

Second Regional Forum on Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA)

REPORT

3-4 February 2026, Beirut

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EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) is a policy platform that provides expertise in the field of equality between women and men and advocates for women's rights as inseparable from democracy-building and citizenship, for political solutions to all conflicts and for the right of peoples to self-determination.

The Regional Observatory on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), hosted by EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) in Amman, is an independent mechanism to follow up on laws and policies related to combating VAWG and to support the implementation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Declarations on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society.

Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA)

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List of Acronyms

AFD	Agence Française de Développement (French Agency for Development)
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AWO	Arab Women Organization (Jordan)
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction (Lebanon)
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CVAWG	Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls
EFI	EuroMed Feminist Initiative
EU	European Union
FSOF	Support Fund for Feminist Organizations
GE	Gender Equality
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit /GmbH
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
KR-I	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
NAP	National Action Plan
NCFA	National Council for Family Affairs, Jordan
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women, Lebanon

PWWSD	Palestinian Working Women Society for Development
RCSO	Regional Civil Society Observatory
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TFCBV	Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WEO	Women Empowerment Organization
WPSA	Women, Peace and Security Agenda
WR	Women's Rights
WHRD	Women's Human Rights Defenders

INTRODUCTION

The Second Regional Forum “Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA)” took place on 3-4 February 2026. It was organised by the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI), in the framework of the three-year regional project "Strengthening feminist CSOs for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine," funded by the Support Fund for Feminist Organisations (FSOF) of the French Agency for Development (AFD) and the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Held in Beirut, it brought together over 160 participants, including representatives from partnering civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) across the four project countries, relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the WPSA, women's rights and legal experts and academics, members of national and regional observatories on VAWG and women's rights, international stakeholders, donors, United Nations (UN) agencies and media representatives.

The Second Regional Forum was built on the outcomes of the previous one, organised in May 2025 in Amman, Jordan, which brought together about 80 participants and followed up on the progress made in the implementation of the WPSA. It examined shared regional challenges as well as country-specific gaps and barriers and further identified policy recommendations for advancing the WPSA.

The Second Regional Forum sought to further enhance collaboration between feminist CSOs and women-led CBOs, with key stakeholders and decision-makers to advance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the WPSA in the four countries and at the regional level.

The Forum explored connections between the implementation of the WPSA and key concerns including climate justice, cyber violence, transitional justice and accountability, economic security and the inclusion of vulnerable women in the process, such as women with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) and migrant workers. The Forum also discussed challenges linked to the funding and implementation of the WPSA and identified pathways forward.

PROCEEDINGS

The Forum was structured around five plenary sessions and four workshops. These included an **opening session** on political will for the implementation of the WPSA; **Session One** on States' legal obligations and their practical application in ensuring effective prevention and protection; **Session Two** on the role of civil society in advancing the WPSA and its community-led implementation; **Session Three** on the role of the international community in sustaining the implementation of the WPSA; and **Session Four** on the application of WPSA principles in transitional justice and reconstruction in post-conflict and transition settings.

The **plenary sessions** included panel discussions bringing together governmental and institutional representatives, women's rights actors, lawyers and experts from Jordan, Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), Lebanon and Palestine, as well as representatives of international organisations, donors and UN agencies. Panellists shared their perspectives, addressing concrete and interrelated dimensions in the implementation of the WPSA across the region and beyond, and inspired lively discussions with participants.

The **four workshops** on the second day of the Forum focused on thematic areas identified as priorities during the First Regional Forum. **Workshop One** focused on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) and Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls (CVAWG); **Workshop Two** on Climate Justice and Environmental Insecurity; **Workshop Three** on Gender-Sensitive Transitional Processes and Social Reconstruction; and **Workshop Four** on Economic Security and Women's Rights.

Each workshop was introduced by a short framing panel of three speakers, combining perspectives from civil society, policy and academia across the four countries.

The open discussions and high-level debates during the plenary sessions and the workshops took place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and open exchange of views, ensuring that all voices were valued and represented, which enriched the overall outcomes of the Forum.

The exchange of good practices and lessons learned informed the identified priorities for enhancing the implementation of the WPSA and for addressing thematic areas discussed during the workshops as directly linked to the WPSA implementation at national and regional levels. These exchanges also enabled the development of concrete recommendations.

I. POLITICAL WILL, INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WPSA



Political will, inclusive policy development and reforms that advance women's rights are **crucial** for the implementation of the WPSA. In the opening session, Ms. Nathalie Zaarour, Executive Board Secretary of the NCLW in Lebanon, underlined that **the WPSA is framed by a comprehensive strategic vision for inclusive security**. Beyond gender equality, it encompasses **State stability, quality governance** and the functioning of public

institutions, stressing that **women's participation in decision-making and peace processes** must be substantive - **actively shaping priorities and policies** - rather than merely symbolic. Moreover, the present regional and international context requires **comprehensive and equitable approaches** to achieving peace and security.



In Lebanon, following the implementation of the first National Action Plan (NAP) for United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2019–2024), the NCLW was mandated to develop the second NAP, which has been finalised and is pending official launch and adoption. It encompasses five key priorities: enhancing women's leadership and participation; protecting women and girls from violence in

conflict and crises; **promoting a culture of peace and conflict prevention**; ensuring gender-responsive humanitarian response and reconstruction; and strengthening institutional capacities for coordination and effective implementation.

Both plans were developed through close collaboration among ministries, security and military institutions, CSOs and international partners, using an **inclusive and participatory approach** involving youth, persons with disabilities, media and academic institutions. This approach supports the building of political will and provides strategic direction that resonates with and engages all stakeholders, reflecting their diverse perspectives and experiences. This Forum fostered dialogue, exchanged experiences and addressed key issues, contributing to

improved implementation mechanisms and more inclusive and sustainable governance and security systems.



Mr. Hervé Magro, **Ambassador** of France to Lebanon highlighted that the Forum took place at a critical moment in the Middle East, underscoring the urgent need for **lasting peace—one that cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of women** and the full recognition of their rights. He referred to UNSCR 1325 as a key framework for addressing violence and discrimination, particularly as women are often the primary

victims of armed conflicts.

He emphasised the importance of **engaging men alongside women** in this effort, noting that achieving equality and strengthening women's role in peace and security is a shared responsibility, and expressed appreciation for the presence of men in the audience.

He also noted that the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs' support for such initiatives **reflects France's commitment to strengthening women's role** in conflict prevention, protection and resolution, and to prioritising the implementation of the WPSA in Lebanon. This support enabled key organisations to implement fifteen initiatives, providing social and economic assistance that primarily benefited women, within a context requiring urgent intervention.

Underscoring that meaningful change is built on trust and sustained engagement, Ambassador Magro reaffirmed **France's continued support** and praised the efforts of the NCLW, particularly under the leadership of Lebanon's First Lady, in advancing UNSCR 1325.



The central role of women's movements in building political will for the implementation of the WPSA was stressed by Ms. Lilian Halls-French, Co-President of EFI. She underlined the importance of the **project, which enabled the feminist movements in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine to take a leading role** in the implementation of the WPSA and thanked the Agence Française de Développement and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

for their support. EFI marks its **twentieth anniversary in a challenging global and regional context**, yet it has maintained an unshakable commitment to combating all forms of VAWG. Traditional security policies continue to overlook the lack of real security for women - even in times of peace - and women continue to face this **persistent violence in both private and public spheres**. This requires **rethinking conventional concepts of peace and security** and addressing the gap between official frameworks and women's lived realities.

An **inclusive strategic direction** is essential to **address interconnected issues** such as climate justice, cyber violence against women and girls (CVAWG), transitional justice, accountability and economic security, encompassing the needs of the most vulnerable women, such as women with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced women and migrant workers.

