

**Oversight Group of Ireland's second
National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015 – 2018)**

First Meeting

14 October 2015, Iveagh House, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Minutes

Attendees:

Oversight Group

- Nora Owen, Independent Chair
- Colm Byrne, Oxfam Ireland
- Anastasia Crickley
- Émer Deane, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the EU
- Nicola Donnelly, Cosc (National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence), Department of Justice and Equality
- Jaqueline Healy, National Women's Council of Ireland
- Helen Johnston (representing Ruth Taillon), Centre for Cross-Border Studies
- Kevin Kelly, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Rob Kevlihan, Kimmage Development Studies Centre
- Jayne Lawlor, Defence Forces, joined by Eoghan McDermott, Defence Forces
- Niall Morris, Development Co-operation Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Réiseal Ni Chéilleachair, Trócaire
- Diane Nurse, Social Inclusion Unit, Health Services Executive
- Catherine O'Rourke, Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster
- Michael Rowan, independent expert,
- Louise Synnott, An Garda Síochána
- Claire Tiernan (representing Barry Lavin), Intl Security and Defence Policy Branch, Dept. of Defence
- Rachel Ward (representing Sarah McGrath), Anglo-Irish Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Also attending:

- Michael O'Toole, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations in New York (via videoconference)
- Róisín Burke, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations in New York (via videoconference)

Secretariat

- Helena Keleher, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Pat McLoughlin, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charles Flanagan, T.D. joined the meeting in order to wish the Oversight Group well as it undertakes its programme of work. The Minister acknowledged the work of Colm Byrne for his role in chairing the Consultative Group that oversaw the drafting of the Plan. He also wished Nora Owen success as Chair.

2. Presentation of National Action Plan by Conflict Resolution Unit

Helena Keleher provided an overview of the contents of the National Action Plan, noting the Ireland's contributions in UN peacekeeping; Ireland's commitment to overseas development aid; and Ireland's experience of the peace process in Northern Ireland. The National Action Plan is centred around four pillars: Prevention; Empowerment and Participation; Protection, relief and Recovery; and Promotion, and contains a Monitoring Framework. Two caveats were noted:

- 1) It is important to keep balance between protection elements and empowerment and participation elements of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.
- 2) Women are not a minority – they are half the population. Women's experiences and perspectives are wide-ranging.

Hard copies of the National Action Plan are available from the Secretariat.

3. High-level Review of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325

Michael O'Toole and Róisín Burke from the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations in New York gave overview of highlights of the events taking place in New York for the fifteenth anniversary of UNSCR 1325.

- On Tuesday 13 October, the Security Council adopted a new resolution, [2242](#). There were over 130 speakers at the relevant Open Debate, reflecting interest in area.
- Ireland is due to co-host the launch of the [Global Study on Women, Peace and Security](#) later on Wednesday 14 October. Issues noted include the percentage of women in peacekeeping, number of countries which have adopted National Action Plans, and context of violent extremism. Key challenges exist regarding financial support; accountability; and political will to implement the WPS agenda. The event will include a pledging element and over 200 people are expected.
- The UN Secretary-General has already his [annual report on women, peace and security](#) that includes recommendations from the Global Study.
- Ireland has committed €200,000 to the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action and to support [Justice Rapid Response](#)-UN Women SGBV Justice Experts Roster, which rapidly deploys investigative expertise to improve accountability for and fight impunity for SGBV.

**Oversight Group of Ireland's second
National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015 – 2018)**

- On Monday 12 October, Ireland co-hosted a civil society event with speakers from Iraq and DRC, who subsequently addressed the Security Council Open Debate. (Ireland, via UN Women, is funding their travel to NY).
- On Thursday 15 October, Ireland will host an event with [Karama](#), an organisation promoting women's participation, security and rights in the Arab world
- On Friday 16 October, Ireland will co-host with the UN Development programme a side event on strengthening women's involvement in peace-building.
- On Friday 23 October, Ireland will co-host a side event with by [NGO Working Group on WPS](#), and the Netherlands on 'Moving beyond UNSCR 1325'. This event will involve voices from the field and a panel, including consultant Karen McMinn who recently reviewed Ireland's implementation of 1325.

It was noted that the High-level Review takes place in the context of a number of UN processes, in particular the [report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations](#) and the [report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture](#), but also the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the preparations for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Discussion took place around Resolution 1325 and the subsequent seven resolutions. Concern was expressed to the need for a new resolution – what is required is implementation. It was noted that latest resolution (UNSC Resolution 2242) looks at engagement with civil society organisations, sexual exploitation abuse by UN peacekeepers, and the emerging context of violent extremism. Also noted was the intention to establish Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security.

