

Meeting of the Advisory Group for Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), December 17, 2018

This report aims to summarize key points and discussion highlights, record main recommendations and/or concerns and outline action items for coming meetings. Full list of participants follows below.

1. Background and opening of the meeting

The Advisory group is mandated to meet twice a year to discuss progress on implementation of Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and provide advice. This meeting was the second regular meeting of the Advisory group, which met for the first time in March 2018. The main purpose of this meeting was to review progress of the government's implementation of Canada's National Action Plan, as reflected in the annual progress report tabled in Parliament in September 2018. It was also a chance to present outcomes from the special meeting of the Group on Indigenous women and girls and the WPS agenda held in October 2018. The Advisory group can hold such issue-specific meetings when there is need for more focused or informal discussions between interested members and with additional invitees.

Advisory group co-chairs Annik Lussier-Rez, Deputy Director of Women, Peace and Security in the Conflict Prevention, Stabilization and Peacebuilding Division (IRZ) at Global Affairs Canada and Beth Woroniuk, Coordinator of the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada (WPSN-C) provided opening remarks. Woroniuk noted that the Group was in the process of moving forward to a more formalized structure and that WPSN-C's role was that of a "critical friend": to applaud when things go well, but also to push for better results.

2. Lead Partner Presentations

Lead Implementing partners were represented by their WPS Champions who provided overviews of departmental progress and challenges for the first year of Action Plan implementation (fiscal year 2017/18).

Global Affairs Canada's WPS Champion Larisa Galadza, Director General for the Peace and Stabilizations Operations Program (PSOPs), welcomed new Action Plan partners Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and congratulated the former Status of Women Canada on the first day as the new Department for Women and Gender Equality¹. Highlights from Ms. Galadza's remarks included:

Stronger ownership of and accountability for WPS across the department as evident by the improved integration of women's voices, increased number of global initiatives, and additional officers working on

¹ In French: Le ministère des Femmes et de l'Égalité des genres.

the Action Plan or as gender advisors and focal points. Concrete examples include the creation of the first G7 Gender Advisory Council, the Women's Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations and the G7 WPS Partnerships Initiatives, the decision to create the position of a WPS ambassador (approved by Parliament on December 12, 2018), stronger emphasis on WPS and gender in non-traditional settings such as disarmament discussions at the UN, tracking of WPS funding and increased programming (from \$221 million to \$408 million), and the development of a WPS toolkit to enable missions and officers to integrate WPS into programming and policy at the planning stages.

Upcoming high-level events include Canada co-chairing the WPS Focal Points Network with Uruguay in 2020 and co-hosting in January 2019 with Ethiopia a WPS-focused preparatory meeting for the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting to be held later this spring.

On challenges, Ms. Galadza referred to the "backlash" often encountered in multilateral fora, and the "yes, but", and stressed the importance of making a concerted effort to engage men and boys on why WPS is good for everyone. There is a need to be both sensitive and firm on this, and responses so far are encouraging. Galadza also underlined that it is through local women's groups that we achieve change and build the WPS movement, and that efforts to identify and support these organizations continue.

Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF) WPS Champion

Brigadier-General (BGen) Lise Bourgon explained that the DND/CAF approach had two main aims: to institutionalize WPS and to integrate WPS into tactical programming, where it will make a difference on the ground. While BGen Bourgon is the official WPS champion, DND/CAF has a WPS champion in General Vance, and his role leading the WPS Chiefs of Defence Staff (CHOD) Network in 2019 will be an opportunity to engage further on implementing the WPS agenda. The WPS CHOD network currently has 30 members and General Vance would like to see this increased to 65 by next year.

BGen Bourgon summarized progress under the DND/CAF implementation plan, where the majority of targets are on track and only one requires attention, namely to increase the number of uniformed women deployed to international operations. This target is closely tied to the target on increasing the percentage of women in the military. In spite of ongoing and increased efforts, it is too early to see results, but encouraging that the Royal Military College recently welcomed 25% women cadets in the first year, compared with 17.5% in previous years. BGen Bourgon assured they will be watching these targets closely. Other activities include increased gender advisor training in cooperation with other countries and the deployment of Gender Advisors in Mali, Latvia, and in February 2019 also in South Sudan.