II. STATE COMMITMENTS TO THE WPSA: FROM LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TO EFFECTIVE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

Lebanon's Second NAP for UNSCR 1325: Enhancing institutional capacity and strengthening women's resilience and ability to address climate and economic challenges



The development of Lebanon's NAP for UNSCR 1325 was based on the core pillars of the agenda: women's participation in decision-making, prevention, protection and relief and recovery. Ms. Cynthia El Asmar, journalist and NCLW General Assembly member, stressed the flexible approach that the NAP has adopted, which allows for anticipating emerging challenges and addressing them during implementation.

The NCLW organised **consultative sessions** with experts on emerging issues such as CVAWG, climate change and humanitarian crisis responses. It has also been **advocating** for the **adoption of a law to protect women and girls from digital violence** and to strengthen their capacities in the technology field.

The second NAP **incorporated environmental and climate dimensions** into the implementation of the WPSA by analysing the impacts of natural disasters and resource degradation on women and girls, enhancing institutional capacity to respond to crises from a

gender equality perspective, and strengthening women's resilience and ability to **address climate and economic challenges**. These orientations are particularly reflected in the fourth priority of the plan, which focuses on a comprehensive response in relief and recovery, to ensure that the needs of women and girls - especially internally displaced women - are met in terms of protection, psychosocial health, and economic and social empowerment.

Proposed interventions include conducting studies and dialogues on the **link between climate change and human security**, establishing early warning systems and gender-responsive risk management and organising consultations on **integrating gender perspectives into climate response policies and natural resource management**.

The NCLW adopted a broad **participatory approach** in developing the NAP, involving ministries, public administrations, CSOs, youth groups, academic and media institutions, international organisations and stakeholders representing women with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced women, migrant workers and rural women. The NAP also includes **clear priorities, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators**, and an **estimated budget** for implementation, alongside the establishment of a national network of women's and youth organisations working at the local level to implement the WPSA in an inclusive manner.

[Iraq's Third NAP for UNSCR 1325: Applying new approaches to address emerging challenges, including digital violence, cyber extortion, cyber threats and climate-related risks](#)



Iraq is the first country in the region to adopt a NAP for UNSCR 1325. Dr. Ahmad Al Zubaidi, Deputy Director General of the National Directorate for Iraqi Women at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers in Baghdad, stated that the WPSA in Iraq has evolved beyond being merely an international obligation or rights framework to become a national security strategy

based on early planning, institution-building and addressing the root causes of social fragility. Contemporary security challenges, **especially digital violence, cyber extortion, cyber threats and climate-related risks**, are placing new pressures that exceed the capacity of traditional legal frameworks, contributing to the increasing complexity of confronting VAWG and reinforcing patterns that exclude women from public life.

Today, Iraq is developing **new approaches** to address these threats by redesigning national plans and early warning systems, shifting from sectoral planning to threat-pattern-based planning, and developing data systems linking digital indicators such as hate speech with preventive response mechanisms. Institutional steps include forming a **Women's Working Group** to counter violent extremism within the National Security Advisory, **training security personnel** to handle digital evidence and establishing a **high-level committee** to support women's political participation and **protect them from political violence and cyber extortion**.

Environmental insecurity and resource degradation act as multipliers of vulnerability, leading to what Dr Al Zubaidi described as the "feminisation of environmental poverty." This necessitates **integrating gender-responsive climate policies** into WPSA implementation. Iraq is **linking women's economic security to equitable access to resources, women's economic empowerment and directing part of climate financing toward women-led projects**, as well as supporting **sustainable agriculture**. Notably, 25% of concessional loans have been allocated to women's projects in environmentally affected areas.

There are many challenges faced by refugees, IDPs and returnees **and women's economic empowerment** especially the lack of official documentation limiting access to services and participation. Iraq has adopted **policies to expand access through One Stop Service Centres** and by **funding local women's organisations, to ensure marginalised voices are heard by decision-makers**. Best practices include the Al-Amal Center for rehabilitating returnees from Al-Hol camp, which has received over 18,000 returnees, provided rehabilitation programmes, issued hundreds of national ID cards, opened model centres offering integrated medical, psychological, and legal services and successfully reunited over 1,000 families.

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) Third NAP for UNSCR: Defining roles for all stakeholders, providing comprehensive responses to emerging issues such as digital violence, climate change and displacement



The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) remains committed to implementing the agenda by **promoting women's participation in decision-making and ensuring a safe environment for their engagement in political and civic life**, particularly in light of **digital threats targeting women activists**.

Ms. Fenik Shafik, Director General of the General Directorate for Combating Violence against Women and the Family at the Ministry of

Interior of the KR-I stated that the WPSA is a fundamental framework for enhancing women's security and societal stability amid increasing regional challenges. It now requires **adaptive strategies** to address evolving challenges such as digital violence, climate change and displacement.

There has been **progress in women's leadership**, with women holding ministerial and deputy ministerial positions and nearly 30% representation in the Kurdistan Parliament. The goal is not only numerical representation but also **effective participation in policymaking**.

Environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and displacement increase women's vulnerability and their exposure to violence and exploitation, **requiring gender-responsive climate policies**. The KR-I has adopted **a participatory approach** involving ministries and civil society to protect women, established a specialised directorate within the Ministry of Interior and **integrated women into the military and police** to enhance protection in camps and affected communities.

The **third KR-I NAP** defines roles for all stakeholders and includes **mechanisms such as 24/7 hotlines, cybercrime units, and five shelters** for women at risk. She also stressed the importance of **women's economic empowerment** through **support for small businesses** and **income-generating programmes**, particularly for **displaced women and women with disabilities**.

She concluded by emphasising the need for **stronger cooperation between government and civil society** and **adequate funding**, noting that **financial constraints remain a major barrier** to full implementation.

Implementing the WPSA in Palestine amid a highly complex political and security context due to ongoing occupation and recurring crises



The implementation of the WPSA in Palestine faces significant challenges resulting from the ongoing **occupation and recurring crises'** context, which hinder institutional work and limit the implementation of the NAPs for UNSCR 1325.

Ms. Hanan Saliba, Chairperson of the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD), noted that Palestinian women and girls are among the most vulnerable, facing intersecting political, social and economic challenges.

Technological developments, while globally beneficial, have also become tools of additional pressure in Palestine,

including through **surveillance infrastructure** and **monitoring of social media** under the **pretext of incitement**. CVAWG, online harassment and bullying are also on the rise.

The impact of environmental degradation and climate change is visible. Pollution from **industrial settlements** exacerbates health and economic risks, particularly **amid resource scarcity**. Climate justice is part of **human rights**, and the implementation of the WPSA is closely linked to **national climate adaptation** and **disaster management strategies**, where women's participation—**especially that of rural and displaced women** – needs to be ensured.

It is essential to move beyond **symbolic representation** to **meaningful participation**, recognising the diversity of women, including **women with disabilities**, **forcibly displaced women**, **rural women** and youth.

Women's participation is essential for societal resilience and effective WPSA implementation. **Inclusive, multi-sectoral approaches** are needed together with **measurable indicators** to assess inclusivity.

Jordan's Third NAP for UNSCR 1325: Increasing funding, strengthening monitoring mechanisms and adopting integrated approaches to address interconnected challenges



Jordan is currently reviewing its previous NAP and developing its third NAP for implementing UNSCR 1325, **drawing on lessons learned from the first regional forum and its recommendations**. Ms. Huda Ayesh, Director of the Policies and Observatory Unit at Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), emphasised that while the WPSA is central to protecting women in

conflict zones, **new challenges, especially technology-facilitated violence**, pose growing threats to women's participation in public life.

