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MEANINGFUL PARTNERS

Opportunities for Collaboration between Women, Peace and Security, and Small Arms Control at the National Level

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Overview

National actors working in small arms control and on women, peace, and security (WPS)¹ share commitments to reduce suffering, maintain peace and security, and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Briefing Paper finds that while cross-references between WPS and small arms control are increasingly commonplace in the international policy framework, this often does not translate into harmonized references in the national action plans (NAPs) on WPS and small arms control.² In addition, many NAPs refer either to women’s meaningful participation in small arms control or to the need to consider the gendered impacts of armed violence. This paper, however, finds that gender-responsive small arms control involves addressing both aspects. It therefore identifies potential avenues for future work that may improve the harmonization of efforts related to WPS and small arms control, as well as the effectiveness of both policy areas in achieving their objectives.

Key findings

- Better aligning WPS and small arms control NAPs with wider policy objectives—such as those related to sustainable development—would reduce the risk of donor-driven or incoherent implementation activities.
- Ensuring that NAPs are developed in an inclusive way—reflecting the needs of women, men, girls, and boys—would help to ensure national ownership and buy-in.
- Achieving the meaningful participation of women and men, including youth, involves addressing working environments in policymaking processes and national institutions to ensure that they support diversity and inclusion.
- Ensuring that expertise on small arms feeds into policy processes related to all four pillars of the WPS Agenda and vice versa could improve policy effectiveness by addressing both technical and social components in implementation activities.
- Identifying existing good practices, especially at the local level, related to gender-responsive small arms control that would warrant further support, funding, and potentially scaling up or replication could support WPS-related objectives.

Introduction

In laying the groundwork for this paper, it is important to outline the rationale for closer cooperation between national actors working on WPS and small arms control. Firstly, there is an overlap in the goals of the two agendas. The fundamental objective of the WPS Agenda is to prevent armed conflict, which is seen as a precondition to advances in gender equality (Gallelli and Dybeck, 2021, p. 1). One of the key aims of small arms control is to prevent the illicit transfer and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons, which can be risk factors for initiating, sustaining, and exacerbating especially civil conflict (Killicoat, 2007, p. 270; UNSC, 2021, p. 1). Small arms control mechanisms also seek to reduce the misuse of small arms, which can be used actively or coercively to commit acts of gender-based violence (GBV) and other violations of women’s human rights that WPS actors seek to prevent (UNSC, 2021, para. 29).

Secondly, national governments have an obligation to implement small arms control mechanisms in ways that conform to legally binding commitments to gender equality under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),³ as well as the provisions on GBV in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) (UNGA, 2013, art. 7(4)). In addition, the 2030 Agenda foresees the need for collaboration between WPS and small arms control actors working towards the achievement of the SDGs (McDonald, 2018, p. 9). SDG Targets 16.1 and 16.4 call for a reduction in armed violence and the illicit flow of weapons, while SDG 5, which is a cross-cutting goal, requires that all goals be implemented in a way that ends discrimination and violence against women while ensuring their full and effective participation at all levels of decision-making (Chappuis, 2021, p. 8; UN DESA, 2022a).

Thirdly, both policy communities include individuals and organizations with expertise that could support the other in achieving their objectives. Drawing on the gender analytical skills and diverse perspectives of WPS actors can enable the development of small arms policies that are based on a more nuanced understanding of the nature of armed violence in the national—or even local—context. Moreover, WPS actors often have expertise that goes beyond gender, for example in areas such as violence reduction, shifting social norms, effective policymaking, and inclusive facilitation.⁴ Similarly, the WPS community could benefit from the technical

skills of small arms experts in monitoring arms proliferation and implementing measures to prevent their misuse.

Finally, embedding small arms control and WPS implementation within coherent, cross-government sustainable development plans may also be a way to mitigate the risk of donors funding incoherent, piecemeal initiatives that are more in line with the donors' political priorities than the recipient country's needs.⁵

Structure and methodology

To address the rationale outlined in the previous section, this paper will begin by providing an overview of some of the key concepts used in policymaking in the fields of small arms control and WPS. It will then outline how these two fields fit into the wider international policy framework, before examining cross-references between the two fields in national and regional action plans on small arms control and on WPS.

The paper will then highlight some of the remaining challenges facing further collaboration between actors in small arms control and WPS, as well as promising practices that may be able to overcome these challenges. Finally, the paper will conclude with a summary of the general trends observed and their implications for donors, and for actors working in small arms control and specifically on the WPS Agenda, as well as on WPS more broadly (see endnote 1).

Research for this paper was conducted firstly through an extensive literature review of academic work, as well as international, regional, and national policy documents—primarily in English, but also in French and Spanish. This was complemented by one internal focus group discussion with the staff of the Small Arms Survey working with national counterparts on arms control, and with 20 key informant interviews with 24 experts (20 women and 4 men) working on gender and arms control in Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa region, the Asia-Pacific region, and Australia.

Key concepts used in women, peace, and security and small arms control policy

Gender

'Gender refers to socially constructed ideas about the attributes and opportunities associated with a person based on their assigned sex (male, female, or

other) and in the context of social, political, economic, and cultural relationships. These constructed attributes, opportunities, and relationships are learned through socialization processes, vary across contexts, and can change over time. In short: gender is socially and culturally constructed, relational, context specific, and changeable' (Schöb and LeBrun, 2019, p. 20).⁶

Gender roles are thus sometimes described as 'socially ascribed' because they primarily reflect the norms and expectations of a person's society rather than biologically determined behaviours. Small arms often play a role in this socialization process, as well as the relationships among different groups of men, women, and people of diverse gender identities (Myrntinen, 2019, p. 65).

Note that people who identify as trans, non-binary, or genderqueer, for example, do not identify with the gender related to the sex they were assigned at birth (UNF&E, 2017, p. 1).

Gender responsive, gender sensitive, and gender transformative

'Gender responsiveness means ensuring that relevant programmes and projects take into account specific gender dynamics—including dominant social and cultural expectations and roles of people based on their gender identities—in a given society, time, and place' (Schöb and LeBrun, 2019, p. 24).

The concept of gender responsiveness contrasts with 'gender-neutral' or 'gender-blind' approaches, which do not acknowledge how lived experiences differ based on one's gender, thus generating, for example, different needs and interests in terms of small arms control. While these approaches may attempt to treat everyone the same, they risk reinforcing existing forms of discrimination, because they tend to reflect the interests of those who can best access or influence decision-making bodies. Gender-responsive approaches range from 'gender-sensitive' programming, which takes into account gender dynamics, to 'gender-transformative' programming, which seeks to address underlying inequalities and redistribute power with the aim of achieving gender equality (Schöb and LeBrun, 2019, p. 24).

