Switzerland

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Overview

Switzerland's current national action plan (NAP) for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 covers the period 2013-2016. It is the third Swiss NAP. The first NAP covered the period 2007-2009 and the second covered 2010-2012. Its implementation, monitoring and review are led by the Human Security Division (HSD) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The current NAP[1] has the following goals:

1. Greater participation of women in peacebuilding;
2. Protection of the rights of women and girls during and after violent conflicts, and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV);
3. Greater inclusion of a gender perspective during and after armed conflicts in emergency aid, reconstruction and in dealing with the past;
4. Greater inclusion of a gender perspective in conflict prevention;
5. Mainstreaming women, peace and security-related (WPS) issues in the federal administration.

The fifth goal is new and was included in the current NAP in response to one of the recommendations included in the review of the second NAP (i.e. increase the overall financial and human resources allocated to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions).

Goals 1 to 4 have three sub-goals ordered along the following areas: (1) Multilateral policy; (2) Switzerland's personnel policy, and; (3) bilateral activities and peace policy programmes, and programmes for fragile states. As underlined in the NAP, the five headline goals are interconnected and should be treated as such. At the same time, the goal of increasing the participation of women should be understood as the overriding principle.

For CSOs, the fourth sub-goal under Goal 5 is particularly important as it stresses accountability and strengthening of the roles of both CSOs and Parliament in the NAP process. This goal was celebrated as a milestone and a major achievement of the advocacy which was undertaken by the Working Group on WPS.[2]

The most recent progress report on NAP implementation was initially discussed internally in the HSD. It was then submitted to the Interdepartmental Working Group (WG 1325) which was created in 2006 by the Coordination Committee for Peace Policy.[3] For the first time, the report was discussed in Parliament's Foreign Policy Committee of the Swiss Parliament before being submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for final approval. This change was triggered by civil society requests for greater accountability and transparency. Members of Parliament (MPs) seemed to appreciate the initiative and it proved to be a useful starting point for stimulating

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[1] See:
https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/en/documents/publications/MenschenrechtehumanitaerePolitikundMigration/Frauen-Frieden-und-Sicherheit_en.pdf
[2] See http://koff.swisspeace.ch/what-we-offer/working-group-on-women-peace-security/
[3] The Coordination Committee for Peace Policy is comprised of representatives from various sections of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), the Federal Department of Finance (FDF), the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the, Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) (Federal Office of Police and Federal Office for Migration), and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)). It acts in an advisory capacity and serves to improve coordination and coherence between the different federal administration agencies involved in peacebuilding.

discussions on WPS-related issues and peace policies as well as on new challenges (e.g. as countering violent extremism (CVE) and preventing violent extremism (PVE)).

The official FDFA progress report also includes an update on sex-disaggregated data (e.g. Swiss officials in international organisations). A number of initiatives on staff capacity building exist, including a planned e-learning training course and a review of the quality assurance system for project activities (i.e. gender marker). Regional case studies were selected to be further analysed. These case studies were identified in internal discussions and consultations with the Swiss Embassies. The Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF)[4] was informed and invited to support the framing of the approach and the questions to be addressed in the case studies.

Co-operation between the HSD and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has intensified in recent years. One explanation is that the HSD has almost no budget for implementing projects, even if one measure included in the NAP (Impact analysis of selected projects and programmes) and an "indicator" (Support for studies on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 as part of the peacebuilding activities of the UN, NATO and EU insofar as available resources permit) falls under the HSD's responsibility. A strategic policy shift has also taken place as a result of which the SDC is now explicitly addressing the so-called "Fragile States". UNSCR 1325 is not linked directly to fragility contexts, except for when fragility is a direct outcome of a conflict. Therefore the possible connexions between SDC / Fragility and WPS have still to be elaborated.

Other ministries involved in the NAP are the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) and the Federal Office for Gender Equality. Despite repeated calls from CSOs to involve the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), this did not happen. As a result, aspects of the political economy of women's security in conflict contexts were not tackled. Furthermore, the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) has no gender strategy or any link to WPS-related issues at the operational level and, therefore, lacks the organisational resources and procedures required to engage in them. Human rights, including women's rights issues, are currently mainly under the responsibility of the FDFA and the FDIA which is also responsible for the implementation of the action plan for the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The NAP focuses on bilateral interventions in North Africa (Egypt, Libya and Tunisia,) and the Great Lakes region (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda), on activities at the multilateral level on the participation of women in peace negotiations and peace missions and on debates/networks/revisions of instruments dealing with UNSCR 1325 (UN, OSCE, NATO, and intergovernmental Initiative PSVI-SGBV).