Jordan has taken initial steps to address this issue through **awareness campaigns**, particularly during the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women and Girls, and through collaboration with civil society, the Crisis Management Center and the National Cybersecurity Center. However, Ms Ayesh stressed the need for clearer legislation and practical measures.

While the second NAP addressed women's participation in crisis management, more **funding, stronger monitoring mechanisms, and integrated approaches** are needed to address **interconnected challenges** such as climate displacement, VAWG, and human trafficking.

Integrating **climate justice** into WPSA implementation requires **three main pathways**: developing **gender-responsive climate policies**, integrating prevention and protection mechanisms into disaster response plans and directing climate related finance toward **women-led initiatives**.

Strengthening women's meaningful participation requires stronger **gender-disaggregated and intersectional data systems**, support to grassroots and women's organisations and **enhanced accountability and coordination mechanisms**. Sustainable peace can be achieved with the participation of all women, and **inclusivity** is the foundation for more stable and just societies.

Key Priorities identified by the panel and the following exchange of views, best practices and lessons learned

❖ **Development of mechanisms to measure NAP implementation**

There are currently no precise indicators to measure the level of success of the NAPs, which has prompted relevant stakeholders to work on **developing more systematic mechanisms** to assess their actual impact in the future.

Participants explained that in Jordan, for example, progress in the implementation of the NAP is monitored through an UN-supported M&E system based on a set of indicators, most notably the increased participation of women in decision-making positions, particularly in the security and military sectors and other public institutions. However, **comprehensive M&E mechanisms** are needed, adapted to measure the implementation of each NAP.

❖ **Participation of civil society and women's organisations**

The discussion highlighted the importance of **establishing clear governance frameworks** that define roles and responsibilities between government entities and non-governmental organisations, thereby enhancing trust and coordination among different actors. Ensuring the participation of civil society and women's organisations in the development, implementation and M&E of the NAPs is a high priority, especially in light of the challenges these organisations may face.

Jordan's and KR-I experience in establishing a forum for CSOs concerned with the WPSA, where organisations are represented through elected representatives, has contributed to **better organisation of their participation and strengthening their role in monitoring implementation.**

❖ **Integration of marginalised women**

The discussion further addressed the importance of integrating marginalised women—such as refugees, internally displaced women and women with disabilities—into all stages of development and implementation of NAPs.

Participants emphasised that achieving this goal is not limited to providing funding but also, as shared by Palestine and Lebanon practice, requires **ensuring these women's access to essential services and protection and justice mechanisms**, such as hotlines and support services. In this regard, **financial support is a key factor** in enhancing the sustainability and expansion of programmes, particularly in cases where governments cannot carry out these efforts alone.

❖ **Establishment of institutional frameworks to address VAWG, particularly digital violence, and to raise awareness**

Participants discussed the institutional frameworks needed to address all forms of VAWG, particularly digital violence. They stressed the importance of having **integrated mechanisms** that combine governmental roles with those of civil society.

These mechanisms, as stated with Iraq experience, could **include establishing specialised police units to combat cybercrime**, receive complaints and follow up on them, alongside efforts by women's organisations to **raise awareness about digital protection and reporting mechanisms.**

The importance of **providing hotlines and reporting platforms for online violence and blackmail** was also highlighted, as well as the need to **develop legislation** that criminalises such acts and strengthens legal protection for women.

III. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ADVANCING THE WPSA: PROTECTION, RESILIENCE AND LOCALLY LED IMPLEMENTATION

Supporting women's CSOs: An urgent priority to ensure the credibility and sustainability of the WPSA

Strengthening women's CSOs has become an **urgent necessity** to ensure the **credibility and sustainability** of the WPSA. The discussion brought together perspectives from international civil society representatives, women's human rights defenders (WHRDs) and ministerial representatives from the region.



Ms. Sylvi Bratten, Executive Director of the Forum for Women and Development, Norway, noted that women's organisations were the driving force behind the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and continue to push for its implementation while holding governments and international organisations accountable. **Local feminist organisations in conflict countries** possess direct knowledge of lived

realities, **making them best positioned** to translate political commitments into tangible outcomes, while ensuring inclusive representation of all women, including those outside "elite" groups.

However, women's participation in global peace processes remains extremely limited, with **none of the peace agreements reached in 2023 involving** women as signatories or official representatives, indicating a lack of meaningful participation overall.¹ Even in **countries supportive of women's participation**, implementation has often been **delayed due to conflict- or war-related priorities**, reflecting **weak institutional commitment and a lack of sustainability**. Therefore, continued pressure is needed to ensure that States uphold their commitments when it comes to women's rights.

Today, the threats faced by WHRDs are multiple and include physical and psychological threats, the exploitation of sexual violence to shame women, targeting of family members and digital attacks such as defamation, doxxing and deepfakes. Protecting activists requires

¹ UN Secretary-General's 2024 report to the Security Council:

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S-2024-671.pdf>

thorough risk assessments, adequate funding for organisational protection and strong digital and legal protection mechanisms.

In Lebanon, for example, WHRDs face increasing defamation and harassment campaigns, alongside weak legal frameworks and enforcement, which heighten cyber risks and make documentation a dangerous activity. Civil society bears responsibility for preserving the historical record of violations, and protecting women in support centres requires strict measures to ensure identity and safety. The support of international partners and donors to local initiatives is crucial so that they can act independently and flexibly, free from political or economic agendas, to ensure the continuity of genuine rights-based work. **Strengthening civil society and maintaining open dialogue with government institutions remain essential for sustaining the WPSA.** Failure to genuinely support feminist organisations risks reversing progress at both national, regional and international levels.

Feminist and local organisations play a central role, often operating on the frontlines of response during conflicts, even before government or UN agencies can intervene



This was reaffirmed by Ms. Ghida Anani, Founder and Director of ABAAD - Resource Centre for Gender Equality in Lebanon. It is more **urgent than ever to strengthen local and feminist CSOs to ensure the credibility, sustainability** and impact of the WPSA at both national and regional levels. A lack of documentation and statistical data at both national and international levels complicates

evidence-based planning. However, **available figures indicate a major rise of VAWG in conflict settings:** the rate of femicide quadrupled in 2023 compared to 2021 and 2022, and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), including rape against women and girls, increased by 87% compared to 2022.

These indicators reflect the heavy burdens borne by women and girls, and the responsibility does not lie with a single actor. In such context, feminist and local organisations play a **central role, often operating on the frontlines of response during conflicts**, even before government or UN agencies can intervene.

These organisations provide legitimacy within local contexts through their understanding of cultural and social dynamics and by building trust with communities. This is essential to ensure that the WPSA is implementable and locally owned, with the inclusion of all women,

including the most marginalised groups, such as elderly women, women with disabilities, foreign women and domestic workers.

Empowering these organisations is crucial for preserving gains in the field of WPS. Despite challenges such as funding shortages, backlash, and the politicisation of gender issues, these organisations continue to provide life-saving services driven by volunteerism and sustained commitment.

The WPSA is built on three core pillars: protection, response and participation, and **supporting and strengthening feminist organisations ensure the application of these principles, increases their independence, protects women from backlash** and contributes to community-level peace and preservation of national gains amid potential international shifts.

WHRDs face multiple threats: protecting them requires coordinated efforts



Ms. Wathba Altayyar, a women's rights expert from Iraq, emphasised that **strengthening feminist organisations and CBOs goes beyond increasing their number to ensuring that they are empowered**, effective and capable of performing their roles in the field, monitoring performance, holding governments accountable, ensuring sustainability and supporting decision-makers in the implementation of the WPSA. These

organisations have been, and continue to be, key actors in advancing the implementation of UNSCR 1325, particularly in developing NAPs and monitoring commitments.

