
CSSF Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk

Review of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security second generation (2020–2023) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Submitted: 13/09/2022

Assignment Code: WPS015

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Direct Audience:

British Embassy Kinshasa, Social Development Adviser, Political team and BEK's Humanitarian, Peace and Security team and the central WPS team. The secondary audience will be like-minded embassies working on WPS such as Canada, Sweden and the EU, as well as UN Women and MONUSCO, to inform advocacy messages, future programming and policy work in the development of the next NAP and programming to support its implementation.

Confidentiality Status: None



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Executive Summary

This review focuses on the implementation of the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DR Congo) second-generation National Action Plan (NAP) of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in 2019 for the period 2020–2023 (NAP-WPS-II) at the national level, as well as in two target provinces, North Kivu and South Kivu. The purpose was to assess the government's progress against the NAP-WPS-II, to provide an overview of the existing coordination mechanisms, to identify the main barriers to the implementation and to provide recommendations. The methodology includes a desk review and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.

Progress and main achievements of the NAP-WPS-II

- The inclusion for the first time of indicators in the logical framework to measure progress against the NAP-WPS-II results; and the development of a national operational plan and two provincial plans with an implementation budget.
- The establishment of national and provincial coordination mechanisms in most of the provinces (22 out of 26), and the development of two provincial actions plans, in North Kivu and Ituri.
- The inclusion of references to young women, women with disabilities, women refugees and displaced women, showing initial signs of applying an intersectional approach.

On Axis 1. Inclusion:

- The adoption of the country's first ever legislation to formally recognise and safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples in 2022, which is one of the specific groups mentioned in the NAP.
- The appointment of the country's first minister for people with disabilities in 2019, and the adoption of a bill on the protection and promotion of the rights of people living with disabilities in 2022, which is one of the specific groups mentioned in the NAP.
- The latest reform of the electoral law in 2022 encourages political parties to promote women candidates by establishing an exemption from the payment of the deposit if at least 50% of the candidates lists in a given constituency are women.

On Axis 2. Prevention:

- The adoption of a national strategy for the implementation of the Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme (P-DDCRS) for ex-combatants in March 2022, which provides a framework for objectives 5 and 6 of the NAP.

On Axis 3. Protection:

- The adoption of the Congolese National Police's (CNP) Action Plan on the fight against sexual violence in November 2019.

Challenges and barriers to implementation of the NAP-WPS-II

On coordination

Most of the coordination mechanisms in place are not really operational. For instance, the National Steering Committee has not had any meetings since the approval of the NAP. The WPS agenda touches upon many issues, such as women's political participation, sexual and gender-based violence, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration or security and justice reform. However, the ministries of gender at national and local levels that are in charge of coordination have not managed to mobilise key ministries and institutions involved in all these areas that should be part of NAP implementation.

On resource mobilisation

Despite having an operation plan, the NAP-WPS-II has not been aligned with the national budget, and therefore, it has not been financed. It was only recently that the 1325 Trust Fund received the first round of funding from an international donor.

On indicators and means of verification

Some of the indicators chosen are measuring whether a given activity has been conducted rather than if the result is being achieved. Also, the logical framework has not included any means of verification, and it is not very clear what those would be for the majority of the results, as there are no centralised databases collecting this type of information in a systematic way.

On accountability and progress reporting

Although the National Secretariat has produced two annual reports (2020 and 2021), these are not exactly progress reports on the implementation of NAP-WPS-II. These documents report on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in general, and they neither touch upon all the objectives, results and indicators included in the NAP nor cover the implementation period (examples provided are often from years before the NAP-WPS-II was in place).

Recommendations

On accountability and progress reporting

Ensure that progress information is collected for all the results and indicators included in the NAP-WPS-II, so that the DR Congo can be held accountable to its commitments. Ensure that data collected is disaggregated by sex and the other diversity factors mentioned in the NAP. Support independent data collection initiatives on women's participation in decision-making positions and mechanisms beyond politics, and ensure that this data feeds into evidence-based programming. Support an external evaluation of the NAP-WPS-II before engaging in developing a third-generation action plan. In the third-generation plan, ensure the inclusion of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators and means of verification; and support baseline data collection and a robust data plan.

On coordination

Ensure that all relevant ministries and departments are included in the NAP-WPS-II implementation process and that the WPS agenda is fully integrated into the policies and programmes of the different ministries and departments, including stabilisation, security, justice or education.

On financing

Ensure that the operational plan is aligned with the national budget before committing direct funds to the 1325 Trust Fund.

On intersectionality

Demand gender analysis that incorporates an intersectional approach before committing funds to a potential WPS programme, taking into account the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities, indigenous women and girls, and internally displaced and refugee women and girls.

On key stakeholders

Support women's rights organisations, women's movements and peacebuilding organisations doing the work on the ground on WPS. Support initiatives working with women candidates and potential candidates for the upcoming 2023 elections.

List of acronyms and abbreviations

DDR	Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
MONUSCO	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in DR Congo
MPs	Members of Parliament
NAP	National Action Plan
NAP-WPS-II	Democratic Republic of the Congo National Action Plan to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, Second Generation, adopted in 2019 for the period 2020-2023
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
P-DDCRS	Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme
PAP	Provincial Action Plan
PMEL	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
PNC	Congolese National Police
RSLF	Rien Sans Les Femmes
SCF	Stabilisation Coherence Fund
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) adopted its most recent National Action Plan (NAP) to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in 2019 for the period 2020–2023. It is called ‘second generation’ as it was preceded by a first NAP adopted in 2010 and there is not a specific period of implementation.

Objectives and scope of the review

This review focuses on the implementation of DR Congo’s second-generation NAP on UNSCR 1325 on WPS (from now on, referred to as NAP-WPS-II in the report) at the national level and in two target provinces, North Kivu and South Kivu.¹

The purpose of the review is (1) to assess the DR Congo government’s progress against the NAP-WPS-II; (2) to provide an overview of the existing coordination and monitoring mechanisms of the NAP-WPS-II, and of key stakeholders working on its implementation; (3) to identify the main barriers to the implementation of the NAP-WPS-II; and (4) to make recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the NAP-WPS-II and for the development of the future NAP on WPS.

Methodology

The review has tried to answer the following main questions:

1. To what extent have NAP-WPS-II coordination and monitoring mechanisms been set up and are operational at national, provincial and territorial level?
2. To what extent are the NAP-WPS-II objectives and results being achieved? To what extent is the progress against these results being monitored and measured by the existing coordination and monitoring structures?
3. What are the main barriers to implementing the NAP-WPS-II activities at national, provincial and territorial level?
4. What are the main advocacy priorities to strengthen the implementation of the NAP-WPS-II at national, provincial and territorial level? And for the development of the future NAP on WPS? Who are the main stakeholders that the UK Embassy in Kinshasa should engage with?

In order to respond to these questions, the research team has used qualitative data collection methods. Firstly, a desk review and analysis of relevant documents related to the NAP-WPS-II was conducted, which included the NAP-WPS-II and its annexes (Logical Framework and Operational Plan), North Kivu Provincial Action Plan (2022–2025), national reports on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and some key laws and policies.² Also, 18 semi-structured individual interviews were conducted remotely with key stakeholders, including representatives of key embassies in DR Congo, the UN, international non-governmental

¹ The review originally intended to also cover two target territories in those two provinces, but it has not been possible to gather enough information at the local level to keep that focus.