The NAP mentions working with men and boys only with regards to the prevention of GBV. It also includes some references to the different needs of girls and boys in the context of demining activities but it does not include any references to sexual violence against men. The issue of masculinity in peacebuilding was raised in the consultations with civil society but it is not included as an identified problem in the NAP nor as a field of action or goal. It is supposed to be addressed explicitly in the next NAP.

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[4] Founded in 2001, KOFF is a dialogue and exchange network which is facilitated by swisspeace and which connects those Swiss state and non-state actors which are active in peacebuilding. Its mission is to ensure that Swiss peacebuilding activities are strengthened, relevant, and visible. In order to achieve this objective, KOFF facilitates dialogue and learning processes in Switzerland and abroad, and fosters information sharing with a view to developing – in co-operation with its member organisations, strategic alternatives, policy recommendations and joint initiatives for peace.
See: http://koff.swisspeace.ch/

There is no budget allocated to the NAP. It is foreseen that there will be a part-time (30%) gender focal point and a budget of approximately 30,000 CHF per year for the annual monitoring reports. Nevertheless, the civil society proposal for independent reporting was supported with an extra budget to finance the outputs (e.g. publications and events) and remuneration for experts.

Design
A platform of NGOs was coordinated and facilitated by KOFF. It brought together specialised Swiss NGOs and other NGOs working on WPS-related issues. Experts from specific conflict contexts or representatives from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and multilateral organisations were invited to take part in round-table discussions. KOFF's gender advisor had the lead and submitted inputs for the NAP to the government on behalf of CSOs. Before the current NAP was launched in 2013, CSOs complained about the gap between their commitment (i.e. the time which they invested and the contacts which they shared with the government) and the quality of the NAP draft version. A number of CSOs, particularly the more political feminist organisations, felt that their issues were not adequately reflected in the document, and they were not satisfied with the indicators included. In addition, they criticised the fact that activities foreseen for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 would not address national security policies in a comprehensive manner and, therefore, overlooked the underlying causes of conflict. Finally, some CSOs also felt that they had been instrumentalised.

The inclusion in the current NAP of Goal 5 (Mainstreaming WPS-related issues in the federal administration) stemmed from the intensive discussions which took place between the UNSCR 1325 CSO-WG and the HSD. It was one of the most positive outcomes of the consultations with CSOs and was perceived as a major step towards greater accountability. However, even if the indicators for measuring progress towards the achievement of Goal 5 look promising, given the current tight financial climate, it will be difficult to secure the resources needed for impact analysis (e.g case studies) or to fund the increased human resources which will be required to ensure its proper implementation[5].

KOFF member organisations presented various critical views throughout the consultations. For example, they argued that 'expenditure in civilian peacebuilding had not been sufficiently reviewed in terms of its actual gender-specific impact, something that would surely have been possible by implementing a "gender-responsive budgeting" initiative'.[6] CSOs criticising this approach warned that if such aspects were ignored, it would have serious consequences, including risking losing sight of the structural causes of violence. Despite their concerns, CSOs continued to participate in the NAP preparation process.

Following a pause in activities which resulted from a combination of staff changes and reduced interest from CSOs, in 2014, KOFF established a new NGO working group on WPS (WG WPS). The working group focused mainly on Goal 5 and held several regional and thematic roundtables. The core group is comprised of four 4 NGOs, two independent experts and KOFF. The members of the WG drew on their experiences and networks to start to plan complementary case studies on thematic aspects of WPS in relevant regional contexts (e.g. post-conflict and state-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the interfaces of representation, gender and militarisation in the conflict in Syria, and reviewing the national concept of security from a feminist perspective). The outcomes of these case studies fed into an NGO report.

