Sweden and Women, Peace and Security

*20-year anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council* *resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*

The 31st of October marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325). The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is a priority for the Swedish government and the anniversary is an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment as well as to acknowledge past accomplishments in the realm of the agenda. This brief is intended to be a supporting document for those who represent the Swedish foreign ministry, with the aim of providing an overview of the government’s priorities in relation to the WPS-agenda and the ways in which it is being implemented in the government’s work in different fora.

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# Introduction

Women’s participation in peace processes is needed to create a sustainable and legitimate peace. This is important both as a right to representation as well as to the improved quality of peace processes. Inclusive peace negotiations ensure a broader commitment to the deals made and the inclusion of a wider array of experiences of conflict. Research has shown that women’s participation in peace negotiations leads to a more stable implementation of the agreements made at the negotiation table.

Unfortunately, the global development regarding women’s rights as well as participation in peace processes makes for dim reading. The number of women who actively participates in peace processes continues to be marginal and few women take part in peacekeeping-operations. Additionally, the threat to women’s rights-defenders is increasing and the economic, social and political rights of women are challenged in many places around the world. It is important, but not enough, to support individuals and networks for women mediators and peacebuilders. Further efforts need to be undertaken as to strengthen the infrastructure for inclusive peace and security, including addressing the link between economic empowerment and women’s participation in the realm of peace and security.

As foreign minister Ann Linde stressed in the symposium hosted by her commemorating the adoption of resolution 1325, this year should be a year of re-commitment and strengthening of the implementation of the WPS-agenda. Additionally, the implications of Covid-19 are especially serious for those caught in the midst of conflict and ensuring women’s participation in the efforts to overcome these obstacles is crucial. As the UN Secretary General has acknowledged, women’s leadership and contributions should be at the heart of resilience and recovery efforts of Covid-19. Sweden reaffirms the need to promote the WPS-agenda at all levels and works intensively to act on its commitments in this regard. It will continue to tirelessly support women’s participation in peace processes in multiple contexts, as well as within the fora of international cooperation.

# Sweden and the Women, Peace and Security agenda

Sweden continues to champion the WPS-agenda and works intensively to promote it nationally, in the European Union (EU), in the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in other intergovernmental organizations and in specific geographical contexts. The broad spectrum of Swedish engagement to advance the agenda also includes cooperation with strategic partnership organisations, development aid and its bilateral relationships. The Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbates the need to ensure inclusive peace processes and promoting women’s social, economic and political empowerment as to ensure that the priorities of the agenda are included in efforts to build back better.

## Priorities

The over-arching priorities of the government within the realm of WPS are *leadership*, supporting *implementation* and ensuring *accountability*.

### *Leadership*

In order to achieve full integration and keep momentum, bold and strong leadership is key. *We have to fight for women’s rights and participation.*

* Ensure 2020 is a year of moving forward.
* Essential to counter attacks on women’s full and equal enjoyment of human rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights.
* Ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights and strengthen services for survivors.
* Ensure WPS is part of strategic documents, operational planning and leadership compacts.
* Systematically influence decision making at all levels of peace initiatives.
* Resource the agenda. All international organizations with a peace and security mandate should apply gender budgeting.

### *Implementation*

Practical measures must be taken by national governments, multilateral institutions as well as by individual missions. *We need to be as concrete as possible.*

* Ensure WPS is included where plans are designed, patrols sent out, trainings conducted, analysis created, and agreements facilitated.
* Ensure criteria for women’s participation in negotiations and a gender perspective in peace agreements.
* Ensure reform and development of peace and security sectors have a gender perspective.
* Ensure inclusion of sex-disaggregated data in all reporting.

### *Accountability*

Ensure clearly defined responsibilities to fully implement, communicate and follow up WPS is essential. *We need to make sure that whatever is decided becomes reality through actionable recommendations*.

* Strategies developed for women’s participation in peace processes and decision-making bodies.
* Ensure reports on peace keeping has sex-disaggregated data and a gender perspective.
* Consult regularly with civil society – at local, national and international level.
* Make prevention and prosecution of conflict related sexual violence central in peace efforts.