Gender-based violence

GBV is 'any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences'

(UN Women Training Centre, n.d.). GBV can be physical (including acts committed using a firearm), sexual, psychological, and emotional (including when perpetrators perpetrate acts by threatening their victims with firearms) (Schöb and LeBrun, 2019, p. 23). GBV is seen as a manifestation of gender inequality because it is the unequal gendered power relations between and among different groups of women, men, girls, boys, and gender minorities that allow perpetrators to act with impunity and prevent survivors from reporting GBV and accessing support (IASC, 2015, p. 5; UNGA, 1993, preamble).

Gender minority

In this paper, the term gender minority is used to describe any person who has a gender identity that differs from that traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Although not an exhaustive term, it would include people who identify as trans, non-binary, a gender other than a woman or a man, or without a gender (Suen et al., 2020, p. 2302).

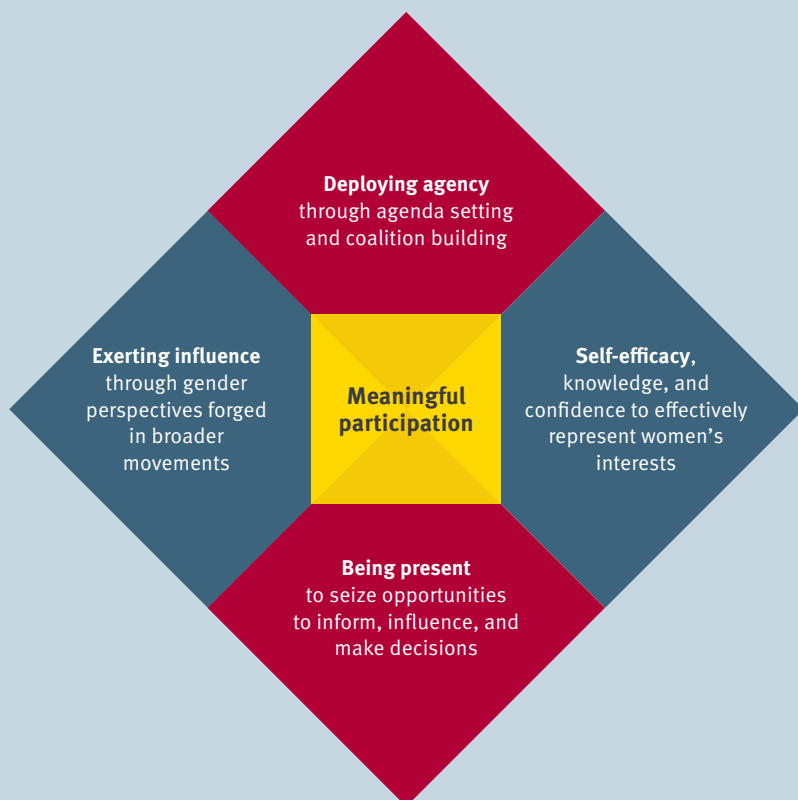
Meaningful participation

The term 'meaningful participation' highlights how women need to not only be present at decision-making peace and security forums, but also have their concerns, contributions, and expertise featured in the outcomes of these processes (Salmela and Manion, 2018, p. 11). This could also be understood as a 'quantity and quality' argument: women need to be represented in sufficient numbers, but their inclusion also has to be genuine. It is intended to address situations where women are included in decision-making processes as observers or in tokenistic ways, or where those who are invited lack the requisite expertise or preparation time to have any influence (Salmela and Manion, 2018, p. 12). Box 1 outlines four foundational components of meaningful participation identified at an expert group meeting convened by UN Women.

Small arms and light weapons

In practical terms, a small arm can be thought of as a weapon that an individual can carry and use. Examples include revolvers, rifles, and light machine guns. A light weapon is a device that a crew of several people can carry and use, potentially transported by a light vehicle or pack animal. Examples include heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, and portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns

Box 1 Elements of women’s meaningful participation in small arms control



Being present

Women are represented in settings where small arms control is discussed in more than token numbers—including within local, national, regional, and international arms control and disarmament mechanisms. They also hold positions of power in committees and institutions, and are therefore able to seize opportunities to inform and influence decision-making directly.

Having self-efficacy

Women with diverse identities, values, and experiences have the knowledge, skills, confidence, and funding to represent their individual and collective interests related to small arms control.

Deploying agency

Women as well as movements and organizations supporting women’s rights mobilize to bring about change through small arms control by engaging in evidence gathering, agenda setting, and coalition building.

Exerting influence

Laws, policies, and practices related to small arms control reflect the diverse interests, values, needs, and experiences of women (and of wider society), who are routinely engaged in planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and oversight activities.

Source: Author elaboration based on Salmela and Manion (2018, p. 12) and Buchanan (2021, p. 16)

(UNGA, 1997, paras. 25, 27). The *Report of the Panel of Experts on Small Arms* provides more detailed, generally accepted definitions (UNGA, 1997, para. 26).

Separate agendas, common objectives

The WPS Agenda and small arms control mechanisms have much in common, such as a shared commitment to the SDGs and to a human-centred view of security, with a view to reducing suffering and protecting human rights (Pytlak, 2019, pp. 38–41) while also seeking to help maintain international peace and security by preventing conflict.⁷

Situating the WPS and small arms control agendas within the wider international legal policy framework can thus be useful in understanding how both seek to make complementary contributions to wider state and human commitments (see Figure 1). It can also be useful when identifying potential synergies, and prioritizing collaboration in areas that facilitate state compliance with international obligations, such as the UN Charter and

international human rights law, and major policy priorities such as the SDGs.

The following sections outline how these synergies between WPS resolutions and small arms control mechanisms have begun to unfold through cross-references in the official documents emanating from these two international policy fields.

Gender equality in international small arms control mechanisms

UN Programme of Action and International Tracing Instrument

In 2001, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) noted the need to consider how the illicit arms trade can have a ‘negative impact on women and the elderly’ (UNGA, 2001b, preamble, art. 6). This was termed a ‘gender perspective’ from 2008 at the PoA Third Biennial Meeting of States onward (UNGA, 2008, para. 28(n)). At the PoA Second Review Confer-

ence in 2012, calls were made to ‘facilitate the participation and representation of women in small arms policymaking’ (UNGA, 2012, annex II, para. A.2(i)). This was extended to meaningful participation in planning and implementation processes related to physical security and stockpile management measures at the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS5) in 2014 (UNGA, 2014, para. 17(d)). Links to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 (2000) (UNSC, 2000) and its follow-up resolutions, as well as the 2011 UN General Assembly Resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control (UNGA, 2011a), were also mentioned explicitly at BMS5 (UNGA, 2014, para. 31).