² For more details, please see Annex 1. List of Key Documents for Desk Review.

organisations (NGOs), DR Congo government institutions, and civil society organisations and networks at national, provincial and local levels.³

³ For more details, please see Annex 2. Key Informants' Interviews. Interviews were conducted in English, French and Kiswahili, depending on the language of the interviewee.

General assessment of the NAP-WPS-II

1

On its content and structure

DR Congo adopted its most recent NAP to implement UNSCR 1325 on WPS in 2019 for the period 2020–2023. The NAP-WPS-II contains an introduction section and is then divided into four main chapters: (1) the regulatory and institutional framework for the action plan at international, regional and national level; (2) a reflection of the eight years of implementation of the first action plan; (3) the specific objectives of the action plan, compiled under four thematic priority axes: inclusion, prevention, protection and recovery; and (4) the coordination mechanisms.

Key achievements

This is DR Congo's second NAP on WPS, and just its existence in itself is mentioned as an achievement by most of the actors interviewed. Some of the reasons given are that it was developed in a more participatory way than its predecessor, involving civil society and government actors from a number of provinces, or that it was validated by the Council of Ministries, re-confirming the commitment towards WPS of the new president and national government (after the 2018 elections).

Some women's rights organisations interviewed also mentioned that this second NAP was the result of civil society advocacy. They are particularly proud of the steps taken towards an intersectional approach (the NAP-WPS-II includes specific references to young women, women with disabilities, and women refugees and displaced women) and the possibility of developing Provincial Action Plans (PAP).⁴

Moreover, it seems to have a more solid and organised structure and content than its predecessor, following the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 instead of the 10 areas of intervention included in the first NAP. It also provides quite a comprehensive regulatory framework which highlights the link between the NAP and other international, regional and national commitments,⁵ such as the National Gender Policy, the National Strategy to Combat Gender-based Violence, and key laws and policies related to the police and the army.

Furthermore, the NAP-WPS-II includes a logical framework and an operational plan as annexes – for the first time incorporating indicators to measure objectively the progress made and hold the government accountable – including a budget to implement the plan.

⁴ Provincial governments were supposed to take ownership of the NAP and adapt it if necessary to the particularities of their provinces, producing their own PAP. So far, only two out of the 26 provinces have approved their PAP: North Kivu and Ituri (whose plan has been validated very recently). Some of the explanations given by the interviewees for North Kivu's leading role were the commitment and ownership of the process by the technical personnel at North Kivu Gender Division, the presence of an active civil society, or the accompaniment of some international partners

⁵ The full list of conventions, declarations, laws and policies can be found on the NAP-WPS-II, chapter I.

Key challenges

The regulatory and institutional framework has left out some key laws related to women's participation in decision making, such as the Electoral Law or the Gender Parity Law.⁶ Also, despite including two specific results on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), there are no references to stabilization commitments (International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, P-DDCRS) in the framework beyond the Addis Ababa Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. There are also no references to the Stabilisation Coherence Fund (SCF) or how its activities could support the implementation of the NAP. Likewise, the SCF broadened its Pillar 5 from Sexual and Gender-Based Violence to WPS in 2017 but without any mention to the NAP in its activities.

Moreover, the budget included in the operational plan is not aligned with the state's national budget and has not been funded. Even the official country implementation report of 2021 mentions the “non-alignment of the NAP (NAP-WPS-II) in the National Budget”⁷ as a key challenge for implementation.

Another weakness is the choice of activities for some of the expected results, as they do not seem to lead to the achievement of the result. For instance, at least ten of the plan's activities consist of advocacy actions towards the government ('competent authorities') for doing something, such as renovating schools, setting up courts and tribunals throughout the country or promoting women within the security services. Apart from the fact that it does not make sense to include this as an activity as it is a government plan, in some instances, this is the only activity included to achieve the result. For instance, if we take the example of the schools, what the government is committing to achieve is that “schools are renovated and constructed in camps for displaced persons”; but the only activity planned in order to achieve this is the “organization of advocacy for the renovation and/or construction of schools in camps for displaced persons” instead of the actual renovation and construction of schools. Moreover, with the same example, the operational plan has not included any budget for the actual renovation and construction of schools.

Finally, even though the inclusion of concrete indicators in the NAP-WPS-II was a big achievement in itself, sometimes the choice of indicators has been inappropriate. Some of the chosen indicators measure whether a given activity has been conducted rather than whether the result has been achieved. For instance, there are quite a few indicators referring to the number of people trained or the number of advocacy initiatives undertaken. Also, the logical framework has not included any means of verification for these indicators. Therefore, for the majority of the indicators, it is not clear what type of data or what sources could be used to measure progress, if the data is being collected, how often or by which institution, as there are no centralised databases collecting the required information to measure progress against the indicators.

2

On its coordination mechanisms

The NAP-WPS-II presents the national coordination mechanism set up with a view to guarantee successful implementation of the NAP-WPS-II, comprising three bodies: (a) the Steering Committee at national, provincial and local levels; (b) the National, Provincial and

⁶ Loi no 15/013 du 1er août 2015 portant modalités d'application des droits de la femme et de la parité en République Démocratique du Congo.

⁷ National Secretariat 1325, DR Congo Ministry of Gender, Family and Children (2021), 'DR Congo Country Implementation report on UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security', October, p.23.

Local Secretariat; and (c) the 1325 Trust Fund. It also includes a description of the composition and main tasks of these mechanisms.

The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is structured as a national, provincial and local committee. The National Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children and includes representatives from the presidency and various ministries, the UN, the donor community, INGOs and civil society, including young women's associations. Provincial and local committees have a similar composition at their level, but also include representatives of the security forces and the provincial parliament.

However, since the NAP-WPS-II was approved, there have been no meetings of the Steering Committee at the national level. Many of the stakeholders interviewed claim that it is due to a lack of political will, the Ministry of Gender's lack of authority/power to be able to mobilise the rest of the ministries and a lack of funding. Preparations are being made to hold the first meeting later this year, with the support of UN Women and with funding from the Norwegian Embassy.

The National, Provincial and Local Secretariat

The Secretariat is the body responsible for the day-to-day management of the implementation of the NAP at either national, provincial or local level. The National Secretariat is composed of four permanent members working full time and about 20 non-permanent members from sectoral ministries and civil society organisations that are convened for the meetings. It has been in place since 2015. Provincial secretariats have been set up in 22 of the 26 provinces of the DR Congo, including North Kivu and South Kivu, and they are also composed of permanent and non-permanent members. According to the National Secretariat, Kinshasa is the only city that has set up communal mechanisms for implementing the PAP-WPS-II in its 24 communes.

Monthly meetings are supposed to take place, but this schedule is not followed. Often National Secretariat meetings are convened on the basis of a specific need, such as for the twentieth anniversary of the UNSCR 1325, but they are not periodically planned. At the provincial level, and according to many of the people interviewed, North Kivu has one of the most active provincial secretariats of the NAP-WPS-II, and they organise regular meetings. However, the Provincial Secretariat in South Kivu has not been very active since the adoption of the NAP-WPS-II, and it has been only in the past two or three months that the permanent members are trying to revitalize the group.