## UN

WPS was a central priority for Sweden during our time as an elected member of the UN Security Council 2017-2018 and insisted on the agenda being contextualized and operationalized in all aspects of the work in the UNSC.

During the time in the council, Sweden addressed challenges and opportunities, regarding both participation and protection of women, specifically tailored to each country context on the agenda of the UNSC and provided concrete suggestions for addressing gaps. Our consistent insistence on Women, Peace and Security in the Security Council yielded results.

* All mandates for peacekeeping and political missions now contain Women, Peace and Security references. \*
* Existing mission mandates on Women, Peace and Security have been strengthened.
* Close to all Presidential Statement on crises situations adopted in 2017-18 contained references to women’s participation or situation.
* More civil society briefers than ever before have been invited which have resulted in more inclusive and better-informed discussions
* Gender parity among briefers in the UNSC in July 2018, for the first time ever.
* Briefings and reporting to the UNSC more regularly contain Women, Peace and Security perspective.
* Informal expert group on WPS (IEG2242) became a stronger mechanism with relevant and timely information to the council discussions.

By the end of our period as elected members in the council, Sweden presented a list of critical recommendations based on the experiences from the council.

* Progress requires ownership and accountability at the highest levels of leadership in the UN system and Member States. Leadership should be measured on how they implement and deliver on women, peace and security.
* Senior gender expertise in political and peacekeeping mission should be strategically positioned.
* A gender dimension always needs to be taken into account throughout strategic planning processes in conflict contexts.
* Missions must also step up efforts to engage with civil society, not least women’s organizations.
* Conflict analysis that inform decision making must include gender equality and sex disaggregated data.
* Peacekeeping and political mission budgets must be gender responsive.

Sweden continuous to closely follow the developments regarding these areas in the council and works to form strategic partnerships with like-minded actors.

## EU

Sweden put strong emphasis on Women, Peace and Security in the EU and champions the agenda in multiple ways.

* Insisting on gender and WPS being integrated in all working groups focusing on external action.
* Aiming to achieve integrated gender/WPS expertise and analysis in all EU-led missions.
* Strongly supports the EU:s principal adviser on gender equality and women, peace and security and stresses the importance of the advisors mandate.
* Regards the EU Action Plan on WPS is a tool for implementation and review.
* Welcomes the new Gender Action Plan where WPS features prominently that will be adopted this autumn.

## OSCE

During the foreign minister Ann Linde’s coming chairmanship of the OSCE 2021, the WPS agenda will be central in the work to strengthen common security within the framework of the European Security Order. The inclusion of perspectives on women, peace and security in this regard is a is essential and an integral part of the OSCE’s concept of comprehensive security. H.E. Linde intends to work for an integrated WPS-perspective throughout all dimensions of the OSCE.

* The politico-military dimension,
*For instance, mainstreaming WPS in the organisations work with military and non-military security related topics and to ensure a WPS-lens when working with the OSCE field missions and regional presence*
* The economic empowerment dimension

*Working for women’s economic empowerment, essential for the ability to partake in political processes and conflict mitigation*

* The humanitarian dimension

*Supporting the promotion of freedom of speech and female journalists*

## Swedish National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security

In 2016, Sweden adopted its third National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on WPS. Close to 20 governmental agencies, departments, Swedish embassies and permanent missions abroad have been active with the implementation of the National Action Plan. The priorities outlined in the plan are:

* Inclusive peace processes and peacebuilding
* Conflict prevention
* Increased protection of women and girls
* Leadership and expertise

Considered together, Sweden has implemented several operations within the realm of the National Action Plan in over 30 countries as well as worked extensively with internal training and organisational development with regard to WPS. Of particular importance are the following accomplishments:

* Widespread strategic advocacy work on a national, regional and global level
* Comprehensive work on training and capacity-building measures for both civilian and military actors has been conducted, both internally at govern- ment agencies and externally for partners.
* More than 20 gender advisers and experts in the area of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence has been appointed. In addition, seconded staff in other areas have contributed to raising awareness of gender equality issues and the majority of them took part in training of information measures concerning WPS before their assignments started.
* The importance of support for the civil society and the work with women, peace and security agenda was stressed, particularly in light of the continuing vulnerability of women and women’s rights defenders, especially with regards to the shrinking democratic space for civil society actors.