In 2021, BMS7 marked a watershed in the inclusion of gendered language in the PoA framework, with specific references to gender in eight consecutive paragraphs (UNGA, 2021, paras. 72–79). States resolved to ‘[utilize] analysis mechanisms to inform evidence-based gender-sensitive policymaking and programming with a view to strengthening the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action at all levels’ (UNGA, 2021, para. 74). Furthermore,

Figure 1 Small arms control mechanisms and the WPS Agenda in context⁸

Overarching international frameworks outlining minimum standards of human and state security

UN Charter	Universal Declaration on Human Rights	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 1: States to maintain international peace and security • Art. 2: States to settle international disputes by peaceful means 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights • Art. 3: Right to life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 2: States ensure individual rights without distinction of any kind (including sex) • Art. 9: Right to liberty and security of person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 1: Right to self-determination, including to freely determine political status and pursue economic, social, and cultural development

International frameworks providing details on minimum standards of human security for specific groups

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 2: States to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization, or enterprise • Art. 5: Elimination of prejudices or stereotyped roles for men and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 6: States to ensure for everyone within their jurisdiction effective protection and remedies against any acts of racial discrimination that violate their human rights and fundamental freedoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 16: States to protect persons with disabilities, both within and outside the home, from all forms of exploitation, violence, and abuse, including their gender-based aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 3: States to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of parents, or other legally responsible individuals

Agreements on how to meet minimum standards of human and state security for all, including specific groups

SDG 5: Gender equality	SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions	Geneva Conventions Additional Protocol 1	Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls • Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination • Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence • Target 5.5: Ensure full and effective participation in political, economic, and public life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development • Target 16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere • Target 16.3: Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all • Target 16.4: Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 35: Prohibition on weapons that cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering • Art. 51: Civilians to be protected during military operations, including from indiscriminate attacks • Art. 76.1: Women to be protected in particular against rape, forced prostitution, and any other form of indecent assault 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 7: Specified forms of sexual and gender-based violence considered as crimes against humanity • Art. 25: Individual criminal responsibility for committing or contributing to the commission of the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, or the crime of aggression

Regulations on how specific sectors contribute to meeting minimum standards of human and state security

Small arms agenda	WPS Agenda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Firearms Protocol • UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Tracing Instrument • Arms Trade Treaty • UN Security Council Resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Framework on Ammunition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019)

Sources: ICRC (1977); UN (1945; 1948; 1998); UN DESA (2022a; 2022b); UNGA (1965; 1966a; 1966b; 1979; 1989; 1993; 2001a; 2001b; 2005; 2006; 2013; 2015; 2023); UNSC (2000; 2008; 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2015a; 2015b; 2019a; 2019b)

states resolved ‘[t]o exchange national experiences, lessons learned and good practices’ on how best to mainstream gender perspectives into PoA policies and programmes, and explicitly recognized that ‘eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a key part of combating gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict’ (UNGA, 2021, paras. 75, 77). They also agreed on a voluntary basis to include gender-relevant information in national reports on PoA and International Tracing Instrument (ITI) implementation, and to strengthen response mechanisms to ‘the disproportionate impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on women, children and youth’ (UNGA, 2005; 2021, paras. 78–79).

These provisions were retained in the BMS8 final report, which added the term ‘meaningful’ to references to participation and referred to the ‘differential impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on women, men, girls and boys’ (UNGA, 2022b, paras. 9, 79), rather than the ‘disproportionate impact’ referred to in that of BMS7.

Arms Trade Treaty

In contrast to the PoA, from the outset the ATT of 2013 made an explicit link between the transfer, diversion, and misuse of small arms, and GBV (UNGA, 2013, art. 7(4)). After a thematic discussion on gender and GBV at the Fifth Conference of States Parties in 2019, the participants decided to strive for greater gender balance in delegations, panels, and formal sessions (ATT Secretariat, 2019, para. 22a). The conference also encouraged states to support research to better understand the gendered impact of armed violence in the ATT context and to include delegates with gender expertise to feed into working group discussions (ATT Secretariat, 2019, para. 22b). Furthermore, it stated that the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation should encourage states parties to share practices on the interpretation and implementation of GBV risk assessment criteria in line with Article 7(4) of the ATT (ATT Secretariat, 2019, para. 22c).⁹

Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management

The Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management was adopted in 2023 on the recommendation of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition (UNGA, 2023,

para. 21). Gender has been included from the outset under Objective 14, which highlights the need to incorporate a gender perspective in through-life conventional ammunition management, and to ensure the full, equal, meaningful, and effective participation and leadership of both women and men in this field. It also calls for a better understanding of how unplanned explosions at conventional ammunition sites and ammunition diversion affect women, men, girls, and boys differently (p. 20).¹⁰ Objective 4 on prioritizing the sustainability of national authorities’ capabilities in ammunition management specifically mentions the need for the coherent integration of the framework into the WPS Agenda (p. 12). Gender mainstreaming is also listed as a potential area for international cooperation and assistance (p. 21).

Small arms in the international WPS Agenda

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CEDAW provides one of the legal bases of the WPS Agenda,¹¹ but does not explicitly mention any form of violence, let alone any reference to small arms (UNGA, 1979). In 1992, however, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) unequivocally stated in General Recommendation 19 that ‘[g]ender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men’ (UN CEDAW, 1992, para. 1). It went on to urge states to report on the ‘close connection between discrimination against women, gender-based violence and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms’ (UN CEDAW, 1992, para. 4). When this recommendation was superseded by General Recommendation 35 in 2017, the CEDAW Committee recommended that states ‘[a]ddress factors that heighten the risk to women of exposure to serious forms of gender-based violence, such as the ready accessibility and availability of firearms, including their export’, making references to the ATT (UN CEDAW, 2017, para. 31(c)).

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration reiterated that the ‘equal rights and inherent

human dignity of women and men’ were enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Declaration on the Right to Development (UN, 1995, Beijing Declaration, para. 8). The accompanying Platform for Action, one of the precursors to the WPS Agenda, recognized that excessive military expenditure, including the trade or trafficking in arms, had a negative impact on budgets available for social development and was a contributing factor to poverty (UN, 1995, Platform for Action, para. 13). It also acknowledged that the maintenance of peace and security is an important factor for economic growth, development, and women’s empowerment (UN, 1995, Platform for Action, para. 138). It therefore encouraged governments to recognize and address the negative effects of excessive spending on arms, especially those whose use is indiscriminate or particularly injurious, and to combat illicit arms trafficking and violence (UN, 1995, Platform for Action, para. 143(d)).

UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security

Neither UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) nor the subsequent five resolutions on WPS adopted between June 2008 and June 2013 referred to small arms.¹² In October 2013, however, UNSC Resolution 2122 on WPS explicitly referenced Article 7(4) of the ATT¹³ and mentioned the need ‘to ensure women’s full and meaningful participation in efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons’ (UNSC, 2013c, art. 14). Resolution 2242 (2015) expanded this further by calling for ‘empowering women, including through capacity-building efforts, as appropriate, to participate in the design and implementation of efforts’ related to the illicit transfer, misuse, and destabilizing accumulation of small arms (UNSC, 2015b, art. 15). Moreover, it also called on member states to consider how small arms affect ‘women’s and girl’s security, mobility, education, economic activity and opportunities’ in conflict and post-conflict settings, as well as ‘to mitigate the risk of women from becoming active players in the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons’ (UNSC, 2015b, art. 15). While this section specifically focuses on women and girls, Box 2 explores references to men, boys, gender minorities, and small arms in the WPS Agenda and other UN documents.

Box 2 Men and gender minorities in the WPS Agenda

While the WPS Agenda explicitly addresses the situation of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, more recent resolutions recognize men as both important agents of change and victims of GBV. UNSC Resolution 2106 (2013) affirms the centrality of enlisting men and boys in efforts to combat all forms of violence against women, including GBV (UNSC, 2013a, preamble). It also acknowledges men as both direct victims of conflict-related sexual violence and secondary victims of trauma when they are forced to witness sexual violence committed against family members (UNSC, 2013a, preamble). Likewise, UNSC Resolution 2467 (2019) recognized how male survivors of sexual violence may continue to be victims of stigma and exclusion in post-conflict settings (UNSC, 2019a, para. 28). The CEDAW Committee also highlighted the need to address social norms regarding masculinity and ‘the need to assert male control or power’ when tackling the root causes of GBV (UN CEDAW, 2017, para. 19). As yet, no references have been made to men and boys in connection with small arms control in official WPS-related documents.

Similarly, no specific references have been made to gender minorities in UNSC resolutions on WPS. The CEDAW Committee does, however, highlight the need for approaches to discrimination that consider gender together with intersecting factors, including gender identity (UN CEDAW, 2010, para. 18). The UN Human Rights Council has been the most active of the UN bodies in addressing the human rights of gender minorities. In 2011, it expressed ‘grave concern at acts of violence and discrimination, in all regions of the world, committed against individuals because of their sexual orientation and gender identity’ (UNGA, 2011b, preamble), and since 2016 has appointed an independent expert to provide regular thematic and country reports on the matter (UN OHCHR, 2022). More recently, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights mentioned that transgender, queer, and intersex populations (many of whom could be considered as gender minorities) are disproportionately exposed to attacks because of their gender identity, and that they may also be at a disproportionate risk of using firearms for the purposes of suicide (UNGA, 2022a, para. 34).

Converging agendas in national practice: NAP mapping

To assess how member states translate aspects of gender-related small arms control from international instruments and forums into national policies, a mapping study was conducted drawing on publicly available NAPs on WPS and small arms control. The mapping identified 105 NAPs on WPS, as well as nine regional action plans. It also found 16 NAPs related to small arms, including physical security and stockpile management—along with three regional action plans (two of which were labelled as road maps).¹⁴ The WPS NAPs were first examined for references to small arms control, while the small arms NAPs were examined for references to WPS-related topics. In a second round of analysis, the references were classified according to six further categories, as listed in the bottom half of Table 1, in order to identify common trends and unique approaches. The categories are not mutually exclusive: one reference can be counted in two categories.

Table 1 References to gender in action plans related to small arms and light weapons

	Albania	Benin	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Burkina Faso	Burundi	DRC	Ghana	Kenya	Kosovo*	Mali	Niger	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda	Caribbean**	EU**	Western Balkans**
WPS categories	Prevention of conflict and GBV	✓		✓								✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
	Participation of women in small arms and light weapons processes	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Protection of women and women’s rights	✓										✓				✓	✓		
	Gender perspective in relief and recovery efforts																		
Other gender-related categories	Gender mainstreaming	✓			✓						✓				✓	✓			✓
	Raising awareness of small arms and light weapons among women										✓	✓		✓					✓
	Gender analysis of small arms and light weapons issues	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓								✓
	Collection of gender-disaggregated data	✓									✓						✓		✓
	Gender-transformative approaches	✓																	
	Inclusion of women in small arms and light weapons collection activities												✓				✓		

* The designation of Kosovo is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

** Regional action plan.

Gender in national frameworks on small arms control

Of the 16 countries identified as having a NAP on small arms control, all but one (Tanzania) also have a NAP on WPS. Despite this, only ten NAPs on small arms control refer to gender (see Table 1), and Mali and Niger are the only countries to mention the WPS Agenda explicitly. Moreover, of the three regional action plans identified, the Western Balkans and Caribbean plans had provisions related to gender, while the European Union (EU) one did not (see Table 1). The Western Balkan ‘roadmap’¹⁵ specifically highlighted the importance of integrating a gender perspective into NAPs.

In terms of the WPS Agenda pillars (see Table 2), nine of the 16 NAPs and two of the regional plans frame their activities within the context of conflict prevention, which is the primary goal of the WPS Agenda (not shown in Table 1). Only Senegal, however, explicitly mentions a link between gender and conflict prevention (Senegal, n.d., pp. 29–30).

As Table 1 shows, just over a third of the NAPs and regional plans refer to the need to control arms in order to prevent GBV. Around two-thirds acknowledge the importance of women’s participation in the implementation of their activities, and only four discuss the importance of protecting women and their human rights. None of the NAPs address the relief and recovery pillar, although much of the gender-related work in this field relates to humanitarian demining and removing the explosive remnants of war, which have their own policy framework outside the scope of this study (Myrntinen, 2020, p. 4).¹⁶

Regarding the content of the gender-related references, in addition to recognizing the need to foster women’s participation, most NAPs included provisions designed to make the NAP gender responsive. The majority, however, appear to favour a gender-sensitive approach

“ Only Albania’s NAP mentions gender-transformative approaches that seek to redefine how firearms are used in the expression of specific behaviours related to gender roles, with a view to addressing the gendered root causes of firearm-related human suffering.”

that takes into account gender dynamics through mainstreaming, awareness raising, and analysis. Only Albania’s NAP mentions gender-transformative approaches that seek to redefine how firearms are used in the expression of specific behaviours related to gender roles, with a view to addressing the gendered root causes of firearm-related human suffering (Albania, n.d., p. 19). More countries might consider adopting this kind of approach based on the gender analyses within their respective NAPs.

Small arms control in WPS NAPs

For this part of the mapping study, the Small Arms Survey examined WPS NAPs for references to small arms control (including using alternative terms such as ‘guns’, ‘firearms’, and ‘disarmament’) and the international small arms control mechanisms listed above. As WPS NAPs tend to be structured around the four pil-

lars listed in Table 2, the Survey recorded whether the reference to small arms was found within a section on prevention, protection, participation, or relief and recovery (see Table 3). In addition, the mapping looked at the kinds of small-arms-related activities mentioned in WPS NAPs.