4. Terms of Reference for Oversight Group

The draft [Terms of Reference](#) were unanimously adopted without amendment.

5. Draft Workplan and topics for forthcoming meetings

Proposal for meeting on Wednesday 9 December

It was proposed and subsequently agreed that under the theme of 'Post-Conflict Reconciliation on the island of Ireland' the Oversight Group will visit Belfast on the 09 December in order to examine implementation of the relevant commitments under the National Action Plan. Ruairi de Burca, the Irish Joint Secretary in Belfast will host a networking lunch. A draft programme and outline for the visit was presented.

Discussion took place regarding the importance of having a clear purpose of the visit and to ensure that a good cross-section of grassroots/community organisations are represented. It was suggested that invitations could be extended to other local groups for the networking lunch. Two group members indicated lack of availability on that day but it was agreed they would be represented by colleagues.

Actions: *Oversight Group members to submit any specific suggestions for the visit to Secretariat*

**Oversight Group of Ireland's second
National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015 – 2018)**

Secretariat and Anglo-Irish Division to confirm details of substance and logistics for the visit

Secretariat and Defence Forces and An Garda Síochána to arrange any relevant uniformed permissions, if required.

List of Possible Topics/Themes for Future Meetings

Group discussed a number of topics/themes that could be examined. The Group agreed to examine the theme of 'Peace Support Operations' in Q2 2016. The meeting will be hosted by the Defence Forces in The Curragh.

The Group also agreed to examine the themes of 'Gender-Based Violence in Conflict-related Emergencies' and 'Women from conflict affected areas and countries living in Ireland'. Some members thought that given the current migrant crisis, it might be pertinent to examine the theme of 'Women from conflict affected areas and countries living in Ireland' early.

It was noted that in May 2016, Ireland will partake in a major summit, the World Humanitarian Summit where they will highlight the issue of conflict-related humanitarian emergencies including SGBV. Therefore, examining the theme of 'Gender-Based Violence in conflict-related Emergencies' could feed into Ireland's response at this conference. It was agreed to examine this theme in Q1 2016. The Development Co-operation Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will take the lead on this.

It was agreed, following discussion that the group would look at the theme of 'Women from conflict affected areas and countries living in Ireland' in Q3 2016. It was agreed that the Chair, on behalf of the Group, would write to the Chair of the cross-departmental Taskforce which was established to deal with the operational and logistical aspects of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme, in order to note the group's interest and intention to examine the commitments made under the National Action Plan.

It was noted that the Group should be forward thinking and plan its work with forthcoming milestones in mind. It was also suggested that monitoring and evaluation and related process issues be examined under each theme. Other themes considered for future meetings include: 'Diplomatic Efforts to Promote Women, Peace and Security'; 'Women's Participation in Peacebuilding'; 'Women in Decision-Making in Ireland'; 'Re-Thinking "Gender": The Role of Men and Boys'; and 'Media, Social Media, Conflict and Gender'.

The Group also noted that it will consider the Mid-Term Progress Report in Q4 2016.

6. Any Other Business

- Catherine O'Rourke gave an overview and circulated the publication '[Gender Principles for Dealing with the Legacy of the Past](#)', launched on Tuesday 15 September. The Principles set out a framework for ensuring that mechanisms established pursuant to the Stormont House Agreement do not ignore the experiences of women who have been affected by the conflict. The project received support from the Reconciliation Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs and

**Oversight Group of Ireland's second
National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015 – 2018)**

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- It was noted Anastasia Crickley will attend an OSCE Security Days event in Vienna '[In Pursuit of Peace and Security: How Gender Makes a Difference](#)' on Friday 13 November.
- Nicola Donnelly noted that the government approved the signature of [the Council of Europe Convention on prevention and combatting violence against women and domestic violence \(Istanbul Convention\)](#) on Tuesday 13 October. The Action Plan towards ratification was also approved by government on the same day. This will feed into the next National Strategy on Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

ENDS

Secretariat - Conflict Resolution Unit		wpsconsultation@dfa.ie
Helena Keleher	Deputy Director	01 408 2093 / 087 237 1857
Patrick McLoughlin	Desk Officer	01 408 2034
Colin Davy	Clerical Officer	01 408 2812