## The Swedish Women’s Mediation Network

The Women’s Mediation Network, comprising of 15 members, was established in 2015, and its work has yielded concrete results. The work conducted by the members of the network has four pillars:

*1. Direct support to and participation in peace negotiations and peace processes.*

*2. Advocacy work for the strengthening of women’s participation in conflict prevention and peace processes, as well as the promotion of the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.*

*3. Capacity building efforts with women from contexts marked by conflict as to ensure their participation and affect dialog, mediation and peace processes.*

*4. Strengthened cooperation and support for regional and global women’s mediation networks.*

As of now, the work of the mediation network has included activities in and related to Yemen, Palestine, Syria, Georgia, Somalia, South Sudan, Mali and Burundi. The competence and experience of its members has been highly sought after and the network has received regular requests from embassies, the civil society and international organisations.

## Geographical contexts – a few examples

The efforts on behalf of Sweden to advance the WPS agenda has also been pursued in relation to multiple specific conflict contexts and has also yielded concrete results. **In Afghanistan**, Sweden has contributed to educating female mediators from all provinces. In cooperation with the UN and other actors, Sweden has pushed for inclusion of women in the peace negotiations, the high peace council and in the political processes. Sweden particularly stresses the need to include women at every level in possible future intra-Afghani dialogues, as to ensure an inclusive peace processes that includes the needs and perspectives of women and contributes to sustainable peace.

**In Sudan,**women took a centre-stage role in the protests that led to the subsequent resignation of the long-time president Omar al-Bashir. During her time in office, the foreign minister Ann Linde has met with representatives of the new civilian interim government, as well as young Sudanese women who had participated in the protests. The new prime minister has made commitments to increase female representation, but the situation is still precarious and the inclusion of women in the political processes is not satisfactory.

Sweden’s engagement with Sudan with regards to the WPS-agenda is multi-folded. It has supported local civil society organisations working to enhance women’s participation as well as aided the financing of gender equality experts working in the Sudanese government. Sweden has also provided support in the process of creating a national action plan for women, peace and security on the part of the Sudanese government.

Sweden continues to tirelessly address the importance of women’s participation in the political process **in Yemen** within the realm of our cooperation with the UN and other partners. In addition, Sweden has contributed with financial support to the UN’s special envoy to Yemen as to strengthen women’s participation in the peace processes. The cooperation with the UN’s special envoys advisory women’s group continued during the Yemeni peace talks that took place in Rimbo in 2018. Furthermore, Sweden has contributed financially to the work aiming to stop gender-based violence towards women and children and to strengthen their participation in the local economy.

Within the scope of the conflict **in** **Ukraine,** Sweden has been active in promoting the participation of women and for the inclusion of their particular needs. Ukraine adopted its first action plan for women, peace and security in 2016 and has taken measures to increase women’s influence in the area of peace and security. Despite this, women are often excluded from decision-making because of stereotypical ideas about women’s and men’s qualities and roles in society. The strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey (2014–2020) promotes the fulfilment of the international and national gender equality commitments, and of women’s empowerment.

In addition to this, the Folke Bernadotte Academy has contributed to gender mainstreaming at the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs and has seconded a gender adviser to the European Union Advisory Mission Ukraine (EUAM), who has played an important role in providing gender mainstreaming support and advice to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Swedish Police Authority has also arranged workshops on gender-based violence and trained police and prosecutors on how they can work to secure evidence in investigations in Ukraine. Furthermore, Sweden – through Sida’s support – has contributed to expert support and a more inclusive process in the drafting of a new national action plan for women, peace and security.

Sweden has since long provided its support to strengthen and make possible women’s participation on both the local and the international level in regards to the conflict in **Syria**. Long-term assistance to the civil society is in this respect a must. The cooperation with various UN agencies is also a corner stone to this end. The Swedish support to UN Women has, for example, contributed to aiding Syrian women in their advisory capacity to the UN:s special envoy to Syria.

**Somalia** has been marked by armed conflicts for almost 40 years. Women are often excluded from peacebuilding and state building processes, and the prevalence of gender-based violence is widespread. The new strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Somalia 2018–2022 was adopted in June 2018 and contains objectives for strengthening women’s and young people’s participation in democracy, as well as peacebuilding and state building processes.