One challenge in increasing the percentage of women is that 50% of women in the CAF are still in what are considered "traditional" supporting roles: administration, nursing and logistics. Combat roles (where women would actually be in a position to deploy as peacekeepers) are much less popular, and women remain around 11%. By February 2019, CAF hopes to have this number closer to 15%, but it is also important that women are not pushed into peacekeeping roles – they need to be volunteers.

Finally, DND/CAF is updating its implementation plan to have clearer and more measurable targets and be able to collect stronger data.

RCMP WPS Champion Assistant Commissioner of Federal Policing, Intelligence and International Policing Paula Dionne underlined that the RCMP approach is that everyone can be a champion for women. All personnel in the International Police Peacekeeping and Peace Operations programs is required to take the GBA+ course and special sensitivity training is required, particular to the country of deployment. In October 2018, a barrier survey was conducted to identify the barriers preventing women police officers from deploying to peace operations. In 2017/18, 17.8% of deployed Canadian police officers were women, while the aim is to match the UN goal of 20%. The RCMP is also working in other countries to help enhance the chances of women police officers to pass UN testing to qualify for participation in UN peace operations (e.g., in Senegal). In Iraq, Canada provides training of women Iraqi police officers and was the only Coalition partner offered this opportunity. Additionally, a senior RCMP member is deployed to Iraq as the Director of Gender and Protection for the Coalition.

The RCMP is also looking at how it can improve domestically to have a more diverse and inclusive workplace, including for example through adapting and modernizing uniforms and pistols to accommodate women and smaller persons, re-thinking roles and strengths on emergency response teams; community policing etc. where women are generally under-represented but may relate differently and have different responses.

Challenges include the lack of will in some countries of operation to include women police officers in uniformed participation.

Finally, Assistant Commissioner Dionne welcomed the expanded scope of the Action Plan to Indigenous women and girls, and the opportunity for the RCMP to apply its lessons learned in this context.

3. Questions and Discussion on Lead Partners' Progress

Prior to the Advisory group meeting, WPSN-C had invited input from network members and collated a large number of comments and questions. Some of these were put forward by a civil society representative present at the meeting:

Overall the response to the Progress Report had been very positive, in particular in regards to reporting and cooperation with civil society, including the invitation of civil society organizations to the Women Foreign Ministers' Meeting hosted by Minister Freeland in September 2018. Meanwhile, it was noted, it is especially after initial progress that things may become more challenging, and collaboration with civil society even more helpful.

Challenges still exist, in particular the need for qualitative data and more rigorous evaluation and reporting to ensure that policy and programs are strong and informed by expertise. Follow-up in the form of surveys, focus groups and dialogue with grassroots groups in conflict zones would be helpful to

assess impact and ensure there has been meaningful participation (i.e., are women really being heard at meetings and in negotiations?).

There is mention in the progress report of Canada working on innovative tools to be able to fund grassroots level organisations, and there is an interest to know what those tools are. A civil society spokesperson reiterated the importance of increasing funding and support to women-led and women's organizations that are building peace.

In regards to the system of measuring progress, how does "on track" compare to "mostly on track"?

The government needs to be clearer on terminology (e.g., what does "gender sensitive" and "gender integrated" mean and do they mean the same to everyone involved?), and move from gender responsive to gender transformative. This will include engaging men and boys and addressing the backlash, to move towards true equality in gender relations.

Other questions from civil society and Indigenous representatives were directed to CAF and the RCMP:

While CAF has achieved progress on Action Plan targets, will the department re-evaluate themes to capture areas that were left behind from the beginning and may now fall further behind? For example, are we engaging men fully in advancing WPS in the CAF? Second, CAF has a closed health care system and women serving in the armed forces are in their reproductive years, which implies an extra responsibility. At the same time, there is no stakeholder/voice for women in CAF or Veterans' Affairs. This need is likely to grow as 75% of healthcare claims are made after release from CAF. This issue is directly linked to recruiting more women – is the environment safe for them? How is this being tracked? It was suggested to have a separate meeting with CAF on this issue.

Other comments concerned RCMPs work in Indigenous communities and the need for distinctions based (First Nations, Metis and Inuit-specific) training for police, judges and health care workers, and the lack of a reach back mechanism for deployed RCMP officers to ensure they have access to expertise on gender and WPS.