Iraq's post-2003 experience shows that approximately 6,000 CSOs were established, including about 1,500 active organisations, among them influential women's organisations. Despite this, Iraqi civil society has faced weak legal accountability, tribal interference and sensitivity surrounding women's issues, making the advancement of the WPSA a significant challenge.

Women's initiatives were often first responders during crises, such as after the liberation of Mosul, providing support before government intervention. Sustaining these organisations requires key factors such as legal frameworks facilitating their work across provinces, protection of WHRDs, sustainable funding and reliable data on violence to strengthen monitoring of national plans. **Accurate statistics are paramount to ensure tangible programme impact.**

WHRDs in Iraq face multiple threats, including defamation, coordinated campaigns, cyberattacks, psychological and social pressure and threats of closure or funding cuts. These threats disproportionately affect women due to overlapping security and social pressures and sometimes extend to family members. Some defenders have been forced to relocate or close social media accounts for safety.

Protecting WHRDs requires coordinated efforts by governments, international actors and donors, including independent funding, risk assessments and legal and institutional protection mechanisms tailored to local contexts. In this context, it is essential to counter narratives portraying the WPSA as a “Western concept.”

Empowering feminist CSOs in Iraq is critical for sustaining the WPSA and ensuring implementation on the ground despite security, political and financial challenges.

Feminist CSOs are strategic partners: The dialogue between civil society and policymakers is of high importance, leading to positive reforms



An institutional perspective was discussed by Ms. Muna Rfouh, Director of Governmental Achievement and Performance Follow-Up Unit at the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), Jordan. She emphasised that **strengthening** women’s organisations and CBOs is **essential to ensuring the credibility the reach and sustainability of the WPSA**. This involves **not only increasing number of**

organisations but also empowering them to participate in planning, monitoring, implementation and accountability processes. Governments cannot fulfil all roles and duties without **making civil society a strategic partner**.

In Jordan, the development of the first NAP involved CSOs **as key implementing partners**. Despite not facing large-scale displacement like some countries, Jordan’s geopolitical position and the latest Syrian refugee crisis **necessitated strong civil society engagement**.

Jordan has around 7,000 registered associations. With the support of government funding, a national coalition of over 60 CSOs, alongside government and private sector representatives, was established to guide implementation processes. CSOs in Jordan are now **central to implementing the WPSA**, supported through a joint committee MoSD / UN Women, which oversees approximately \$800,000 in funding from the Women, Peace and Humanitarian

Fund to enhance awareness, monitor violence and sustain local-level implementation. The CSOs are the **best positioned to reach vulnerable women, survivors of violence, refugees and women affected by conflict** and multidimensional poverty, particularly in camps, in coordination with UN Women. **Sustainability requires continuous funding and government support programmes** aimed at empowering associations, helping families and strengthening communities. **Over 10% of Jordanian associations are women-led** and capable of forming partnerships. Jordan has also linked its NAP for UNSCR 1325 with the national social protection strategy, including a resilience pillar to strengthen community and institutional responses to crises.

To provide protection for WHRDs, Jordan has established legal frameworks, including cybercrime laws criminalising digital abuse, hate speech and bullying, alongside protection mechanisms for frontline defenders. **The dialogue between civil society and policymakers is for these processes of high importance:** it has led to legislative reforms, such as improving rights for children of Jordanian women and repealing provisions related to forced marriage. It is also important to **integrate protection mechanisms for WHRDs** into national and international frameworks to ensure continuity of WPSA implementation and preserve the progress achieved in safeguarding women from threats.

Key Priorities identified by the panel and the following exchange of views, best practices and lessons learned

❖ **Feminist CSOs play a fundamental role in advancing the WPSA, and their contributions need to be documented**

Feminist CSOs have played a fundamental role in advancing the WPSA globally, contributing to the adoption of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and participating in the development of NAPs for its implementation. However, real-world impact varies by context, with meaningful participation in some areas and more symbolic roles in others, underscoring the **need to document and replicate successful experiences**.

❖ **Institutionalisation of the WPSA within government structures**

Sustaining the WPSA requires **its institutionalisation within government structures**, including dedicated budgets, official focal points, monitoring mechanisms and measurable indicators. Political will remains the key driver for translating policies into real action. Across all countries this remains a challenge.

❖ Invest in the role of language and terminology in national policies

There is a need to **review the terminology** used in national policies, particularly gender-related terms, to ensure linguistic and cultural accuracy and avoid public misunderstanding. Jordan, for example, has initiated a localisation project involving universities and government bodies to adopt context-appropriate terminology.

❖ Adopting a clear legal framework to curb hate speech and incitement against women

The discussion highlighted the rise in hate speech and incitement against women, particularly women defenders, including digital violence. Participants stressed the importance and urgency of **adopting a clear legal framework** while distinguishing between hate speech laws and cybercrime laws to protect freedom of expression.

❖ Supporting Palestinian WHRDs amid occupation

Palestinian civil society faces complex challenges, including occupation, political pressures, donor restrictions and harassment campaigns. The lack of effective protection mechanisms leaves WHRDs vulnerable, in need **for stronger institutional and legal safeguards**.

❖ Data-driven policy for assessing policy impact

Provision of reliable data was identified as essential for **assessing policy impact**, as it ensures that policy design is linked to measurable results, transparency and informed governance, which supports the assessment of policy outcomes. Jordan has established an observatory to monitor women's status and promote gender-sensitive data systems aligned with international standards. The Regional Observatory on VAWG, hosted by EuroMed Feminist Initiative in Jordan, is a key actor in collecting national data on VAWG and compiling it at a regional level through the Regional Index.

❖ Prioritising successful implementation of the WPSA

Participants highlighted that the success of the WPSA is closely tied to the **strength of civil society**, which often initiates programmes later adopted by governments, as seen across all countries. Supporting this sector is critical for sustainability of these programmes. However, threats to the WPSA are increasing, including the rise of far-right movements and declining international commitment to UN frameworks, which affect civil society independence. The importance of **localising UNSCR 1325 according to national contexts** was emphasised. In Palestine, for example, **localisation is linked to regional frameworks**, while in Jordan it includes institutional mechanisms such as observatories and performance indicators to ensure effective implementation.

IV. THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPSA: LEGISLATION, FINANCING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Addressing the gap between rhetoric and implementation requires diversified and innovative funding mechanisms



Achieving peace and security requires **translating commitments at the national level**, alongside an active role for civil society in supporting State institutions, rather than relying on imported models or bypassing political and legal processes.

Ms. Gielan Elmessiri, UN Women Representative in Lebanon, explained that feminist CSOs play a fundamental role in

providing social legitimacy and strengthening commitment to peace and security, stressing that the benefits extend to society as a whole - not only to women. The WPSA must therefore be integrated into national justice, security plans and institutional reforms, rather than only associated to international initiatives.

There is a significant **gap between rhetoric and implementation**, as **funding remains limited** and often **focuses on crisis response rather than prevention and institution-building**, which hinders long-term structural change.

Survey findings in Lebanon, and globally, show that most feminist organisations face funding crises threatening their sustainability, despite continuing to provide essential support and conflict prevention efforts.

There is a need for flexible, multi-year funding that supports **prevention** and institution-building, including support for State institutions, **flexible funding mechanisms** for feminist organisations, **rapid response tools for political escalation**, and **gender-responsive, programme-based budgeting** to assess policy impacts on both women and men, while ensuring that funding does not prioritise crisis response at the expense of long-term prevention.

When words are aligned with actions



WPSA and its implementation in practice require stronger alignment between policy commitments and real outcomes on the ground. Ms. Anne Isambert, Deputy Director, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in Lebanon, highlighted in her paper the official commitment of France to feminist foreign policy which aims to integrate gender equality into all aspects of international relations, promoting women's rights and addressing global challenges through a gendered lens. With this act, the French government emphasizes that gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and development.