Moreover, The Folke Bernadotte Academy conducts measures to strengthen women as peace builder within the framework of bilateral development cooperation with Somalia by having a focus on dialogue initiatives about the role of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Sida also supports organisations that conduct activities to implement the agenda for women, peace and security in Somalia, and have supported the introduction of a 20 per cent quota for women in the next election and the adoption of a law to combat sexual violence against women in Somaliland.

Sweden also contributed to the opportunity for women from the **DRK** civilian society to brief the UNSC during the time as an elected member in the council, as also to raise awareness of sexual violence in conflict. During the time in the council, Sweden continued to promote the inclusion of women in the political processes and the strengthening of the gender-perspective in the mandate of the Monusco. Sweden continues to support a gender advisor to the Monusco and has facilitated a specific position focusing on the challenges of conflict-related sexual violence at the UN integrated human rights office in DRK.

# Swedish pledges of commitment on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2020

In addition to the general goals and priorities within the realm of the WPS-agenda, Sweden has undertaken a number of particular pledges of commitment that has guided the efforts in 2019-2020. These pledges represent identified opportunities for Sweden to make a difference and contribute to the advancement of the agenda and have been given special attention and priority during this period.

## Key commitments at political level

1. Arrange a multi-stakeholder meeting on Women, Peace and Security for civil society, UN Security Council members and UN representatives in conjunction with the Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security 2019 and 2020.

2. Strengthen women’s participation in peace processes including through activities of mediators in the Swedish women mediators’ network.

3. Follow up on, and assess progress of, Swedish recommendations 2018 to the UN Secretary General on implementation of women, peace and security mandates in UN missions.

4. Offer training to incoming and existing UN Security Council members on integrating women, peace and security in ordinary work of the Council.

5. Actively promote the implementation of the new EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in EU common security and defence policy (CSDP) and in CSDP missions and operations.

## Women’s participation and leadership

6. Support women's participation in Yemeni peace talks through increased pressure on both the parties as well as the Office of the Special Envoy to increase the number of women participating in future consultations or peace negotiations.

7. Support the Sanaa Centre for Strategic Studies in Yemen and their Gender Analysis for Progressive Policy project which aims to increase women's participation in political and peace processes in Yemen, including by producing a number of policy briefs, holding workshops and finalising an in-depth research report.

8. Support increased participation of women in Iraqi national dialogue on reconciliation through support to Iraq Foundation’s work with female parliamentarians.

9. Promote women’s political leadership in Colombia through technical support to the political reform and strengthening women’s civil society.

10. Arrange a panel on security policy on the Korean Peninsula in Seoul with only female participants to high light the lack of women in conferences, panels and seminars about the political development.

11. Support an increase of female seconded staff to UN prison and probation services by conducting a pre-deployment training specifically targeting women.

12. Financing a UN Women study on increased female participation in view of elections 2023 to follow up on a previous study on women’s political participation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The study will be presented in several provinces in the DRC.

## Gender analysis

13.Support inclusive peace in Venezuela, including though ensuring that a gender analysis and a women, peace and security perspective is integrated in processes that aim at a peaceful and democratic solution of the crisis in Venezuela.

## Implementation of WPS by UN missions

14.Conduct a field mission, possibly to South Sudan, to follow up on the in-depth study Sweden undertook in 2018 of implementation of UN mission mandates.

## Gender responsive leadership

15.Support gender responsive leadership through support to senior leadership within DPO and DPPA as well as in the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability within EEAS, and through seconded personnel to CSDP missions and operations.

## Active civil society

16.Financially support civil society organisations active in conflict- and post conflict countries.

## Capacity building – sexual and gender-based violence

17. Contribute with Swedish experts to the European Security and Defence College training on investigating and preventing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict environments targeting civil and military staff to be deployed in peace keeping missions.

18. Support the work on sexual and gender-based violence of the UN mission in the Central African Republic through a Specialized Police Team focusing on capacity building of local police and support to victims.

## Action plans

19. Actively support the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security through inter alia support to civil society.