The 1325 Trust Fund

The 1325 Trust Fund is the structure set up to support resource mobilisation to implement the NAP-WPS-II. The text of the NAP mentions that "it shall be funded both by the Government and by donors and technical and financial partners". UN Women manages the fund in collaboration with the National Secretariat, but it has only recently received the first round of funding (from the Norwegian Embassy). The reasons for this delay are unclear, but it seems that donors and technical partners have not been willing to commit funds, due in part to the lack of funds allocated to NAP implementation by the DR Congo government. The funding is being used to strengthen the coordination of the NAP-WPS-II, including the development of Ituri's PAP.

The establishment of a NAP-WPS-II coordination structure is in itself considered an achievement by many. However, some of the civil society organisations interviewed denounced the weak knowledge and ownership of the NAP-WPS-II by numerous members of these coordination bodies, stating that the political embedding of these mechanisms is a major challenge. Some of the key sectoral ministries and government departments that would normally accompany the implementation of the NAP-WPS-II ignore and/or neglect it,

while most of the issues touched upon in the NAP cannot be managed by the Ministry of Gender (justice reform, security sector reform, etc.). Also, it seems that very often it is easier to get the necessary information from individuals than from the relevant departments. One of the people interviewed mentioned that data on women's participation in the judiciary should be provided by the Superior Council of the Magistracy, but the Council does not carry out this task.

Furthermore, the constant change of policy makers also plays a role in the stagnation of some of these coordination mechanisms. People interviewed mentioned the Ministry of Gender's lack of power to mobilise other ministries, and that there might be additional issues, such as a lack of clarity regarding the role of the different institutions, a lack of incentives, a lack of systems and procedures in place, and a lack of capacities. Another point was that information does not flow very well between the local, the provincial and the national levels.

Apart from the official mechanisms established in the NAP-WPS-II to coordinate its implementation, there were existing formal and informal coordination mechanisms focused on particular aspects of the NAP-WPS-II at national, provincial and local levels. Some examples of these groups are:

- The **Gender Theme Group** at national and provincial level. They are chaired by the Minister of Gender and they work with an executive secretariat consisting of a representative of the ministry, a representative of civil society, a representative of the UN system (UN Women) and a representative of the donor community (recently it has been Sweden), but they also include other government bodies, international organisations, the UN and civil society organisations working on gender.
- The Gender Theme Group has **four sub-groups** (all in areas related to WPS): (1) on gender-based sexual violence, (2) on women's economic empowerment, (3) on women's political participation, and (4) on gender equality and women's legal status. Each sub-group has its own terms of reference which are contextualised at the level of each province to ensure that the specificities of each province are taken into account.
- The **Gender Donor Coordination Group** is an informal group within the donor community to coordinate on gender issues.
- The **UN Gender Team** is led by UN Women to coordinate on gender within the UN system.
- **'1+1'** is a joint group formed by the gender donor coordination group and the UN gender team which enables ambassadors and directors to meet together on gender issues.

However, and even though the membership in some of these groups is sometimes almost the same, it is not very clear how these coordination groups relate to the NAP-WPS-II coordination mechanisms or how the relevant information is shared between the groups, and there might be some duplication.

3

On accountability and progress reporting

The NAP-WPS-II commissions the National Secretariat with the tasks of “gathering, analysing, publishing and archiving the implementation data” for the NAP and “following up and evaluating the implementation” of the NAP, and it establishes that the steering committees should produce annual reports.

As mentioned above, the logical framework of the NAP-WPS-II includes indicators to measure the progress, but it does not include means of verification, and sometimes it is not very clear where this data should or could be collected. Also, apart from a state of play study

conducted in 2017 by Centre d'Études sur le Handicap, la Justice et la Résolution 1325,⁸ a civil society organisation based in Kinshasa, there was no baseline data collected, so it is not easy to measure implementation and track the progress.

Data on the indicators and generally on the progress towards the results seems to be collected by a wide range of actors, including different government institutions, civil society organisations, INGOs or the UN. This data is for their own analysis and programming, and it is not necessarily shared with the NAP-WPS-II coordination mechanisms. And even when this data is shared, it is not necessarily used by those mechanisms for reporting on the NAP-WPS-II.

So far, there have been two annual national reports on the implementation of NAP-WPS-II, one in October 2020 to mark the twentieth anniversary of UNSCR 1325⁹ and one the following year, in October 2021.¹⁰ These reports are shared with the UN, the African Union, the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and the Economic Community of the Central African States, and their findings are used in the evaluations that are carried out with the African Union in this regard.

However, these are not exactly progress reports on the implementation of NAP-WPS-II, but rather on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in general, as their official titles say. None of these reports follow the structure of the NAP-WPS-II, and they neither touch upon all the objectives, results and indicators included in the plan nor cover the implementation period. Although they include quite a number of tables with data on women's participation in different sectors and decision-making bodies mechanisms, they appear to be unreliable as often they are incomplete, or it is unclear what the source is or the period covered.

Apart from these reports on the implementation of NAP-WPS-II, the DR Congo reported on its WPS commitments in its national reporting for Beijing+25,¹¹ in preparation for the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2020. Specifically, it included the following among its achievements:

- The establishment of the National Secretariat for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in 2015 for better coordination;
- The establishment of Provincial Secretariats 1325 in 21 out of 26 provinces; and
- The strengthening of the capacities of various members of these committees at both the national and provincial levels.¹²

Beyond the government, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) reporting to the Secretary General includes a section on WPS,¹³ as well as sections that cover topics within the WPS agenda, such as

⁸ Please note that the NAP-WPS-II mentions this study, as well as some of the Kinshasa-based actors interviewed. However, the research team has not had access to it and has not been able to verify which type of data was collected.

⁹ RD Congo Secrétariat National Permanent 1325 (2020), 'Rapport Pays de 20 ans de la mise en œuvre de la résolution 1325 du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies sur femmes, paix et sécurité en RD Congo', octobre.

¹⁰ RD Congo Secrétariat National Permanent 1325 (2021), 'Rapport Pays de la mise en œuvre de la résolution 1325 du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies sur femmes, paix et sécurité en RD Congo', octobre.

¹¹ DR Congo Ministry of Gender, Family and Children (2019), 'DR Congo Government Report - National Review on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 25th Anniversary Beijing+25', May, p. 46 (https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/64/National-reviews/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo.pdf).

¹² WILPF, Monitoring and Analysis of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security Database by Country, 'Democratic Republic of the Congo' (<http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-drc/>).

¹³ United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo - MONUSCO (2021), 'Report of the Secretary-General', December, pp 10-11 (https://monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2021_987_e.pdf).

child protection and sexual violence in conflict, security sector and justice system reforms, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

NAP-WPS-II implementation progress, main achievements and existing challenges

The NAP-WPS-II general objective is to promote a secure environment that guarantees the fair inclusion of women, men and young people in consolidating peace in the DR Congo. It also identifies 11 specific objectives, which are compiled under four thematic priority axes: inclusion, prevention, protection and recovery.