French feminist diplomacy has not remained in words only but has been **reflected through State policies and funding mechanisms supporting feminist organisations** as part of **broader diplomatic and development efforts**. A good practice is the FSOF, the Fund that supports this regional WPSA program, in the frame of which this Forum takes place. FSOF forms part of France's feminist diplomacy and supports feminist organizations operating in AFD's partner countries. Aiming to reduce gender-based inequalities by strengthening the technical, financial and administrative capacities of feminist CSOs in France's partner countries, it is overseen by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the AFD, in **regular consultation with civil society organizations**.

This approach underlines the value of **incorporating insights** from practitioners and experts to **strengthen policy design** and implementation. It also allows more efficient **investment in prevention**, as prevention remains both essential for the implementation of the WPSA and still a challenge.

Sustainable, flexible, and long-term funding rather than short-term, project-based approaches for women's organisations enables stronger coordination among States and feminist CSOs, alongside continued dialogue and enhances women's participation and impact in peace and security processes.

Successful legislation requires a gradual, participatory approach, involving all stakeholders



Developing gender-related legislation in Arab countries faces fundamental challenges linked to societal culture and implementation context—not just legal drafting. Mr. Mohammed Miqdadi, Secretary General of the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) in Jordan, emphasised that **successful legislation** requires a **gradual, participatory approach**

involving all stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society, and educational, health and religious institutions, while respecting local values.

Jordan's Child Rights Law (2015) is an example of this, where broad stakeholder engagement contributed to its successful adoption and monitoring mechanisms, overcoming resistance from local communities.

However, implementation often fails due to weak enforcement, or lack, of contextual adaptation, even with international support. Therefore, it is important to act for alignment of **international commitments with national realities** to ensure tangible rights besides producing legal texts.

It is also important to have **sustainable funding** for feminist initiatives and the WPSA. Short-term and fragmented funding cannot support the achievement of meaningful change. Strict donor conditions may have negative impact on small organisations, shifting focus towards reporting rather than real achievements.

Prevention, awareness and behavioural change projects require long-term support aligned with **clear national strategies**.

Effective legislation and policies require participatory approaches, contextual alignment, clear monitoring mechanisms and sustainable funding linked to national priorities.

Flexible funding with institutional capacity-building strengthens women's leadership and ensures sustainability.



It is essential to strengthen local ownership of gender policies and initiatives supporting the implementation of the WPSA. Ms. Lama Zeinoun Tabet, Gender Focal Point at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in Lebanon, shared the lessons learned and good practices of GIZ's work, which focuses on **sustainable development**,

good governance and **social justice** in partner countries, enabled through technical support, policy advice and institutional capacity-building in cooperation with national stakeholders. Gender is treated as a cross-cutting priority integrated across all sectors - such as water, education, governance and employment - rather than as a standalone issue.

Cooperation with local partners, particularly the NCLW, is essential for **translating international commitments into national policies and actionable plans**, supported by indicators aligned with both international standards and national priorities. Programmes also support women's political and economic empowerment, awareness of VAWG and psychosocial support.

However, sustainability requires **institutional capacity-building**—not just project implementation—through tools such as **gender auditing and leadership mentoring programmes** for women. There is a gap between long-term international commitments and short-term, donor-driven funding, especially in fragile contexts like Lebanon, where women are often at the forefront of crises response.

Flexible funding channels and capacity-building for feminist organisations—especially in financial management—are crucial for reducing administrative burdens and enabling focus on fieldwork.

Combining **flexible funding with institutional capacity-building strengthens women's leadership and ensures sustainability**.

National and local funding must be strengthened through legislative reforms, government support mechanisms and partnerships



Understanding decision-making mechanisms within the State is **essential for civil society efforts** to succeed in advancing Women's Rights (WR) and the WPSA. Dr. Amir Kanani, Legal Advisor to the President of Iraq, explained that decision-making involves multiple stages -from institutional actors to actual decision-makers and ultimately policy beneficiaries. Governments are not

inherently opposed to women, but social traditions, customs and some religious interpretations have limited women's rights, especially in cases of violence.

It is important that CSOs adopt flexible and collaborative strategies to influence public policies through understanding decision-making channels, building alliances and proposing practical solutions.

Iraq's 2014 NAP for UNSCR 1325 is an example of how collaboration between parliament and civil society transformed it into a national programme and strategy. Similarly, the Yazidi Survivors Law was developed through a **participatory process** and successfully enacted alongside other legislation, providing survivors with legal protection, compensation, education and financial support funded by the government.

While **international cooperation** is important for capacity-building and knowledge exchange, it is **insufficient for sustainability**, as international funding is often tied to donor priorities. Therefore, **national and local funding** must be strengthened through legislative reforms, government support mechanisms and partnerships.

Challenges in Iraq include not only legislative gaps but also weak institutional trust, limited financial allocations and lack of gender-responsive budgeting.

Civil society plays a key role in filling gaps, supporting legislation and promoting women's participation and empowerment despite political and financial challenges.

Key Priorities identified by the panel and the following open discussion

❖ **Design of sustainable and flexible funding, that leads to meaningful empowerment and impactful change**

Sustainable funding remains a major challenge, as donor-driven approaches often lack genuine partnership and prioritise short-term crisis response, while **long-term structural transformation requires sustainable and flexible funding mechanisms**.

Feminist organisations play a crucial role in protecting women's rights and **women's empowerment** requires **long-term, multi-dimensional approaches** (social, economic and political). Consequently, short-term projects risk undermining meaningful empowerment.

❖ **Maintaining a participatory, cross-sector dialogue with women's organisations in the process of harmonising national legislation with international women's rights mechanisms**

Although international women's human rights treaties are supposed to prevail over national laws, in practice, domestic legislation is most often applied first. Therefore, **updating national laws to align with international treaties** is essential. International agreements are typically translated into NAPs tailored to local contexts.

Gender-sensitive legislation often faces resistance, particularly from conservative political actors. **Clear communication of legal content and participatory dialogue** can help shift opposition into support.

❖ **Investing in genuine partnerships between international organisations, governments and civil society, as they are essential for local ownership and sustainability**

International cooperation is important and provides technical support, but the sustainability of national policies requires **local funding, legislative reforms, government support mechanisms and cross-sector partnerships**. However, in some Arab countries, NGO laws restrict funding and limit civil society's ability to operate effectively.

Genuine partnerships between international organisations, governments and civil society are **essential for local ownership and sustainability**. Experiences in Iraq and Lebanon show that integrating peace, development and humanitarian efforts enhances effectiveness and sustainability, alongside national strategies to counter extremism and protect women.

❖ A shift in monitoring of impact of the WPSA

Monitoring and measuring the real impact of the WPSA on the ground, especially in conflict settings, requires a **shift from activity-based monitoring to assessing its impact on women's lives** using clear indicators and percentages.

Ministries and institutions should **establish clear gender-equal structures and apply gender-responsive budgeting** to ensure effective implementation, in coordination with civil society.

❖ Broad analysis and diverse strategies application by women's organisations to sustain gains and advance the WPSA

Terminology and legal translation into Arabic are linked to cultural and legal appropriation to ensure effective implementation.

Engagement with conservative or religious groups should **focus on their policies and practices rather than identity alone**, allowing for constructive engagement when possible, including on terminology.

❖ Ensuring women's access to employment and economic participation in transitional contexts

Ensuring women's access to employment and development financing is critical. Therefore, **allocating**, for example, **to women a portion of jobs and responsibilities** in the reconstruction field, as in Lebanon is necessary to ensure equitable opportunities.