More than half of the NAPs and all but two of the regional action plans on WPS mention small arms. Of the 16 countries with small arms NAPs, 15 also have WPS NAPs. Only seven of these WPS NAPs, however, mention small arms. Of the three regions with small arms action plans, only the EU also has a WPS action plan, which does mention small arms (while the small arms action plan does not mention gender).

When examining references to small arms within the WPS framework, around 44 per cent of WPS NAPs mentioning small arms draw a link to the prevention of GBV. Of these WPS NAPs, 25 per cent highlight the need for women’s participation in small arms control processes, while 42 per cent discuss the need to control small arms within the protection pillar, and 21 per cent mention it within the framework of relief and recovery.

In terms of the prevention of conflict and GBV, several NAPs mentioned the problems caused by the circulation of small arms. Other NAPs sought to address the risks posed by weapons circulating in areas at heightened risk of transhumance-related conflict (Niger, 2020, p. 18; South Sudan, n.d., p. 16) or where a peace agreement had recently been signed (Philippines, n.d., p. 16; South

Table 2 Pillars of the WPS Agenda

Prevention	Prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations
Participation	Equal participation of women and gender equality in peace and security decision-making processes at all levels
Protection	Protection of women and girls from all forms of sexual and GBV, and protection and promotion of their rights in conflict situations
Relief and recovery	Fulfilment of specific relief needs of women and strengthening of their capacities to act as agents in relief and recovery in conflict and post-conflict situations

Source: Rodrigues (2019, p. 5)

Table 3 References to small arms in WPS action plans

		NAPs	Regional action plans	Total
Thematic sections referring to small arms	Prevention of conflict and GBV	25	3	28
	Participation of women in small arms and light weapons processes	14	2	16
	Protection of women and women's rights	24	3	27
	Gender perspective in relief and recovery efforts	12	1	13
Topics covered	Arms control	23	3	26
	Proliferation/circulation of illicit firearms	25	4	29
	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR)	20	4	24
	Need for gender perspective in small arms mechanisms/policies	25	5	30
	Efforts to coordinate between WPS and small arms control actors	5	1	6
	Participation of women in small arms control policymaking	19	2	21
	Participation of women in implementing small arms control	11	2	13
At least one reference to small arms		57	7	64
No reference to small arms		48	2	50
Total number of action plans studied		105	9	114

Sudan, n.d., p. 16), without commenting on the illicitness of these weapons.

Two NAPs explicitly mentioned the need to reduce excessive military spending as a way for the state to address gender equality by helping to reduce the accumulation of firearms in the country (Guinea-Bissau, n.d., p. 18; Tajikistan, n.d., p. 28). The need to prevent the proliferation of weapons in order to reduce levels of GBV was also a common theme. Two NAPs went a step further by highlighting the need to address masculine gender norms that increase the demand for weapons (Mali, n.d.b, p. 12) and influence arms control policies (Ireland, n.d., p. 29).

In terms of the *participation* pillar, many of the specific provisions related to the involvement of women in national bodies on arms control, disarmament, and arms proliferation.¹⁷ The NAPs of Sudan and South Sudan mentioned the importance of women's participation in community consultations and weapons collection (South Sudan, n.d., p. 45; Sudan, 2020, pp. 43–44), although few other NAPs go into this level of detail. Given that the WPS Agenda calls for troop- and police-contributing countries to increase the proportion of women military and police that member states recruit and deploy to peacekeeping operations (UNSC, 2013a, para. 14; 2013c, para. 9), this may also result in increasing the number of women with expertise in the regulation and control of small arms.

Under the *protection* pillar, an interesting dynamic emerges. Five NAPs from countries that provide financial support to others make explicit references to the ATT as a primary way to ensure the protection of women's rights (Belgium, n.d., p. 21; Finland, 2023, p. 41; Ireland, n.d., p. 37; Netherlands, 2020, p. 28; Norway, 2019, p. 43), while two others refer to the ATT in other sections (Japan, 2019, p. 23; Latvia, 2020, p. 5).

Only one NAP from a development aid recipient country or region mentioned the ATT (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, n.d., p. 27), although another did highlight the need to harmonize legislation with relevant international instruments (Mali, n.d.b, p. 32). Rather, the focus was more often on the need to include gender perspectives in the work of the security sector and national small arms commissions (Liberia, 2019, p. 14; Solomon Islands, n.d., p. 24; Uganda, 2021, p. 22), and to combat various forms of criminality (Gabon, 2020, p. 30; Kenya, n.d., p. 7; New Zealand, n.d., p. 31). This would suggest that either WPS actors in development aid recipient countries are not knowledgeable about the ATT's role in the protection of women's human rights, or they are well informed and have decided that it is not the most effective way of addressing their immediate needs. Another interpretation could be that enforcing Article 7(4) of the ATT is perceived as the exclusive domain of arms-exporting countries (which also tend to be development aid donor coun-

tries) over which actors in other countries have little control.¹⁸

Finally, within the framework of the *relief and recovery* pillar, nearly all references were to the involvement of women and the incorporation of a gender perspective into DDR programmes (Brazil, 2017, p. 49; ECCAS, 2018, p. 23; Malta, n.d., p. 7; Sudan, 2020, p. 43). Some emphasized the importance of considering the impact of small arms on women during humanitarian responses and peace processes (Argentina, 2022, p.11; Norway, 2019, p. 40).

Analysis of gaps and synergies

While many small arms control NAPs refer to gender, few refer specifically to the WPS Agenda. This may explain why countries that have both WPS and small arms control NAPs do not appear to have a harmonized approach to gender-responsive small arms control. To take Mali as an example, the country's WPS NAP discusses the link between weapons and male gender roles, as well as the importance of improving the security of women and girls in relation to the trafficking and circulation of small arms and light weapons (Mali, n.d.b, pp. 12, 34). The small arms and light weapons NAP, on the other hand, talks about the importance of awareness-raising activities with women's civil society on the topic of small arms and light weapons, including their

involvement in weapons collection (Mali, n.d.a, pp. 14, 29). Moreover, the mapping carried out for this study revealed that the existence of a small arms control NAP in a given country does not increase the likelihood that a WPS NAP will refer to small arms. There is therefore clearly scope for better integration between these two policy agendas.

The mapping also shows that gender-related references in small arms NAPs tend to focus on women's participation—but rarely elaborate on ways to ensure that this is meaningful—sometimes with little or no reference to activities aimed at specifically preventing GBV or protecting women's rights. This could risk scenarios where women are present 'without genuinely extending them the opportunity to influence outcomes' (UNSC, 2018, para. 29) by ensuring that activities also address their interests. Similarly, the relatively few references to small arms in relation to protecting women's human rights in WPS NAPs may result in engagement on gender being limited to preventing GBV, rather than including other gendered impacts of small arms, such as those related to sustainable development.