The RCMP explained the options available for deployed officers, including monthly calls with missions and with Gender Advisors as needed, and that RCMP does have a special group trained to work with Metis, Inuit and First Nations.

DND/CAF WPS Champion BGen Bourgon agreed with the points raised on women's health and suggested CAF works on this together with Veterans Affairs. She also underlined that GBA+ is inclusive and about more than gender, and was pleased to inform the Group that the last Gender Advisor course included 50% men.

Global Affairs Canada Champion Galadza thanked the WPSN-C for their report published earlier this fall "[Women, Peace and Security in the Age of Feminist Foreign Policy: Reflections on Canada's New National Action Plan](#)" which continues to be helpful moving forward. At the same time, she asked for

clarification on what solid qualitative data should look like and if there are examples to build on. On evaluation, she asked for clarification of what areas needed deeper evaluation, and stressed that the progress reports under the Action plan is but one mechanism for the department's results reporting.

4. Supporting Partners' Presentations

4.1 Status of Women Canada/Department of Women and Gender Equality

Teresa Finik introduced the new Department of Women and Gender Equality, now a full Department (on its very first day) with an expanded mandate for gender equality to include sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and capacity building for Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+).

On gender-based violence (GBV), the Department will be addressing this via Canada's whole of government strategy to prevent and address GBV launched in 2017. On November 21-22, Minister Monsef hosted a successful GBA+ Forum that brought together over 300 participants from government and civil society in a dialogue on how to make GBA+ more effective. Finik stressed that the [Collaboration website](#) (GCcollab) is still open and welcomed the Group's input.

4.2 Public Safety

Suzanne Waldman highlighted Public Safety's national strategies on the prevention of radicalization to violence and countering human trafficking. Initiatives include:

- A human trafficking hotline;
- Efforts by the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence to counter radicalization in gender sensitive ways that recognize how women and men are drawn in and affected differently in these contexts, and how it is nonetheless important not to generalize but to seek to understand sub-groups and dynamics;
- Support to projects such as "Pushing back against hate in online communities" and "Canada Redirect" that are helping to counter the presence/consumption of violent and misogynistic content online;
- Applicants for Public Safety programming and projects on countering radicalization to violence will receive GBA+ guidance to inform their project and program design proactively; and
- Correctional Services of Canada has developed and is leading in delivering an international program on gender responsive treatment of women prisoners.

4.3 Department of Justice

Carolyn Elliott-Magwood outlined some of the ways in which Justice supports the WPS agenda, largely responsive to and depending on requests from Global Affairs Canada, but playing a key role in reporting on international obligations. Justice provides advice that can inform WPS programming and help design projects in partner countries on justice sector reform. The department also contributes to international capacity-building on prosecuting sexual and gender-based violence in the context of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

4.4 Department of Immigration and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

Alicia Simms highlighted some of the work that the IRCC is doing internationally to protect those at risk and in exile, including the recent work to develop the Migration and Refugee compacts. GBA+ is integrated across programmes, and IRCC has provided disaggregated data on gender in its progress reporting. Of note, everyone at IRCC, including management, must take GBA+ training.

IRCC hopes to include “vulnerabilities” of women in future reporting. An example was shared about the resettlement to Canada of women survivors of Daesh atrocities. These women were supported with special programs to reflect their particular needs.

4.5 CIRNAC/ISC

Jessica Gordon mentioned her long experience in working on Indigenous issues in Canada and stressed that the impact of reconciliation extends beyond Canada’s borders. CIRNAC is new to the WPS space but is learning from other government partners as the two departments put together their implementation plan and identify the next steps.

5. Questions and Discussion on Supporting Partners’ Progress

One question concerned the guidelines for Canada’s support of human rights defenders, *Voices at Risk*, that are currently being revised to better integrate gender considerations. It was highlighted that women human rights defenders are particularly vulnerable, not least those in exile, and must often hide their identities, even when they are applying for refugee status. Canada’s guidelines must be “implementable” and should be shared widely to help support and protect these women, including with immigration judges and officials, as, it was noted, 6,000 legacy claimants are still waiting to have their hearings.