1

Axis 1. Inclusion

The first thematic axis seeks to increase the number of women and young women in decision-making bodies, negotiations and peacekeeping missions, in addition to any other mechanism with a bearing on peace and security at all levels. It comprises two specific objectives and five results.

Objective 1

Helping to raise the inclusion rate of women and young women to 20% within local, provincial, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving conflict and in the security services.

Axis 1. Inclusion - Specific objective 1 ¹⁴		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
1.1. Women and young women associations are represented at a level of 20% in national, regional and international mechanisms for the prevention and management of conflict	Percentage of women and young women within institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and management of conflict	

There is no national database collecting the percentage of women and young women within institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and management of conflict, and there is no comprehensive mapping of what these institutions and mechanisms are and, apart from high-level peace dialogues, most of these are community-based and informal mechanisms, so it is difficult to measure progress.

¹⁴ This table (and the following tables under this section) present the specific objectives, the anticipated results and the indicators of the NAP-WPS-II par axis, together with a rating of their progress in implementation as of September 2022. When the progress is highlighted in red, it means that implementation has not started yet; when the progress is highlighted in amber, it means that implementation has started, but it is not on track; and when the progress is highlighted in green, it means that the implementation is progressing. The full logical framework with the rating can be found as Annex 3.

Civil society organisations and international organisations working on gender and peacebuilding are leading a number of initiatives supporting mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving conflict at different levels, with some particularly focused on increasing women's participation in those mechanisms.

An interesting data collection initiative has been led by the advocacy platform Rien sans les femmes (RSLF, Nothing without women),¹⁵ focused on increasing women's participation in decision making. They recently produced a report¹⁶ presenting the integration of women and young women in peace mechanisms and initiatives in some targeted provinces and territories. The report states that "the evaluation of peace mechanisms and initiatives indicated that women are well represented in these mechanisms and initiatives. But (...) they are poorly represented in decision-making bodies".¹⁷ However, while the report includes quite a number of tables with data on women's participation in different conflict resolution mechanisms, some of these tables are incomplete, or it is not clear what the source is or the period covered. Also, the analysis does not show an evolution of women's participation in these mechanisms over the years, so it is not possible to tell if participation is increasing or not.

Otherwise, the DR Congo national reporting for Beijing+25¹⁸ included as an achievement the participation of women in the various peace dialogues, even though their participation was quite low, particularly the African Union City Agreement for the organisation of peaceful, credible and transparent elections in the DR Congo (61 women out of 262 participants, or 23.2%) in 2018; and the global and inclusive political agreement of the Inter Diocesan Centre, commonly known as the CENCO Agreement or New Year's Eve Agreement in 2016 (3 women out of 29 participants, or 10.3%).¹⁹

Objective 2

Helping to raise to 20% the inclusion rate of women and young women in decision-making bodies of socio-political, economic, public and private institutions.

Axis 1. Inclusion - Specific objective 2		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
2.1. Women and young women are represented at a level of 20% in decision-making bodies	Percentage of women and young women within decision-making bodies	
2.2. National legal structures (particularly Electoral Law) for promoting the inclusion of women in political governance is gender-sensitive	Number of laws revised to be gender-sensitive	
2.3. The number of women in decision-making bodies and involved in diplomatic representations has increased	Percentage of women in decision-making posts in institutions with specified mandates	

¹⁵ Website: <https://riensanslesfemmes.org>.

¹⁶ Rien Sans Les Femmes (2022), 'Politique d'Intégration de la femme et la jeune femme dans les mécanismes et initiatives de paix en République Démocratique du Congo', janvier.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁸ DR Congo Ministry of Gender, Family and Children (2019), op. cit.

¹⁹ WILPF, op. cit.

Axis 1. Inclusion - Specific objective 2		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
2.4. Transformative leadership of women and young women with a strengthening of indigenous women and women living with disability	The percentage of trained women	

In 2019, a study was conducted on women's representation in politics in DR Congo,²⁰ which summarises well the 11 types of elections in the country and when these have been held: five by direct suffrage (president of the republic, members of the national assembly [MPs], members of the provincial assemblies, municipal councillors, etc.) and six by indirect suffrage (senators, governors, mayors, etc.). For instance, presidential and parliamentary elections have been held three times (2006, 2011 and 2018), and elections for provincial assemblies and for senators have been held twice (2006 and December 2018/March 2019). However, the municipal and mayoral elections planned since 2006 have not yet been held.²¹

The study also identifies three main trends related to women's participation and influence in politics in DR Congo. Firstly, the proportion of female candidates to the National Assembly has been decreasing steadily since 2006, going from 13.6% in 2006 to 11.7% in 2018. Secondly, notwithstanding the first trend, the proportion of those elected who are women has increased (at the national level from 8.4 to 9.8%, at the provincial level from 6.8 to 10.2%, and at the senatorial level from 4.6 to 19%). This means that the success rate of female candidates is increasing. Also, in 2018, in several political parties, women candidates had a significantly higher success rate than the men, and in several provinces, women candidates had a higher success rate than the men. The fact that the proportion of elected representatives who are women has increased more than the proportion of women candidates is clear proof that the Congolese population is increasingly voting for women. Thirdly, the proportion of women is significantly higher among the younger than the older politicians. 55% of women candidates to the 2018 parliamentary elections were under the age of 45, compared to only 47% of men. As for the elected MPs, a full 35% of women MPs are under the age of 45, compared to only 26% of the men. And while 9% of the elected men are over the age of 65, none of the elected women are. This is an indication that with the generational shift, an increasing number of women are getting involved in politics, thus giving hope for a positive evolution in the next few years.²²

In addition, the study analyses the obstacles to women's representation and influence in politics. These obstacles include the legal framework, women's limited access both to financial resources and education, the dirty nature of politics, and society's disapproval of women engaging in politics. Other obstacles, while just as real, are more indirect and not necessarily perceived as obstacles, including the burden of reproductive work and the low access to sexual and reproductive health services and the prevailing gender norms which portray leaders as men.²³

Some of the civil society organisations interviewed consider that, even though the number of women candidates elected in the 2018 was very low, there have been some advancements in terms of quality. For instance, they appreciate that important portfolios in the national ministries are headed by women, such as Foreign Affairs, Economy, Labour and Planning. Also, that the highest rank in the National Assembly and in three out of the 26 Provincial Assemblies, Maniema, Tanganyika and Équateur, are headed by women.

20 Malena Liedholm Ndounou and Viktoria Saxby (2019), 'Study on women's representation and influence in politics in DR Congo', March. Not published, commissioned by UN Women DRC and the Swedish Embassy in Kinshasa.