Finally, references to the link between gender roles and the illicit transfer, excessive accumulation, and misuse of firearms and the inclusion of gender-transformative activities appear to be relatively innovative practices that exist in both small arms control and WPS NAPs, but only to a limited degree. This analysis would suggest that exploring how gender roles influence the demand for small arms, as well as how they are used, may be of interest to actors in both the small arms control and WPS fields in terms of addressing the root causes of behaviours that lead to firearm-related human suffering.¹⁹

Challenges and solutions in practice

This section outlines challenges in connecting WPS and small-arms-related activities at the national level, as well as good practices, insights, and lessons identified from key informant interviews and existing research on how these challenges could be mitigated.

International–national nexus

Challenges

When national arms control processes and WPS-related activities require exter-

“ Exploring how gender roles influence the demand for small arms may be of interest to actors in both the small arms control and WPS fields in terms of addressing the root causes of behaviours that lead to firearm-related human suffering.”

nal funding from a donor, there is a risk that the process is driven not by national priorities, but rather by the timelines and interests of the donor.²⁰ For example, donors may only fund WPS activities that are specified in their own NAPs, which may not feature small arms control. Other activities related to small arms and light weapons may only be eligible for funding through military aid rather than through official development assistance (Bromley and Maletta, 2020). Consequently, these limitations may undermine efforts by recipient countries to align small arms control activities with objectives related to their WPS NAP, as well as with other legal and policy frameworks related to sustainable development, peace, security and human rights.

Possible solutions

Collaborations between WPS and small arms control actors (and others) should be encouraged to develop coherent NAPs linking both areas. By working together, national WPS and small arms and light weapons control actors could present holistic, multifaceted small arms control NAPs in which gender is a cross-cutting theme. This would help to also ensure that the NAP aligns with international frameworks such as CEDAW, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (Myrtilinen, 2020, p. 50), as well as domestic commitments. At the same time, WPS NAPs could incorporate cross-references to gender-responsive provisions within small arms control NAPs, rather than proposing small-arms-related activities that fall outside existing national priorities. These suggestions are, of

course, premised on a given state having NAPs on both small arms control and WPS. Given that WPS NAPs are relatively more common, WPS actors would be well placed to provide guidance to small arms control actors on how to go about drafting a NAP, especially if they are doing so for the first time.

Developing interlinked NAPs on WPS and small arms control would allow donors to be presented with a coherent 'menu' of potential funding opportunities, and avoid piecemeal projects designed around donor priorities and timelines (IANSA Women's Network, 2021, p. 2). Moreover, WPS communities often comprise diverse coalitions of actors from many different backgrounds with expertise on examining the gender dimensions of wide-ranging related thematic disciplines, and thus experience of working in a wide range of policy frameworks. By leveraging this factor, WPS and small arms control actors could create partnerships with counterparts in other policy spheres to incorporate necessary activities into their action plans that may need to be funded by other government ministries and donor funds, and implemented within the context of other frameworks. This could include conflict and security, DDR (Bastick and Valasek, 2014, p. 43), security sector reform, organized crime prevention, human trafficking (UN, 2018, p. 14), youth and women's empowerment, and sustainable development (Chappuis, 2021, p. 7; McDonald, 2018, p. 9). Finally, donor countries could ensure that their NAPs on WPS detail mechanisms for funding small-arms-control-related activities that support WPS-related objectives.

“Small arms control actors could consider incorporating violence reduction efforts previously used by WPS actors into their NAPs, such as those engaging men to promote non-violent expressions of masculinity.”

National and local ownership

Challenges

One reason that national- and local-level activities suffer from a lack of ownership is that national commissions or single ministries are sometimes the sole custodians of small arms control NAPs. The NAPs are therefore not well coordinated with other relevant policies and plans on topics such as national and human security.²¹ Moreover, groups that are significantly affected by the negative consequences of illicit firearms trafficking and misuse are sometimes absent from the drafting process. This can include women, gender minorities, youth, ethnic minorities, sex workers, conflict-affected populations, and especially those who live far away from national capitals in border areas, as well as victims and survivors of armed violence (Marsh and Palik, 2021, p. 18; San Martin Romero, 2021, p. 22; WILPF, 2021, p. 4).²²

As a result, these arms control NAPs may not attract the attention of civil society organizations (CSOs) and individual citizens who might otherwise make important contributions to their implementation, such as those working to reduce violence within the framework of a WPS NAP. The NAPs may also miss opportunities to incorporate established good practices at the local level, even if they are well known within the national WPS community (WPS Focal Points Network, 2022, para. 4).²³

Possible solutions

Given the focus of the WPS Agenda on human security and women’s human rights, actors working in small arms control could engage with WPS actors to better define and articulate how their activities

will contribute to improvements in the lived experiences of women, men, girls, boys, and people from gender minorities (Barr, 2011, pp. 24–25). Making documents less technical while demonstrating contributions to the overall vision and ultimate outcomes shared with other policy frameworks, such as gender equality and sustainable development, would be a way to foster buy-in and interest among a greater variety of stakeholders (Farr, Myrntinen, and Schnabel, 2009, p. 425).

Furthermore, ensuring that policy discussions address both the proliferation of illicit weapons, including the risk of diversion from national stockpiles, and the misuse of legally acquired weapons is important for ensuring broad engagement in small arms control activities.²⁴ This is because for many people, especially women, the misuse of legally owned firearms constitutes their primary firearm-related security concern, for example in contexts related to domestic violence, accidents, or suicide within families (Barr, 2011, p. 12; Cukier and Cairns, 2009, p. 18; UNLIREC, 2020, p. 55).²⁵

Youth, peace, and security actors and ‘fourth-wave’ feminists in the WPS community have explored ways of leveraging internet-based technologies such as social media to include the voices of traditionally excluded groups in mainstream political discourses (Shiva and Kharazmi, 2019, p. 130). In addition, several interviewees highlighted the importance of ensuring the inclusion of men in discussions in the areas of both gender-responsive small arms control and WPS.²⁶ Several WPS or WPS-linked actors such as Promundo and Living Peace have developed methodologies to do this.²⁷

Finally, in some contexts at least, the dynamics of illicit trafficking and

misuse of firearms may be highly localized. Stakeholders may therefore be more willing to buy in to a locally led initiative rather than a national one.²⁸

Cross-government buy-in

Challenges

Inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms between different policy areas tend to be high level.²⁹ High-level decision-makers, however, are usually generalists who regularly rotate from post to post. They do not always have the subject-matter knowledge to understand recommendations made by technical experts lower down in the hierarchy, or to identify linkages between small arms control and other policy domains, including WPS and gender equality. Moreover, small arms control may be neither a political nor an individual priority (Chappuis, 2021, p. 13).³⁰

Possible solutions

Women’s CSOs and those working on gender equality and gender-responsive small arms control often have long-standing experience of advocating multi-sectoral responses to violence reduction, including work on small arms control (Cukier and Cairns, 2009, pp. 38–39).³¹ As such, many of these CSOs are well placed to be champions of gender-responsive national arms control policies, and thus to encourage inter-ministerial collaboration and draw attention to the concerns of technical experts on arms control in high-level political debates. Providing financial and capacity support to CSOs that provide this oversight role and encouraging the sharing of good practices locally, nationally, and internally within government ministries may contribute to more engaged and coordinated government action on small arms control.