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[5]See:
http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Media/Publications/Essentials/1_2015_KOFF_EN.pdf p. 24
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 24

The preparation of the NGO report involved WG meetings, expert discussions, semi-public events; a field trip to BiH, exchanges with media representatives and artists, and symposiums and panel discussions. This launch of this report will give CSOs the possibility to both lobby for their causes and to raise their profiles, and it may lead to renewed debate on peace and security policy and, eventually, indirectly influence official discussions on UNSCR 1325 implementation. The NGO report helped to advance the collective work. Another window of opportunity for CSOs to influence the debates on WPS-related issues will open in autumn 2016 in the framework of the regular reporting on CEDAW. This may present a possibility for the organisation of a CSO event on WPS from a critical feminist perspective and an opportunity to renew discussions on the link between CEDAW and UNSCR 1325.

Implementation
The FDFA is discussing a new gender strategy for the department, including the SDC, the HSD and the State Secretary. Each of these offices is represented by their focal points. In 2016, they plan to start a peer review (independent evaluation) in which they would invite European Union (EU) Member States to share their experiences in the implementation of NAPs. At the time of writing, no concept note or terms of reference for the review had been published. It is, therefore, not possible to determine the extent to which the situation of the security of women and girls in the regional priority areas will be analysed, or how the findings will influence the FDFA's regional strategies.

NAP implementation monitoring and progress report preparation is led by the gender focal point in the HSD. They are responsible for gathering information from all of the other departments and divisions involved in the NAP implementation. Although the authors of the latest report have taken the innovative approach of focusing on selected regions, they have not really assessed the broader impact of the regional projects which they describe. The members of the WG WPS are planning to raise this issue during the final evaluation of the NAP which is due to take place in 2016/2017.[7]

The projects organised in the framework of the NAP implementation focus on activities at multilateral level on the participation of women in peace negotiations and peace missions and on debates/networks/revisions of instruments where UNSCR 1325 is considered an issue (UN, OSCE, NATO, and intergovernmental initiative PSVI-SGBV). The team in the Swiss missions in New York worked hard with the gender focal points in the FDFA in Switzerland to promote gender-sensitive language and gender-specific goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, it is very difficult to assess the impact of these activities.

The NAP's impact in conflict-affected countries can be summarised as follows:
- There is no impact analysis of the projects implemented in the NAP framework (other than the usual monitoring in the logical framework). CSOs in Switzerland and in the countries which are covered by the NAP, were consulted on the implementation of the NAP, as they would be in any other monitoring and evaluation (M&E) cycle. However, there was no comprehensive impact analysis of the activities due to a lack of financial resources. One project supported the organisation of a conference in the DRC on developing regional action plans (RAPs) to address women more specifically according to their needs. The RAPs were based on a broad baseline of local data and consultations were monitored by

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[7]For the review process, see
https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/fr/documents/aussenpolitik/menschenrechte-menschliche-sicherheit/September-2015-Bericht-IDAG-1325-Umsetzung-phase-2014-Nationalen-Aktionsplan_FR.pdf (in French)

a committee composed of various experts. However, after the launch event, there was no follow-up done by any Swiss agency.

- The link to the general security situation of women in a specific country, the alignment with the strategies of the conflict-affected countries or any indication about coherence of the manifold interventions of Swiss actors is missing from the NAP. The main insight remains limited to small actions involving local organisations, networks etc. There is no monitoring of the impact of capacity building initiatives or the performance of the expert pool (except the reports by the human security advisors which are not evaluated systematically). The staff in the UN department of the FDFA and the office in charge of Equal Opportunity has worked hard to try to influence UN bodies to change the language used to incorporate the WPS agenda. However, there is no clear strategy to follow up on or systematise these efforts and its impact throughout the Swiss positions. The dominant narrative on gender-related issues is not so much about possible dissonances or contradictions, but more about coherence (i.e. a whole-of-government approach).

It will be a challenge for evaluators to find a way to review the impact in states where Switzerland has bilateral programmes. Another question will be the critical review of other multilateral initiatives in which security issues are highly relevant but which lack a gender perspective.

Conclusions
CSO involvement in the NAP process is important as it challenges and generates alternative insights based on analysis which is not constrained by bureaucracy. However, many NGOs, particularly those which are implementing projects in the Global South, depend on public financing in order to operate. It is therefore important that some political NGOs and feminist movements are involved into the NAP processes so that diverse perspectives on GPS are brought into the debates. CSO platforms are a good way to combine political approaches for transformation with technical ones. Such platforms create space for common learning processes, raise the profile of individual organisations.