about the safety of provincial heads of offices in the Ministry of Women’s Affairs
- Funders can speak with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs about paying for security. For schools funders could speak with the Minister of Education

- Cannot protect all schools with security officials: there will still be acid attacks, the Taliban will still blow up schools, this is happening now. Tools: continued aid and make it conditional to a commitment to women's empowerment; try and resolve basic conflict; have residual forces train Afghan forces in women's empowerment
- There are 15 domestic violence shelters in Afghanistan and they are a huge target. All are NGO-run. Funders could support security to protect these shelters.
- USAID is currently engaged in 850 areas in Afghanistan and has to choose which areas to continue supporting post 2014. They are thinking about how they can share support with funding partners and the Afghan government and which they need to depart completely.

### ***Middle East and North Africa***

- Very concerned about backslide, e.g. Egypt divorce laws, inheritance laws, FGM
- Take cue from women on ground and support women's organizations
- Need to send a strong message to President Morsi about the rights of women and religious and ethnic minorities
- Ensure all of USAID assistance empowers women. Over the next 10 years the U.S. will give Egypt \$4 billion in aid. This aid has to create opportunities and employment for women and minorities
- USAID knows that some specific projects work very well. Private funders can help scale these

### **Role for funders**

- Encourage other agencies to find the political will to effect wider system change. E.g. USAIDs gender impact analysis – is that transportable to other agencies? Need to ensure the analysis is done well. If it's not, it's not helpful
- Advocacy role incredibly important, maintain attention to these issues
- Shine spotlight on where there are gaps, e.g. Northern Mali, Syria, Egypt
- Create coalitions of women; it is then easier for the international community to consult with them if they are already organized.
- With projects USAID knows work well they would love to work with funders to scale up and replicate, e.g. safe schools; child marriage projects
- In Afghanistan support young women now graduating school having undergone education during post-Taliban period
- Support building a network around women's economic empowerment – not much work has been done on this
- Pat Cooper shared about her work with women leaders in Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. They identified three core issues: extremism, corruption, and the militarization of aid and development
- There is also a network of South Asian female parliamentarians

**Meeting at State Department organized by the Office of Global Women's Issues. Participants included representatives of various State Dept bureaus and offices tasked with 1325 implementation as well as leaders of civil society organizations.**

**A list of participants and contact information will be sent separately.**

NAP implementation is coordinated by the White House with participation by DOD, Treasury, State, Commerce, etc. Departments have just submitted their annual review on implementation of NAP to the White House.

#### **Examples of Actions toward Implementation**

- Launched training initiative for staff on gender and women, peace, and security
- US strategy to respond to GBV globally: increased training for police and military about protecting civilians; conflict prevention and the role women play in preventing violence around elections; role of women in countering violent extremism

#### **What Funders Can Do**

- Support mobile courts – bring civil courts to people. This has worked well in the DRC
- The ICC Trust Fund for Victims can earmark funds for GBV. Support their implementing partners
- In Syria, support women's groups to be involved in transitional justice processes
- Support this work over the long term
- Identify case studies of where including women in peace and security made a difference and share these with the U.S. government
- Meet regularly to discuss common objectives between civil society, government, and funders and ways they can mutually reinforce one another's work
- U.S. agencies always looking for ways to support local organizations, but there are capacity gaps
- One lesson learned: need for engagement of men, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Difficult sometimes for the State Department to convene women's groups as they won't come. This could be a role for funders – convening women to share and learn across their own region
- Document and support innovation. In MENA support grassroots groups who cannot get government support. Establish a pool of rapid response funding
- Concerns: mainstreaming and sustainability

#### **US Civil Society Working Group priorities**

- Collaborate with the U.S. government to assess and evaluate what is being done under NAP
- Reach out to other countries and exchange best practices
- Stimulate research
- Mainstream agenda into think tanks
- Encourage PhD students to focus on these issues
- Need more documentation of the value of women in peace and security issues. Cynda mentioned that PSFG is in the process of surveying literature and producing a pamphlet making the case for the importance of women's effective participation. This will be used to encourage funders to incorporate a gender lens into all that they fund.)

**What is the greatest challenge to implementation of NAP?**

- Not much appetite for foreign assistance in general. This is multi-generational work; have to raise money annually, while still justifying impact from last year.
- Mainstreaming gender as a policy prerogative
- Government officials too busy putting out fires on a daily basis to address structural reforms
- Institutionalization of reforms
- Debate about what is life saving and what is not within humanitarian response team

**Topic areas for more detailed discussion**

- What are ways to get men to want women at the table and want to hear their voices? (changing norms) Opportunities for collaboration with different parts of government
- Protecting and empowering women in post withdrawal Afghanistan civil society
- Syria, Congo, MENA: deeper conversations in regions and broader thematic issues (research agenda)
- Gap: research on the impact of corruption on women's lives

**Next steps**

- Focused discussion on women, peace, and security in post-withdrawal Afghanistan
- Focused discussion on status of research/documentation and what more is needed
- Pat Cooper will make available the annotated bibliography they created to those interested