Lack of focus on demand

Challenges

The illicit ownership and misuse of firearms has both a supply and a demand side (Geneva Declaration, 2006, p. 2; Nakamitsu and Okai, 2021). Initiatives related to the PoA, Firearms Protocol (UNGA, 2001a), and ITI all seek to prevent the supply of illicit weapons, which is an important part of reducing human suffering linked to small arms. The relative lack of focus on the ever-changing demand for illicit small arms, however,

makes it difficult to create linkages between these initiatives and efforts to protect human rights, prevent violence and conflict, mitigate the effects of climate change, fight transnational organized crime, foster sustainable development, and even promote gender equality. All of these policy frameworks seek to prevent scenarios where increasing numbers of people would seek to acquire small arms with the intention of potentially using them illicitly (Atwood, Glatz, and Muggah, 2006, pp. 11, 12, 47, 51–52, 56; UNSC, 2021, para. 67). This may be one reason why studies suggest that supply-focused arms control and disarmament efforts that neglect demand tend not to be sustainable, especially when compared to multisectoral, multi-level partnerships between community groups and governments that also look at both (OECD, 2009, pp. 46–48).

Possible solutions

One step towards better understanding the demand for small arms would be for those working on local and national small arms control policies to leverage the WPS community's network of partners working on issues related to the illicit proliferation and misuse of small

arms. This could include those working on human trafficking (UN, 2018, p. vi), environmental protection, poverty reduction, domestic violence, sexual violence and other forms of GBV, violence against children, and violence against and between youth, such as in gang settings (WILPF, 2021, pp. 5–7).³² Moreover, given the 'widespread association of masculinity with small arms possession and violent behaviour' (UN, 2018, p. 3) and recent upticks in demand among women for firearms in some countries,³³ engaging with the WPS community to incorporate a gender analysis of demand for illicit firearms could strengthen policymaking in this area.

Lack of focus on violence reduction

Challenges

Despite calls for 'an increased focus on security promotion and violence reduction' (McDonald, 2018, p. 10), including GBV (IANSA Women's Network, 2021, p. 4), in small arms policymaking, this is rarely a central topic in NAPs on small arms control.³⁴ This problem is exacerbated because CSOs working on violence

reduction, including on GBV, sometimes take arms proliferation as a given rather than engaging on this policy issue.³⁵

Possible solutions

WPS actors are engaged in monitoring and responding to a large range of different forms of violence. For example, some have developed indicators to track levels of community and gender-based violence, because these may be early warning signs of conflict (Acheson and Butler, 2018, pp. 692–94). Collaborative research between national WPS and small arms control actors that links the illicit supply of small arms to increases in violence would be an effective way to produce policy-relevant inputs as part of both WPS and small arms control NAPs. This would also facilitate more effective monitoring frameworks (UN, 2018, p. 16). Moreover, small arms control actors could consider incorporating violence reduction efforts previously used by WPS actors into their NAPs, such as those engaging men to promote non-violent expressions of masculinity (Cukier and Cairns, 2009, p. 41; Schöb and Myrntinen, 2022, pp. 17–18; Schroeder, Farr, and Schnabel, 2005, p. 26). Similarly, small arms control actors may identify actions



Discussions at the United Nations Development Programme South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNDP SEESAC) Regional Workshop on Combating Gender-based Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Abuse, Jahorina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 19 June 2019. Source: UNDP SEESAC

to include in WPS NAPs that would enhance the effectiveness of conflict- and violence-prevention efforts.

Diverse and inclusive working environments

Challenges

Small arms control has traditionally been a male-dominated field in which women are under-represented (Božanić, 2016, p. 8; IANSA Women's Network, 2017). Moreover, several authors have noted that for women who do work in this field, international policy forums on disarmament and small arms control are not characterized by especially diverse and inclusive working environments (Dwan, 2019; Myrtilinen, 2020, p. 32). Conferences often span several weeks or months. Meeting organizers do not draft agendas in a way that facilitates work-life balance and the time constraints of parents and caregivers. Instead, they tend to prioritize long-serving technical specialists in speakers' lists at the expense of those who could share survivors' perspectives and insights from other policy areas mentioned in the previous section (Dwan, 2019). Less has been written on this topic in terms of national and local processes related to small arms control, although several of the people interviewed mentioned how women were under-represented and had to demonstrate a good command of the technical aspects of small arms control in order to be taken seriously.³⁶ These factors may undermine both the meaningful participation of women and the ability to discuss gender-related topics effectively in local and national small arms control activities.

Possible solutions

To create more diverse and inclusive policymaking environments, actors involved in local and national small arms control could draw on the expertise of WPS actors and gender experts in international organizations working on arms control such as the UN Institute for Disarmament Research and Control Arms (Barrows, Sukhai, and Coe, 2021; Dwan, 2019).

A first step would be to assess workplace policies, especially those related to recruitment and retention, in order to identify barriers to women entering into small-arms-related professions in the first place (IANSA Women's Network, 2021, p. 3). In addition, when seeking to create more supportive working environ-

ments, national small arms actors could draw on the experience of women's CSOs and youth groups. These organizations have historically had to organize their activities in order to accommodate the caring roles of their members and have experience in creating alternative consultation mechanisms that channel the views of those not in attendance into decision-making forums.³⁷

Ways forward for practice

This section draws on the challenges and solutions presented in the previous section, and outlines possible ways forward for donors, national actors working on small arms control, and the WPS community.

Ways forward for donors

Donors play a key role in facilitating collaboration between WPS and small arms control actors in the countries they support. They could, for example:

- ensure that the national and local small-arms-related initiatives they support include activities undertaken in partnership with WPS actors in the country;
- provide funding that can be used in a flexible way to overcome barriers to meaningful participation of both WPS actors and other traditionally under-represented groups in national small arms policymaking;
- ensure that the WPS-related activities they support include activities that involve actors working on small arms control;
- ensure that the activities they support align with national and international legal and policy frameworks related to both small arms control and gender equality, as well as other areas such as sustainable development; and
- consider funding mechanisms that can provide sustainable and continued support to community-level CSOs or municipal-level initiatives that contribute to gender-responsive small arms control (Chappuis, 2021, p. 21).³⁸

Ways forward for national actors working on small arms control

National actors working on small arms control could:

- ensure that activities are designed to serve a broad theory of change that considers how they will contribute to ultimate outcomes related to reductions in human suffering by, for example, aligning their activities with the national policies and action plans related to WPS, gender equality, and sustainable development;
- when addressing gender in policies and activities, consider both initiatives that ensure women's meaningful participation and efforts to ensure that small arms control is gender responsive; and
- incorporate or coordinate with efforts to reduce the demand for firearms as part of small arms control by addressing social issues in collaboration with, and by drawing on good practices from, community-level counterparts.