21 Ibid., p.17.

22 Ibid., p.50.

23 Ibid., p.38.

A recent survey²⁴ compares the support for women in politics in the country in 2016, when the survey was also conducted, and in 2022, concluding that support for women in politics appears to have declined. “Now only 48% say efforts should be made to ensure that half of all election candidates are women, compared to 64.6% in 2016. And 58% say they would support the election of a female president. This is two points less than in 2016.”²⁵

Article 14 of the 2005 constitution is used by civil society to advocate for gender parity in political institutions: “*Women are entitled to equitable representation in national, provincial and local institutions. The State guarantees the achievement of parity between men and women in said institutions. The law determines the conditions for the application of these rights.*” However, the existing legal framework does not make this principle a binding requirement.²⁶ The women’s movement advocated for a gender parity law for years, but when it was promulgated in 2015 it did not meet their expectations. RSLF has been advocating for a change in both the electoral law and the gender parity law since 2015, so that it would finally become binding for political parties to include women in their electoral lists. In 2017, RSLF published a thorough analysis²⁷ of the gender parity law, providing concrete recommendations to improve women’s representation in decision-making positions. The electoral law has been modified multiple times without responding to these demands. However, its latest modification,²⁸ in preparation for the upcoming elections in 2023, has touched upon this issue. The law still does not oblige political parties to include women on their lists on a parity basis, but it encourages them to promote women candidates, in return for an exemption from the payment of the deposit if at least 50% of the candidates lists in a given constituency are women.²⁹ Although this is considered to be a step in the right direction, the women’s movement is not satisfied because they consider that this will not be an incentive for the big political parties.

If we look at women’s representation in decision-making beyond politics, Observatoire de la Parité,³⁰ a civil society organisation based in Bukavu, has developed over the years a solid methodology to collect data on women’s participation in decision-making bodies at provincial and local level in different sectors (education, health, justice, security, civil society, private sector, etc.). In 2016, with the support of International Alert, they published a report on the state of play of gender parity in North and South Kivu.³¹ However, they have not updated this data during the implementation period of the NAP-WPS-II, which would allow an analysis of

24 Le Groupe d’étude sur le Congo - GEC, Ebuteli and Le Bureau d’études, de recherche et de consulting international - Berci (2022), ‘Congolais cherchent démocrates. Entre soif de redevabilité et insatisfaction sociale’, August (<https://www.congoresearchgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/rapport-sondage-gec-ebuteli-congolais-democrates-soif-redevabilite-insatisfaction-sociale.pdf>).

25 Ibid, p. 27.

26 Malena Liedholm Ndounou and Viktoria Saxby, op. cit., p.18.

27 Rien Sans Les Femmes (2017), ‘De la parité de droit à la parité de fait. Rapport d’analyses participatives et inclusives de la loi no 15/013 du 1er août 2015 portant modalités d’application des droits de la femme et de la parité en République Démocratique du Congo’, March (<https://www.international-alert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/DRC-Parite-Droit-Parite-Fait-FR-2017.pdf>).

28 Loi n° 22/029 du 29 juin 2022 modifiant et complétant la loi n° 06/006 du 9 mars 2006 portant organisation des élections présidentielle, législatives, provinciales, urbaines, municipales et locales telle que modifiée par la loi n° 11/003 du 25 juin 2011, la loi n° 15/001 du 12 février 2015 et la loi n° 17/013 du 24 décembre 2017.

29 Le Groupe d’étude sur le Congo - GEC, Ebuteli and Le Bureau d’études, de recherche et de consulting international - Berci (2022), ‘Perception des femmes en politique : les Congolais sont-ils prêts à élire une présidente de la République ?’, August (<https://www.congoresearchgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/note-thematique-participation-femme.pdf>).

30 Website of Observatoire de la Parité: <https://deboutcongolaises.org/>

31 Observatoire de la Parité et International Alert (2016), ‘État des lieux de la parité dans la province du Nord-Kivu et du Sud-Kivu en République Démocratique du Congo’, février (<https://www.international-alert.org/fr/publications/etat-des-lieux-de-la-parite-dans-la-province-du-nord-kivu-et-du-sud-kivu/#sthash.mTWLbaZt.dpbs>)

the evolution of women's representation. Observatoire de la Parité has also produced an in-depth analysis of women's participation in the 2018 elections.³²

The fourth expected result under this objective has a particular focus on the leadership of indigenous women and women living with disabilities and, during the implementation of the NAP-WPS-II, there have been some major achievements for the rights of indigenous people and of people living with disabilities:

- Parliament adopted a Bill on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Indigenous Pygmy Peoples in April 2021, and it has been enacted by the Senate in June 2022.³³ This bill is the country's first ever legislation to formally recognise and safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples, guaranteeing an "easier access to justice and basic social services" and "the right to lands and natural resources they own, occupy or use, in accordance with the law in force".³⁴ Also, the National Land Policy of the Democratic Republic of Congo was approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2022 and is expected to lead to substantial improvements in the recognition of land rights of women and indigenous peoples.³⁵
- The DR Congo government appointed for the first time a Minister for People with Disabilities in 2019, a woman with a disability and with an activist background. She led the development of a Bill on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of People Living with Disabilities, which was adopted by Parliament in 2020, and it has been enacted by the Senate in November 2021 with some changes.³⁶ Although there are no specific rights or measures dedicated to women and girls with disabilities, the law makes some generic references in Article 6 on how the state will "define, adopt and implement policies and programmes aimed at strengthening and promoting the rights of women with disabilities".

No analysis of the practical application and impact of these laws and policies has been found as they are relatively recent.

2

Axis 2. Prevention

This axis seeks to prevent all forms of violation of the rights of women and girls during and after armed conflict and comprises five specific objectives with the corresponding nine results.

Objective 3

Large-scale publicising of legal instruments promoting the inclusion of women in political and public governance and NAP-WPS-II.

32 Observatoire de la Parité (2019), 'Rapport final de l'Observatoire de la parité sur l'implication de la femme dans les élections', February (<https://deboutcongolaises.org/rapport-final-de-lobservatoire-de-la-parite-sur-limplication-de-la-femme-dans-les-elections/>)

33 The research team has not had access to the final text of the law, as it has not yet been published in the official journal.

34 Huma Rights Watch (2022), 'DR Congo: Neglected Massacre of Indigenous Group, February (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/02/09/dr-congo-neglected-massacre-indigenous-group>)

35 Global Land Tool Network (2022), 'DR Congo adopts national land policy' (<https://gltn.net/2022/05/04/dr-congo-adopts-national-land-policy/>)

36 Actualité CD (2021), 'RDC : à son tour, le Sénat a adopté en des termes différents la proposition de loi portant protection et promotion des droits des personnes vivant avec handicap', novembre (<https://actualite.cd/2021/11/30/rdc-son-tour-le-senat-adopte-en-des-termes-differents-la-proposition-de-loi-portant>).

Axis 2. Prevention - Specific objective 3		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
3.1. NAP 1325 and legal instruments promoting the political inclusion of women (CEDAW, MAPUTO, UNSCR 1325, etc.) have been publicised	Number of legal instruments, products publicised; number of persons (broken down by gender) affected by this publicity (men/women/young people)	
3.2. Members of the community (in particular political and religious leaders and traditional chiefs), women living with disability, indigenous women and girls are made aware of the political rights of women	Number of persons affected	
3.3. A radio/television media space broadcasts about UNSCR 1325, the NAP and the political rights of women	Existence of a broadcast media space to disseminate information; number of communication channels created; number and content of programmes; number of meetings held and topics addressed	

People interviewed were not aware of any large-scale publicity of the NAP-WPS-II or any other legal and policy instruments promoting the inclusion of women in political and public governance. On the contrary, one of the challenges mentioned throughout the interviews was the lack of knowledge of those instruments, particularly by members of key government institutions at national, provincial and local levels that, in theory, are in charge of contributing to the implementation of the NAP-WPS-II in their respective areas of influence.