It is important to consider that unregulated privatisation policies in transitional contexts can negatively affect women's empowerment and economic participation, requiring safeguards and social investment.

V. GENDER-RESPONSIVE TRANSITIONAL PROCESSES, PEACEBUILDING AND RECONSTRUCTION: LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES FROM CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS

Integrating WPSA principles into transitional justice: from legal frameworks to designs of post-conflict environments.



Transitional justice mechanisms are integral to the WPSA, as they provide a framework for accountability, justice and reconciliation. Ms. Susan Aref, Executive Director of the Women Empowerment Organization (WEO) in Iraq, addressed this relationship, emphasising the need to integrate a gender perspective into these mechanisms to ensure accountability for

VAWG and to strengthen women's meaningful participation in decision-making. She explained that transitional justice represents a set of mechanisms adopted by post-conflict States to hold perpetrators accountable, provide reparations to victims and prevent the recurrence of violations.

Women in **Iraq**, as in many conflict-affected countries, have borne severe consequences of conflict, while also **playing an important role in peacebuilding and community reconciliation**. After 2003, Iraqi policies and legislation did not include gender-sensitive measures until the 2014 Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) invasion, which involved grave violations against women, especially minority women, and marked a turning point, underlining the need to link transitional justice with peace and recovery efforts.

In this context, Iraq benefited from the UNSCRs on Women, Peace and Security, particularly Resolution 1325, developing in 2014 a NAP for its implementation, which contributed to the increasing of number of gender-responsive policies and legislation. A **key milestone was the 2021 Yazidi Survivors Law**, which recognised crimes committed against women during ISIS control and established mechanisms for reparations, support and rehabilitation, as well as a dedicated directorate to implement the law and memorialise violations.

Civil society played an important role—**especially women's organisations**—in documenting violations and advocating for accountability mechanisms, alongside international efforts to document crimes and prosecute perpetrators. However, long-term challenges remain, such

as issues concerning children born of rape or forced marriage, documentation and property rights and compensation for affected individuals. This **underscores that transitional justice is an ongoing process** requiring long-term institutional and societal reform, sensitive to the experiences of both women and men.

Excluding women from reconstruction and recovery processes leads to **fragile and unjust recovery**, as decisions made without women's participation fail to reflect societal needs and weaken trust in peace agreements and public policies. Some local peace agreements following ISIS's defeat lacked meaningful participation by women, reducing their effectiveness.

Therefore, **women's participation** in reconstruction and policymaking bodies must be **substantive**, not symbolic, with real decision-making authority, and at least 30–40% representation. Women's organisations **must also be involved** in designing and implementing recovery programs, adopting gender-responsive budgeting, conducting impact assessments before funding reconstruction projects, investing in education, healthcare and women's economic empowerment, and addressing risks such as exploitation and human trafficking while supporting female-headed households and displaced women.

Regional experiences show that **peace cannot be sustainable without justice**, reconstruction and institutional reform. Integrating women into transitional justice, peacebuilding and reconstruction is essential for achieving fair and sustainable recovery and rebuilding social trust on more inclusive and equitable foundations.

Integrating WPSA principles into transitional justice mechanisms in Syria has also been challenging, as the Syrian conflict involved grave violations by multiple actors, including the Syrian regime and armed extremist groups, with women among the most affected.



Ms. Sawsan Zakzak, a women's rights expert from the Coalition of Syrian Women for Democracy and editor of the Arabic handbook *"Gender Sensitive Reconstruction for Syria,"* explained that one of the main challenges is the nature of **Syria's** political transition, which did not result from a negotiated settlement but from sudden international arrangements that transferred

power to a previously designated entity, creating a complex political and legal environment for transitional justice.

The uncontrolled opening of prisons led to the loss and theft of key documents related to violations, undermining accountability efforts. Furthermore, the legal framework for transitional justice remains incomplete: although the constitutional declaration called for establishing a transitional justice body, its governing law has yet to be issued.

In this context, the feminist movement has called for an **independent transitional justice council** that **includes victims and survivors of CRSV as well as civil society representatives**, to ensure comprehensive justice, where accountability is not limited to crimes committed by the regime alone, but **addresses violations committed by all parts of the conflict**.

Ms. Zakzak pointed to ongoing **violations against women, including killings, abductions and sectarian-based violence**, as well as difficulties in determining the true number of victims due to mass graves and incomplete documentation.

It is important to underline that **Syrian women have contributed significantly to the reconstruction** processes by developing tools such as gendered constitutional guidelines and gender-responsive reconstruction frameworks addressing economic, legal, political and social dimensions, as well as security sector reform. However, women's actual participation in decision-making remains limited, with political discourse often framed by the notion that "those who liberate decide," leading to women's marginalisation. This is reflected in low representation in political institutions, including minimal women's representation in government and parliament.



Regional and international feminist solidarity in support of women in conflict-affected areas, despite diversity within feminist movements, has been and remains essential to defend women's rights, to support women's political participation and protect their individual rights, which in turn are fundamental to building a just and sustainable peace based on equality.

Integrating WPSA principles into transitional justice extends beyond legal frameworks to **include how post-conflict environments are designed**. Ms. Zeina Sorour Khoury, Civil Engineer and Project Manager at the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) in Lebanon, emphasised that **peace** is not achieved solely through agreements but **through safe living conditions**, including adequate housing, well-lit roads and accessible health and education services. Designing safe environments for women inherently benefits all members of society.

Women's participation in planning and reconstruction is **essential**, as they possess direct knowledge of daily needs and how public spaces are used. Involving local communities—especially women—in project design stages (such as schools and hospitals) ensures safety and accessibility through adequate lighting, safe walkways and proper traffic organisation.

Excluding women leads to infrastructure and services that fail to meet **half the population's needs**, thus undermine social stability. Therefore gender audits in project design are required to ensure safety, equity and accessibility.

It is time to move from theoretical discourse on women's rights to **practical implementation** by involving women in project execution, ensuring minimum representation of women in engineering teams, and adopting inclusive design standards as a condition for funding.

Key Priorities identified by the panel and the following exchange of views, best practices and lessons learned

- ❖ **Recovery plans and funding conditions must include clear provisions ensuring accountability for crimes—especially VAWG and CRSV—and not perpetuate impunity**

Syrian participants underlined that transitional justice is a cornerstone of sustainable stability in post-conflict societies; peace cannot be separated from justice and reconstruction and ignoring justice risks prolonging or reigniting conflict.

International and local **funding should be conditioned on compliance with women's human rights standards** and on meaningful participation in gender-responsive public budgeting, focusing on education, health and economic empowerment, as well as protection from exploitation and trafficking.

- ❖ **Women's participation in transitional justice and reconstruction bodies is essential for inclusivity and effectiveness. Representation should reach at least 30–40%, combined with real empowerment and decision-making authority**

Excluding women undermines legitimacy, weakens public trust and negatively impacts economic and security recovery, potentially increasing violence, unemployment and poverty.

When **women's participation** in public life, in policymaking, electoral and legislative bodies, and in all reconstruction project teams is supported, then women's actual and practical needs in all projects would be considered and addressed, including street lighting and childcare facilities, which directly affect women's ability to work and participate in public life, as the practice of Lebanon showed.

Reconstruction efforts **with clear standards**, including a minimum **30–40% quota for women's representation**, ensures that reconstruction becomes an opportunity to rebuild trust between society and the State and to **establish a more inclusive social contract when women are meaningfully involved**.

- ❖ **A focus to be put on long-term funding and support to women's organisations which enables them to continue advocacy and documentation of women's rights abuse as well as to provide protection to vulnerable women throughout transitional processes**

Women's organisations and civil society play a vital role in advocacy, documentation and supporting affected women, including ensuring the voices of victims and survivors reach decision-makers.