Other questions/comments touched upon whether or not the progress reporting process was a useful exercise to help federal partners reflect on their work and how it could be done better; and the need to assess the effectiveness of training and capacity building initiatives (including GBA+) One observation was that GBA+, gender equality and feminist approaches were often conflated in the reporting, and that federal partners need to develop a common understanding of these concepts.

There was a wish for the Department of Women and Gender Equality to distribute the results from the GBA+ Forum, and that it become an annual event.

In the following discussion, it was pointed out that the conversation has to be broader than women and men as it should be about inclusivity - how we can enhance people’s lives in Canada and abroad? Another point was that while GBA+ is an important part of a feminist foreign policy, feminism goes beyond GBA+. There was agreement of the value of making GBA+ more targeted, and suggested that federal partners collect and share conclusions on applying GBA+ in implementing the WPS agenda.

6. Other items

Global Affairs WPS Champion Galadza briefed the Group on the special meeting held on October 19, 2018, on Indigenous women and girls. PSOPs hired a consultant to conduct research to increase the department's knowledge base ahead of the meeting, on both the international and domestic aspect. Some main conclusions from the meeting were:

- Land attachment and the environment are key to security, and natural resource extraction affects Indigenous groups whether in Colombia or Canada;
- This speaks to the scope of our obligations in implementing the WPS agenda and the importance of inclusion;
- Need to address the interconnectedness and continuum of violence;
- Need to support Indigenous women's organisations in Canada in their work internationally;
- The meeting opened a space for mutual understanding, including a space for Indigenous youth;
- We heard about the violence faced in Indigenous communities;
- It is important that we move on this and that we do it right – based on mutual understanding and using established channels (so not to burden Indigenous organizations);
- Overall, this aspect has been absent from the 1325 agenda. As we move towards 2020 and our co-chairing of the WPS Focal Points Network, this is an area where Canada can make a contribution in identifying gaps and share our learning.

During the discussion, it was pointed out that Public Safety, RCMP, and possibly other government department are required by their mandates to report on reconciliation, that the Action Plan is a welcome additional channel for supporting Indigenous voices, that the situation for Indigenous peoples facing natural resource extraction and violence are very similar in Canada compared to Latin America or Africa, that the WPS resolutions can evolve and Member States to a larger extent include domestic issues. CIRNAC underlined the link between the domestic and the international spheres and assured they would take the meeting conclusions into to consideration.

7. Conclusion and follow-up

- Although federal partners' presentations were held short, the high number of them left little room for in depth discussions;
- Co-chairs will meet to discuss format for future regular meetings and decide on follow-up issue-specific meetings;
- CIRNAC will reach out to stakeholders for additional input on their Implementation plan; and
- The next regular meeting of the Advisory Group will take place in spring 2019.

Attending

Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C):

Beth Woroniuk (co-chair), Karen Breeck, Rehana Hashmi, Margaret Jenkins and Kristine St-Pierre

Indigenous organizations and experts:

Native Women's Association of Canada: Carrington Christmas

Pauktuutit: Laura Myers

Government representatives:

Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces: BGen Lise Bourgon (WPS Champion), Sheila Ouellet and Rabiya Mirza

Royal Canadian Mounted Police: Assistant Commissioner Paula Dionne (WPS Champion) and Sean Auld

Global Affairs Canada: Larisa Galadza (WPS Champion), Annik Lussier Rez (co-chair), Cheryl Gopaul Saikali (NDS), Danielle Lee (PSOPs), Norma Gonzalez (PSOPs) Krystyna Wojnarowicz (CFLI), Elin Miller (PSOPs), Sandra Ganou (PSOPs), Natalia Yang (MGS), Isabelle Solon Helal (MGG), Janelle Mercier (ESA), Leslirae Rotor (ESA), Sophie Lam (KGAI), Diane Tisdall (WES), Mariette Maillet (OAA)

Department of Justice: Carolyn Elliott-Magwood and Lia Bellefontaine

Department of Women and Gender Equality: Teresa Finik

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC): Alicia Simms and Vihara Dharmaratne

Public Safety Canada: Suzanne Waldman and Mathilde Brière-Audet

CIRNAC: Jessica Gordon, Daniel Canough and Magali Bouffard

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