Most of the awareness raising efforts about these legal and political instruments are done through advocacy actions by civil society organisations. In North and South Kivu, there have been multiple efforts, including during community meetings, using traditional and social media. However, these efforts have not been systematically documented.

Objective 4

Setting up community-based mechanisms for early warning and peaceful resolution of conflict.

Axis 2. Prevention - Specific objective 4		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
4.1. Community-based mechanisms for early warning and peaceful resolution of conflict have been set up	Number of community-based early warning and conflict resolution mechanisms created	
4.2. Women, including young women, are trained in techniques for early warning and peaceful resolution of conflict and trained in fragility analysis	Percentage of women and AYW [young women] trained in techniques for early warning and peaceful resolution of conflict, on the New Deal and in fragility analysis	

Axis 2. Prevention - Specific objective 4		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
4.3. Studies on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls have been carried out	Number of studies conducted	

The DR Congo national reporting for Beijing+25³⁷ included as an achievement that, since 2017, the country has been working to install community early warning mechanisms in the 26 provinces, which include men and women of all categories. And that, in addition, as part of police reform, the country was striving to expand the establishment of local security councils that include men and women in the prevention and fight against insecurity.

However, in the available reporting on the NAP-WPS-II, it is unclear how many mechanisms have been set up, how operational and gender-responsive they really are and what the percentage is of women within those mechanisms.

At the local level, civil society organisations³⁸ are leading initiatives to support women's presence in community-based early warning and conflict resolution mechanisms, and providing capacity building to the members of those mechanisms.

Objective 5

Reducing the rate of recruitment of child soldiers (young girls and boys) within armed factions

Objective 7

Reinforcing control and reduction of the circulation of small arms and light weapons.

Axis 2. Prevention - Specific objective 5		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
5.1. The percentage of girls in armed factions has been reduced	Percentage of girls demobilised	

Axis 2. Prevention - Specific objective 7		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
7.1. Circulation of small arms and light weapons has been reduced	Nature of the support provided for control mechanism for light weapons; number and type of small arms and light weapons recovered; number of persons affected	

Given the absence of a national DDR programme in the country for several years, the adoption of a national strategy for the implementation of the Demobilization, Disarmament,

³⁷ DR Congo Ministry of Gender, Family and Children (2019), op. cit.

³⁸ For instance, SOFEPADI and Sauti ya Mama Mukongomani in North Kivu, and Caucus de Femmes and SOFAD in South Kivu.

Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme (P-DDRCS) for ex-combatants in March 2022 has been a significant step.³⁹

However, the P-DDRCS is not operational yet, as it has taken a long time to design the national strategy and the national operational plan and to appoint the provincial coordinators of the programme (now in place). Also, the provincial operational plans have been neither developed nor financed, as most of the stabilisation programmes are currently being funded directly through INGOs.

The peacebuilding community as well as civil society activists have raised some concerns around the strategy. Firstly, because stabilisation has been added as one of the components of DDR, while it would make more sense if it were the other way around (DDR be one of the pillars of the stabilisation strategy). In practice, this has meant a change in power dynamics within the government, as previously the stabilisation strategy fell under the Ministry of Planning and now it falls directly under the President. Secondly, because the process has been very political, and there has not been transparency on how organisations and individuals were selected to be involved in the local consultations processes. Finally, some organisations have mentioned that the strategy is relatively gender blind, and that it is not clear how it relates with the NAP-WPS-II and the coordination structures in place.

Civil society members interviewed have not seen any changes on the ground in relation to the recruitment of child soldiers, who continue to be recruited by both the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and rebel groups. They also mentioned that, despite the existing FARDC national action plan against sexual violence in conflict, launched in September 2014, sexual exploitation of women and girls continues to be fairly common practice. Civil society denounce the fact that most efforts to end this practice seem to be coming from civil society initiatives and the UN (UNICEF and MONUSCO). As mentioned earlier, MONUSCO reporting to the Secretary General⁴⁰ includes a section on DDR.

Objective 6

Helping to raise the inclusion rate of women and young women in decision-making bodies within the security services.

Axis 2. Prevention - Specific objective 6		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
6.1. The number of women officers in the army, the police and other security services has increased	Percentage of women (within security services) holding decision-making ranks within the security services (army, police, justice sector, Agence Nationale de Renseignements (ANR), Direction Générale de Migration (DGM); number of advocacy initiatives undertaken; number of persons affected	

The 2020 and 2021 annual reports on the NAP-WPS-II include a table on women's participation at the national level within the FARDC and the PNC, with data from 2019 and 2020. The percentage of women's participation has remained the same for both years, and

³⁹ Carine Tope (2022), 'DRC: MONUSCO supports the new demobilization programme for ex-combatants, April (<https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/drc-monusco-supports-new-demobilization-program-ex-combatants>).

⁴⁰ United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo - MONUSCO (2021), op. cit.

it has been very low: 2% in the FARDC and 7% in the PNC. Neither of the reports comment on this data.

Observatoire de la Parité produced a report on women's participation in decision making, specifically in the security sector in some targeted areas in South Kivu. The results at the local level mirror the ones reported at the national level, with women's participation in the FARDC even lower than at national level (0.6%) and in the PNC a bit higher (10.6%).⁴¹

It is not clear what the government's efforts to increase women's participation in the security forces during the NAP-WPS-II have been, but some civil society activists, who have supported capacity building of security forces on gender issues in Eastern Congo in the past, mentioned that these programmes have stopped due to the state of siege in North Kivu and Ituri since May 2021.

3

Axis 3. Protection

This axis seeks to assure rights protections for women, young women, children and other vulnerable persons during and after conflict, and it comprises two specific objectives with the corresponding seven results.

Objective 8

Guaranteeing respect for the rights of women, adolescents and young women, and for other vulnerable and marginalised persons (people living with disability, indigenous people, refugees and displaced persons, etc.) during and after conflict.

Axis 3. Protection - Specific objective 8		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
8.1. The skillsets of judicial staff (magistrates, clerks, bailiffs, prison staff, etc.) have been widened	Number of judicial staff and auxiliaries of the justice system whose skillsets have been widened in the provinces and in Kinshasa	
8.2. Courts and tribunals have been set up throughout the country	Number of courts and tribunals set up across the country	
8.3. Penal institutions have been renovated or constructed to consider the gender-based needs of men and women	Number of penal institutions renovated and/or constructed to consider the dimension of gender and the rights of the child	
8.4. Community policing is operational right across the country	Number of community policing posts set up in DR Congo; number of cases of	

⁴¹ Observatoire de la Parité (2018), 'État des lieux de la parité et du genre au sein des forces et services de sécurité dans les zones prioritaires dans la province du Sud-Kivu en République Démocratique du Congo', p.10-12.