Continued advocacy, accurate documentation of violations and databases for missing persons are essential to ensure implementation of women's rights and protection of vulnerable groups, including abducted and missing women, as the Syrian participants shared.

Marginalising women's organisations leads to loss of critical field expertise, as these organisations often have a deep understanding of survivors' realities and needs, making their participation essential for responsive and effective policies and sustainable recovery.

- ❖ **The governments collaboration with women's organisations in reforming security and judicial institutions helps them to adequately address the needs of both women and men**

Reforming security and judicial institutions is critical to **ensure access to justice and strengthen legal and social protection for women**, especially female heads of households and displaced women.

In all countries, best practices showed that supporting effective **collaboration between the governments and women's organisations** is essential for achieving sustainable results.

VI. THEMATIC WORKSHOPS: CROSS -CUTTING PRIORITIES FOR WPSA IMPLEMENTATION

1. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence and Cyber Violence

The digital space is witnessing an increase in technology-facilitated forms of violence, particularly targeting women and girls through multiple channels, including online harassment, blackmail and hate speech.

The digital space accelerates the spread of violence due to the rapid circulation of information and easy access to platforms, amplifying both the scale and impact of abuse. The use of fake accounts further hinders accountability by making it difficult to identify and prosecute perpetrators. Limited digital awareness, particularly regarding privacy and protection, increases the vulnerability of women and girls to targeting, while slow legal responses and the absence of clear laws—or weak enforcement—reinforce perpetrators' sense of impunity.

Moreover, social stigma and victim-blaming cultures discourage reporting of violence, especially in conservative environments. Online violence intersects with hate speech and political or sectarian incitement, often targeting women because of their opinions or identities.

In this context, there is a pressing need to adopt comprehensive policies and measures that enhance digital protection, support victims and ensure accountability for violations in the digital environment. In parallel, continuous awareness-raising is crucial to enhance digital literacy and cybersecurity for women and girls at local, national and international levels.

Key Priorities based on identified challenges, exchange of good practices and lessons learned

❖ Updating legislation and building institutional capacity to combat digital/technology-facilitated violence

Reviewing and **updating laws to criminalise forms of online violence** such as digital harassment, cyber extortion and hate speech is essential to ensure legal accountability and protect users in the digital space.

It is also important to **train police officers and judges** to handle cybercrimes and to develop digital investigation tools that support evidence collection and perpetrator identification.

❖ Enhancing digital security awareness among women and girls and developing effective reporting mechanisms

Awareness programmes and training on digital protection skills and online privacy management help women and girls reduce the risks of online violence.

Providing **clear and rapid reporting systems**—through social media platforms or relevant authorities—is crucial to ensure timely responses and victim protection.

❖ **Empowering civil society and women's organisations and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships**

Feminist CSOs play a key role in awareness campaigns, providing legal and psychosocial support to victims, and building women's technical capacity to address digital risks.

Effective practices highlight the **importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships** among governments, civil society and technology companies to develop comprehensive responses to technology-facilitated violence.

❖ **Developing digital safety policies and monitoring technologies**

Improving privacy and security settings on digital platforms and using technology and artificial intelligence to detect and remove harmful content are effective approaches to be included in policy making.

2. Climate Justice and Environmental Insecurity

Climate change and environmental degradation increasingly impact human and social security, as environmental insecurity and the scarcity of natural resources exacerbate economic and social vulnerabilities, particularly in conflict-affected communities. Climate change exacerbates inequality, with women bearing greater economic and social burdens, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. Scarcity of resources such as water and land leads to community conflicts and domestic violence and may increase early marriage and social pressures. Moreover, environmental degradation in the region, such as desertification and declining agriculture, drives displacement, increasing women's vulnerability and limiting their access to services. Women also take on additional responsibilities in securing water and food, increasing physical burdens and daily risks.

Insufficient funding and weak coordination among stakeholders contribute to the widening of the gap between climate policies and implementation. In addition, weak coordination between governments and civil society leads to duplication of efforts, fragmented resources and reduced impact. The absence of an intersectional approach (considering geography, poverty, disability and marginalisation) results in inequitable and ineffective policies.

To add to this, limited climate financing hinders also local initiatives, particularly in countries affected by conflict or economic crises. The impacts of climate change intersect with armed conflict, pollution and occupation, complicating crises and intensifying their effects.

In this context, climate justice emerges as a key approach to ensure a fair and inclusive response that addresses the needs of women and the most affected groups, while promoting their participation in resource management and environmental policymaking.

Key Priorities based on identified challenges, exchange of good practices and lessons learned

❖ Integrating climate justice into Women, Peace and Security policies

Incorporating **climate change issues** into NAPs for UNSCR 1325 ensures that climate impacts are reflected in security and development policies and enhances women's participation in shaping environmental and climate responses.

❖ Empowering women in natural resource management

Women's participation in managing natural resources such as water, land and energy is a **successful practice that contributes** to more equitable and sustainable resource management and strengthens women's role in environmental and local development decision-making.

❖ Adopting comprehensive, gender-sensitive climate analysis

Conducting comprehensive climate analyses helps identify how policies affect women and men differently, determine the most vulnerable groups and **design more responsive policies**.

❖ Supporting local women-led environmental initiatives

Local initiatives led by women in areas such as sustainable agriculture, water management and renewable energy **enhance community resilience** to climate change and promote sustainable local development.

❖ Linking climate justice with social cohesion and peacebuilding

Environmental degradation and resource scarcity can exacerbate tensions and conflict, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Integrating **climate justice** into **peacebuilding** and **social cohesion** efforts can support more sustainable, inclusive and **community-driven** responses.

❖ **Enhancing coordination and using technology in managing environmental crises**

Collaboration among environmental institutions, peacebuilding organisations and women's groups contributes to integrated responses linking environment, security and development. **Technology-based environmental analysis** and early warning systems can support preparedness, disaster response and the protection of vulnerable communities.

3. Gender-Sensitive Transitional Processes and Social Reconstruction

Achieving sustainable recovery requires addressing the legal and institutional challenges that hinder women's access to justice, alongside strengthening their meaningful participation in accountability, reform and decision-making processes. Linking peace with reconstruction and economic empowerment as a fundamental condition for participation.

Social stigma and legal gaps hinder access to justice, highlighting the need to align laws with international standards, especially in conflict contexts. This also require ensuring privacy and safety for women (including identity protection, safe transportation and appropriate services) to enable access to justice.

Support from donors directed toward women's organisations is essential to address these issues and advocate for women's participation in decision-making at no less than 30% to enhance justice and helps address poverty, violence and marginalisation.

Key Priorities based on identified challenges, exchange of good practices and lessons learned

❖ **Applying comprehensive justice and expanding accountability for all forms of sexual and civil crimes**

True justice goes beyond punishing perpetrators to addressing the structural and social causes of VAWG. It includes **integrating security as a core component of transitional justice** and ensuring **women's full and sustainable access** to justice mechanisms, making accountability part of rebuilding society.

❖ Developing a safe and confidential judicial environment and reparations programmes

Establishing high standards of privacy and confidentiality in police and judicial procedures, alongside the use of **AI tools to preserve evidence and witness testimonies**, reduces repeated testimonies and strengthens **women's trust in the justice system**.

A **comprehensive judicial environment** enables women to participate without fear of retaliation or discrimination. Reparations should go **beyond financial compensation to include psychological and social rehabilitation**, helping survivors regain their ability to participate in society and decision-making.

❖ Strengthening the role of civil society and women's organisations in justice and decision-making

Engaging civil society, especially women's organisations, in **documenting violations, monitoring government actions** and advocating for increased representation of women in legislative and administrative decision-making enhances transparency and ensures fair and effective policies responsive to the needs of affected women and girls.

4. Economic Security and Women's Rights

Economic security is a fundamental element in implementing the WPSA. Women's economic empowerment goes beyond simply providing employment opportunities; it includes reforming economic policies, strengthening social protection, expanding access to financing and supporting community-led initiatives by women, ensuring their active participation in peacebuilding and development processes.

Economic security is a fundamental pillar of the WPSA as women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and recovery processes cannot be achieved without economic justice and access to resources. Women's economic participation goes beyond employment opportunities to include reforming discriminatory economic and legal frameworks, strengthening social protection systems, expanding access to financing and supporting women-led economic initiatives, particularly in conflict- and crisis-affected contexts.

Ensuring women's economic rights also requires recognising unpaid care work as a significant part of the economy, developing women-friendly work environments through childcare services, safe transportation and protection from workplace discrimination, and integrating gender perspectives into economic, environmental and reconstruction policies.

Strengthening women's participation in economic and legislative decision-making, including oversight and anti-corruption mechanisms, is essential to building inclusive, equitable and resilient societies.

Key Priorities based on identified challenges, exchange of good practices and lessons learned

❖ Promoting women's economic participation through supportive policies

This includes recognising unpaid care work as a key part of the economy and transforming it into a formal, regulated sector, developing women-friendly work environments through **supportive services**, ensuring safe and **non-discriminatory workplaces** and supporting women's cooperatives.

❖ Strengthening governance, social protection and capacity-building

This involves integrating **gender perspectives into policies**, enhancing women's participation in oversight and anti-corruption efforts, developing **inclusive social protection systems** and building women's capacities, particularly during crises.

❖ Supporting women-led economic initiatives and cooperatives

Women-led cooperatives, local enterprises and community-based economic initiatives strengthen **women's economic independence, resilience and participation** in local recovery and development processes, **particularly in conflict- and crisis-affected areas**.

❖ Strengthening women's participation in economic decision-making

Ensuring women's meaningful participation in economic governance, legislative processes, reconstruction planning and oversight mechanisms is essential for building **inclusive and equitable economic systems** responsive to women's needs and priorities.

❖ Enhancing women's economic resilience in conflict and post-conflict contexts

Economic empowerment strategies should address the specific needs of women affected by conflict, displacement and marginalisation by ensuring **access to employment, social protection, financial services**, vocational training and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the plenary sessions, workshops and the following open discussions, a set of cross-cutting recommendations was developed to strengthen and widen the implementation of the WPSA at the community, national and regional/international levels.

AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

1. Promote women's participation and leadership in community peacebuilding and transitional justice

Ensure women's meaningful participation in community peacebuilding, mediation, transitional justice and reconstruction processes, particularly those from marginalised and conflict-affected groups.

2. Invest in long-term prevention and social change initiatives

Expand community-based awareness and prevention programmes addressing harmful gender norms, victim-blaming and VAWG, while engaging men, youth and community leaders.

3. Expand integrated protection and support services for women and girls

Strengthen shelters, emergency services and integrated psychosocial, legal and social support mechanisms for survivors of VAWG, while ensuring confidentiality, safety and survivor-centred approaches.

4. Strengthen community-based documentation and accountability efforts

Support women's organisations and local actors in documenting rights' violations, preserving evidence and producing data to strengthen accountability, advocacy and evidence-based policymaking.

5. Enhance women's role in climate action and community environmental resilience

Support women-led climate adaptation initiatives, strengthen women's participation in natural resource management and expand community preparedness and local response capacities related to environmental, humanitarian and climate-related crises.

6. Strengthen women's economic participation and local resilience

Support women-led cooperatives, local economic initiatives and vocational training programmes that strengthen women's economic independence, resilience and participation in local recovery efforts.

1. Institutionalise the WPSA within national policies and systems

Integrate WPSA principles across security, development, reconstruction, humanitarian and climate policies through comprehensive NAPs, dedicated budgets, independent monitoring systems and intersectional data collection mechanisms.

2. Strengthen institutional coordination and accountability mechanisms

Include women's organisations in the national coordination structures involving governments, security actors and civil society to ensure implementation, oversight and accountability.

3. Protect WHRDs and strengthen responses to CVAWG

Enhance digital security, risk management and protection mechanisms for WHRDs, while strengthening community responses to technology-facilitated violence through legal, psychosocial and awareness initiatives.

4. Reform legal and policy frameworks to guarantee gender equality and protection

Align national legislation with international standards by maintaining and strengthening cooperation with feminist CSOs in enhancing legal protections related to VAWG, transitional justice, labour rights, digital violence and discrimination.

5. Ensure sustainable funding and support for women's organisations

Develop sustainable and transparent national funding mechanisms supporting women's organisations working on peacebuilding, protection, justice and women's rights.

6. Strengthen women's participation in peacebuilding, governance and decision-making

Promote women's meaningful participation and leadership in political processes, peace negotiations, reconstruction, economic governance and national decision-making structures.

7. Strengthen national systems to combat VAWG and CVAWG

Enhance legal, institutional and technological mechanisms to prevent and respond to VAWG, including cyber violence, through survivor-centred protection and accountability measures.

8. Integrate climate justice into national Women, Peace and Security frameworks

Ensure that climate adaptation, environmental policies and reconstruction strategies address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women in conflict-affected communities.

9. Develop gender-responsive transitional justice and reconstruction frameworks

Integrate gender perspectives into transitional justice, accountability and reconstruction processes while ensuring women's participation in economic and political decision making, , access to justice and protection of survivors' rights.

10. Promote gender-responsive economic and reconstruction policies and social protection systems

Strengthen women's economic rights, financial inclusion, social protection and participation in economic recovery, creation of jobs and reconstruction processes, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings.

AT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

1. Strengthen international involvement for the institutionalisation of the WPSA

Support States in developing, implementing and monitoring comprehensive WPSA frameworks through structural inclusion of feminist CSOs and women ´s led CBOs, technical assistance, performance indicators and sustainable implementation mechanisms.

2. Strengthen international accountability and monitoring mechanisms

Develop stronger international frameworks to monitor States' implementation of WPSA commitments and measure the implementation impact on women's and girls' lives.

3. Reform international funding models to ensure sustainability and local ownership

Promote flexible, multi-year and context-responsive funding forms that prioritise prevention, long-term impact and enable inclusion of community based, women-led organisations.

4. Sustain the support of feminist and women ´s led organisations and networks

Provide sustainable financial support to feminist and community-based women ´s led organisations and networks as key actors in protection, prevention, peacebuilding and humanitarian response, to enable their coordination and direct connection with women and girls on the ground.

5. Support women ´s and feminist networking to enable cross-borders solidarity and cooperation

Provide sustained financial support to regional and international networks to support cross-border cooperation and solidarity and sustain the community of practices on the WPSA and combating VAWG.

6. Strengthen international responses to TFGBV and CVAWG

Enhance international cooperation, legal frameworks and partnerships with technology companies to combat digital violence, cybercrime and attacks targeting women and WHRDs.

7. Promote climate justice and gender-responsive crisis response

Direct international funding and support toward gender-responsive climate policies, environmental resilience and humanitarian responses that address the needs of women and girls.

8. Support gender-responsive transitional justice and reconstruction processes

Ensure that international support for transitional justice and reconstruction integrates accountability for VAWG and CRSV, women's participation and survivor-centred approaches.

9. Strengthen international standards on data, documentation and evidence preservation

Develop harmonised international standards and mechanisms for documenting violations, preserving evidence and supporting reliable data systems related to VAWG and CRSV.