Axis 3. Protection - Specific objective 8		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
	violence dealt with through community policing; number of persons trained	
8.5. The rights of displaced and interned persons and of refugees are guaranteed	Number of measures taken to protect displaced/refugee women and girls; standard and quality of life of women and girls in camps for displaced persons and refugees in DR Congo	

One of the major advancements during this period has been the adoption of the PNC's Action Plan on the fight against sexual violence in November 2019. The goal is to eradicate sexual violence committed by PNC agents, as well as to contribute to the prevention of and response to sexual violence in DR Congo, including through the fight against impunity and the protection of victims and witnesses.

Again, the country reports on the NAP-WPS-II do not respond to the structure of the NAP and do not provide an overview of the achievements during the implementation period. For instance, one of the successes mentioned in the 2021 report is the creation of a protective police unit called the Proximity Police,⁴² while the pilot community policing programme was set up in 2013 and the NAP was already intending that the community policing was operational across the country. The report does not present any data on how many community policing posts have been set up in the country, or the number of cases of violence that have been dealt with through community policing.

One of the biggest challenges during this period has been the security situation in North Kivu and Ituri. In May 2021, President Félix Tshisekedi proclaimed a state of siege in those provinces and ordered the army and police to take over political and administrative powers and granted military justice with the power to prosecute civilians, ostensibly to tackle armed groups more effectively and improve protection of civilians. According to Amnesty International,⁴³ a year after a state of siege was proclaimed in North Kivu and Ituri, allowing the military and police to take over all powers from civilian institutions, it has failed in its stated purpose of rapidly improving the security situation. Military authorities have instead used their extraordinary powers to further undermine people's rights with impunity, including freedoms of expression and assembly and the right to justice, while armed groups' attacks on civilians have more than doubled in 2021 compared to the previous year, according to the UN.

In North and South Kivu, there are numerous civil society organisations working to support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence to access to justice. Some of the organisations interviewed for this review denounce the paralysis of access to justice for survivors of violence in North Kivu, due to the state of siege. The state of siege ushered in great confusion regarding the judiciary, as there were two seemingly contradictory ordinances. On the one hand, Article 3 of ordinance 21/015 provides that "the action of civilian courts will be replaced by that of military courts", implying that the civilian courts were completely suspended. On the other hand, Article 6 of ordinance 21/016 outlining implementation measures of the state of siege provides that "for the entire duration of the state of siege, the criminal jurisdiction of civil courts is vested in the military courts", which specified that the military would only take over criminal cases. After the state of siege came into effect, civilian courts in Ituri and North Kivu immediately stopped working for over two

⁴² RD Congo Secrétariat National Permanent 1325 (2021), op. cit., p. 18.

⁴³ Amnesty International (2022) Democratic Republic of the Congo: Justice and freedoms under siege in North-Kivu and Ituri, May (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr62/5495/2022/en/>).

months. Then, ordinary courts resumed their activities in non-criminal cases, as did specialized courts. However, access to justice remains seriously impacted by the state of siege, as military courts have fewer resources and personnel than civilian courts in both provinces (and civilian courts and prosecution services were already underfunded with limited capacity and faced security and logistical challenges).⁴⁴

Objective 9

Combating impunity for sexual violence and other violations of the rights of women, adolescents, young women and girls during and after armed conflict.

Axis 3. Protection - Specific objective 9		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
9.1. The perpetrators of sexual violence and other violations of the rights of women and girls during armed conflict are tried and convicted	Number of cases effectively received, judged and concluded; number of perpetrators of violence against women and young girls tried and having effectively served their sentence.	
9.2. Tribunals have been supported in trying violations of the fundamental rights of women and girls	Number of tribunals supported	

A coalition of over 50 Congolese and international nongovernmental groups are leading an advocacy campaign to urge the government to make the fight against impunity a top priority, and to provide a roadmap for transitional justice.⁴⁵ They are advocating for the establishment of an international judicial mechanism, a vetting mechanism to identify and provisionally remove from their posts security force officers and other executive branch officials who may have been implicated in serious human rights violations, and a comprehensive reparations programme for victims of serious international crimes and their families, including victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Some of the civil society organisations interviewed denounce the fact that so far there have been no clear public commitments from the government.

The Panzi Foundation, together with the support of the Global Survivors Fund, has been implementing a pilot project on Interim Reparations Measures for Survivors of Sexual Violence since 2019 in North Kivu, South Kivu and in Kasai Central, aiming to implement individual and collective interim reparation measures with more than 1,000 survivors.⁴⁶ Also, the Foundation of the First Lady Denise Nyakeru Tshisekedi has recently presented a preliminary draft of a law establishing the fundamental principles relating to the protection of victims of conflict-related sexual violence (which has been submitted to the National Assembly), and it is advocating for the establishment of a National Reparation Fund for victims.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 22-27.

⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch (2021), 'DR Congo: Prioritize Justice for Serious Crimes', April (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/29/dr-congo-prioritize-justice-serious-crimes>).

⁴⁶ Global Survivors Fund (2021), 'Roundtable on reparations - Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)', March (<https://www.globalsurvivorsfund.org/media/roundtable-in-kinshasa-democratic-republic-of-congo-drc>).

4

Axis 4. Recovery

This axis seeks the integration of a gender perspective in recovery and reconstruction, as well as the socio-economic empowerment of women and young women, and it comprises two specific objectives.

Objective 10

Integrating the gender dimension into the management and peaceful resolution of conflict.

Axis 4. Recovery - Specific objective 10		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
10.1. Recovery projects and programmes are sensitive to gender	Number of projects and programmes integrating gender	
10.2. Community-based actors in recovery projects widen their skillsets in relation to gender	Number of community-based actors in recovery projects trained	

The NAP-WPS-II 2021 report⁴⁷ recognises that “on the subject of gender mainstreaming, it should be noted that despite the advocacy efforts made, there has hardly been any results on integrating gender in conflict management and the peaceful resolution of conflicts”. The national strategy for the implementation of the P-DDRCS for ex-combatants, adopted in March 2022, includes as one of its pillars community recovery. Apart from mentioning that there will be some sensitisation work on transversal issues, including gender, it is not clear how gender will be mainstreamed in community recovery projects.

Peacebuilding organisations continue to integrate gender in their programming, but their results are not being collected in the government reporting.

Objective 11

Guaranteeing the socio-economic empowerment of women and young women victims of conflict.

Axis 4. Recovery - Specific objective 11		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
11.1. Women and young women are trained in entrepreneurship	Percentage of women and AYW [young women] trained	
11.2. Women and young women receive support through empowerment and entrepreneurship kits	Number of women supported with empowerment kits	
11.3. Girls and boys rejoin the education system	Number of girls and boys integrated	

47 RD Congo Secrétariat National Permanent 1325 (2021), op. cit., p. 21

Axis 4. Recovery - Specific objective 11		
Anticipated Results	Indicators	Progress
11.4. Schools are renovated and constructed in camps for displaced persons	Number schools renovated and/or constructed; number of advocacy initiatives undertaken	

The NAP-WPS-II 2021 report⁴⁸ mentions some school enrolment rates of girls and boys (without providing a year reference): “girls’ enrolment is 67% for primary school and 33% for secondary school, while boys is 70% and 44% respectively”, but it does not present its evolution over the years. It also says that a strategy for the reintegration of girl survivors of sexual violence into school is being implemented in North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Kinshasa and Kasai Central, but it does not provide any additional information on its impact.

The report states that the government is continuing its programmes to rehabilitate and build school infrastructure throughout the country,⁴⁹ but it does not specify how many schools have been built or rehabilitated, or how many of these schools are in internally displaced person camps, as included in the NAP-WPS-II.

In terms of women’s economic empowerment, initiatives are mainly being led by INGOs and local civil society organisations. For instance, Care International, International Rescue Committee and International Alert have interesting initiatives in this regard.

48 RD Congo Secrétariat National Permanent 1325 (2021), op. cit., p. 21.

49 RD Congo Secrétariat National Permanent 1325 (2021), op. cit., p. 22.

Conclusions and recommendations

1

Conclusions

The existence of a second-generation NAP on UNSCR 1325 shows the commitment of the DR Congo government to continue working on WPS. Since its adoption in 2019, progress has been made, mainly in the Congolese legal and policy framework with the adoption of the new Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme, the PNC Action Plan on the fight against sexual violence, the Bill on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of People Living with Disabilities and the country's first ever legislation to formally recognise and safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples.

However, there are major barriers to implementation. Most of the NAP-WPS-II coordination mechanisms in place are not really operational, and the ministries of gender at national and local levels have not mobilised the rest of key ministries and institutions that should be involved in implementation. Also, despite having an operation plan, the NAP-WPS-II has not been aligned with the national budget, and therefore, it has not been financed. Instead, most of the work being done on the ground is led by civil society organisations and peacebuilding, development and humanitarian NGOs, but information on the programmes' progress does not flow particularly well between the different actors and the government.

In addition, NAP-WPS-II progress implementation is not being properly monitored, and it is hard to have a full picture of the current situation of each result. This is because: many of the indicators are quite vague; there is no clarity on what the means of verification for these indicators should be, and; there was no baseline data collected. Also, because existing government reports are not reporting on the specific objectives and results of the NAP during the implementation period (examples provided are often from years before the NAP-WPS-II was in place).

In terms of participation, women's representation in politics remains very low: only 9.8% of the members of the National Parliament elected in 2018 were women (a marginal increase from previous elections), and in the five governments since 2006, the proportion of women ministers has been between 10 and 15%. Beyond politics, women's representation is not being systematically tracked, although there are interesting data collection initiatives at local level. The prevention and protection axes have increased their legal and policy arsenal, but implementation on the ground has not seen the same evolution, always hampered by the problem of real political will and budgeting. On protection, one of the biggest challenges has been the state of siege in North Kivu and Kinshasa, which has been in place since May 2021. According to Amnesty International,⁵⁰ it has failed in its stated purpose of rapidly improving the security situation, but military authorities have instead used their extraordinary powers to further undermine people's rights with impunity, and armed groups' attacks on civilians have more than doubled in 2021 compared to the previous year. The area of recovery seems to be left out of government efforts, and there has been no progress reported on it.

50 Amnesty International, op. cit.

2

Recommendations⁵¹

On accountability and progress reporting

Ensure that progress information is collected for all the results and indicators included in the NAP-WPS-II, so that the DR Congo can be held accountable to its commitments. Ensure that data collected is disaggregated by sex and the other diversity factors mentioned in the NAP (age, disability status, etc.).

Support independent data collection initiatives on women's participation in decision-making positions and mechanisms beyond politics that would show some clarity on the issue, and ensure that this data feeds into evidence-based programming.

Support an in-depth external evaluation of the NAP-WPS-II to look into NAP implementation in a more holistic and official way, before engaging in developing a third-generation action plan.

In the third-generation plan, ensure the inclusion of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators and concrete means of verification; and support baseline data collection and a robust data development and implementation plan (including centralising data compilation by the National Secretariat).

Examples of potential measures:

- Second staff with technical expertise on Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) in the NAP National Secretariat and targeted Provincial Secretariats, and support the establishment of a PMEL team within the secretariats to centralise data compilation.
- Provide training on PMEL to technical staff within key ministries and institutions involved on NAP implementation, including the members of the national and provincial steering committees.
- Agree on a joint approach towards the external evaluation of the NAP-WPS-II within the informal gender donor coordination group, and discuss a potential co-funding of the evaluation. Discuss with key UN agencies and peacebuilding organisations working on WPS the key aspects to look into during the evaluation.
- Fund and provide technical accompaniment to existing civil society initiatives on data collection, to complement the National and Provincial Secretariats efforts.
- Create linkages between selected UK and DR Congo universities in order to potentially establish a cooperation programme on PMEL of the current and future WPS NAPs.

Potential stakeholders: Peacebuilding INGOs working on WPS in DR Congo, UN Women, selected UK and DR Congo universities, selected civil society organisations and platforms, such as Rien Sans Les Femmes or Observatoire de la Parité, Gender Donor Coordination Group (or the 1+1 coordination group).

On coordination

Ensure that all relevant ministries are included in the NAP-WPS-II implementation process and that the NAP-WPS-II is fully integrated into the policies and programmes of the different ministries and departments, including stabilisation, security, justice and education.

⁵¹ Recommendations are directed to the UK Embassy in Kinshasa and can be extended to other donors supporting women, peace and security work in DR Congo.

Examples of potential measures:

- Provide training to relevant staff within key ministries and national institutions on WPS, including discussing their role in implementing the NAP-WPS-II to build ownership.
- Mediate with the UK embassy's contact people within these different ministries and institutions so that they can be more actively involved in implementing the NAP-WPS-II. Explore current barriers to implementation
- When collaborating with different ministries on different topics, for instance, the stabilisation strategy, bring up key aspects of WPS and advocate for them to be included in key strategies, programmes and action plans.

Potential stakeholders: UK embassy's key contacts at ministries and national institutions.

On financing

Ensure that the operational plan is aligned with the national budget before committing direct funds to the 1325 Trust Fund.

Example of potential measures:

- Use the UK embassy's convening power in the framework of any current negotiation with the DR Congo government, so that it commits funds to implement NAP-WPS-II in its annual national budget. Ensure that the DR Congo government understands that the UK will not commit direct funds to the 1325 Trust Fund until part of the NAP-WPS-II operational plan has been covered by the national budget.

Potential stakeholders: UK embassy's key contacts at DR Congo national government.

On key stakeholders

Support women's rights organisations, women's movements and peacebuilding organisations doing the work on the ground on WPS. Demand gender analysis that incorporates an intersectional approach before committing funds to a potential WPS programme, taking into account the specific needs of women with disabilities, indigenous women, and internally displaced and refugee women (as key target groups of the NAP-WPS-II).

Examples of potential measures:

- Allocate funds for peacebuilding INGOs and civil society organisations working on WPS as they are at the forefront of most of the work being done under the NAP-WPS-II. Demand that these programmes incorporate gender analysis and use an intersectional approach, favouring programmes directly targeting women with disabilities, indigenous women, and internally displaced and refugee women (as key target groups of the NAP-WPS-II).
- Support initiatives working with women candidates and potential candidates for the upcoming 2023 elections.

Potential stakeholders: Peacebuilding INGOs, organisations working with women candidates, and civil society organisations.

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