Ways forward for the WPS community

Members of the WPS community could:

- consult with local and national actors working in small arms control in order to consider which small-arms-control-related activities are needed to achieve the objectives of WPS NAPs, and what role WPS actors can play in their implementation;
- ensure that references to small arms control feature in the prevention, participation, protection, and, where appropriate, relief and recovery pillars of WPS NAPs;
- engage in the oversight and review of small arms control NAPs; and
- leverage networks and partnerships with counterparts working at both the national and local levels in diverse sectors—including violence reduction, health, and sustainable development—to promote interdisciplinary gender perspectives in small arms control policymaking, oversight, and implementation. ●

Acronyms and abbreviations

ATT Arms Trade Treaty

BMS Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEDAW Committee Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CSO Civil society organization
DDR Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
DRC Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU European Union
GBV Gender-based violence
ITI International Tracing Instrument
NAP National action plan
NGO Non-governmental organization
PoA Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
SDG Sustainable Development Goal
UN United Nations
UNDP SEESAC United Nations Development Programme South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
UNSC United Nations Security Council
WPS Women, peace, and security

Notes

- 1 Some organizations work on topics related to the WPS Agenda (such as the prevention of conflict and sexual and gender-based violence and the participation of women in peace processes), but do not explicitly frame their work as the implementation of this agenda; their activities are therefore referred to in the paper as focusing on women, peace, and security (WPS). The ‘WPS Agenda’ refers specifically to the UN-defined agenda. Strictly speaking, the WPS Agenda applies to conflict and post-conflict settings as recognized by the UN, and much of the work discussed in this paper lies outside of that. Domestic violence, for example, is a primary concern of national actors engaged in WPS-related work, but it has not been mentioned explicitly in a UN Security Council resolution.
- 2 ‘Small arms control’ refers to local, national, and international efforts that seek to prevent and reduce human suffering caused by small arms and light weapons and their ammunition—including efforts to prevent the illicit proliferation and diversion, misuse, and excessive accumulation of small arms, as well as work aimed at reducing community violence and the demand for firearms.
- 3 See, for example, UN (1948, arts. 1, 2, 21); UNGA (1979, arts. 2, 5).
- 4 See Schroeder, Farr, and Schnabel (2005, p. 26); Cukier and Cairns (2009, p. 41); Koyama (2009, p. 337); Shiva and Kharazmi (2019); BCCIC (2020, p. 33).
- 5 Small Arms Survey staff focus group discussion, 21 January 2022.
- 6 This definition draws on widely used definitions from UN Women (n.d.), UNICEF (2017), and UN Women Training Centre (n.d.).
- 7 For example, a review of the normative and legal frameworks related to the WPS and arms control agendas can be found in Pytlak (2019).
- 8 In many states, regional mechanisms and conventions related to small arms and gender also apply.
- 9 For an exploration of how states implement the GBV provisions of the ATT, see Fabre et al. (2022).
- 10 For more information on the gendered impacts of ammunition, see LeBrun (2020).
- 11 As mentioned in Article 9 of UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000), and in the preambles of UNSC resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019). See UNSC (2008; 2009a; 2009b; 2013c; 2015b; 2019a; 2019b).
- 12 UN Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000); 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2010); 2106 (2013). See UNSC (2000; 2008; 2009b; 2009c; 2010; 2013a).
- 13 See UNGA (2013, art. 7(4)).
- 14 It is important to note that one reason for the comparatively large number of NAPs on WPS is that this practice has been specifically encouraged by the Security Council since 2009 (UNSC, 2009b, preamble). National practice in implementing international small arms control mechanisms appears to be more divergent due to variations in how national actors working on small arms control are distributed across national institutions. The researchers worked in English, French, and Spanish, so may have omitted NAPs in other languages, although machine-translated versions of many WPS NAPs were incorporated, because they are hosted on the Peace-Women website (PeaceWomen, n.d.).
- 15 See SEESAC (2019, p. 8).
- 16 While the PoA does include landmines and explosives under its definition of ammunition and explosives (UNGA, 1997, para. 26), landmines and explosive remnants of war are discussed in more detail in policy arenas centred on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (UNODA, 2022).
- 17 See, for example, Liberia (2019, p. 50); Nigeria (2017, p. 18); Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (n.d., p. 25).
- 18 Argentina is an exception as it is both a net aid recipient country (World Bank, n.d.) and net importer of firearms (UN, n.d.), but does reference the ATT in its WPS NAP.
- 19 See, for example, research on this topic in Atwood et al. (2006).
- 20 Small Arms Survey staff focus group discussion, 21 January 2022.
- 21 Small Arms Survey staff focus group discussion, 21 January 2022.
- 22 Author correspondence with CSO representative from Sierra Leone, 4 December 2021.
- 23 Author correspondence with a ministry official from Kenya, 22 February 2022.
- 24 Author correspondence with an international consultant working in small arms control, 17 December 2021.
- 25 Author correspondence with an international consultant working in small arms control, 17 December 2021; a staff member from an international NGO, 1 February 2022; and a staff member from a UN institution, 14 December 2021.
- 26 Author correspondence with a CSO representative from Burkina Faso, 23 December 2021, and a staff member from an international NGO, 24 January 2021.
- 27 Author correspondence with a staff member from an international NGO, 24 January 2022 and 1 February 2022.
- 28 Author correspondence with a CSO representative from Brazil, 8 December 2021; a CSO representative from Jamaica, 7 January 2022; and a staff member from an international NGO, 24 January 2022.
- 29 Small Arms Survey staff focus group discussion, 21 January 2022; author correspondence with a CSO representative from South Africa, 21 January 2022.
- 30 Small Arms Survey staff focus group discussion, 21 January 2022.
- 31 Author correspondence with a CSO representative from Brazil, 8 December 2021. See also organizations such as Demilitarise Education, whose team is mostly women (dED, n.d.).
- 32 Author correspondence with a CSO representative from South Africa, 21 January 2022, and a staff member from an international NGO, 24 January 2022.
- 33 See, for example, Gay (2021); Euromaidan Press (2022); Sefako-Musi (2022).
- 34 Uganda and Ghana make a brief reference to supporting mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution (Uganda, n.d., p. 26; Ghana, 2010, p. 25). Kenya and Senegal mention this topic as something to be incorporated into educational curricula (Kenya, 2006, p. 62; Senegal, n.d., pp. 25–27).
- 35 Author correspondence with a CSO representative from South Africa, 21 January 2022.
- 36 Author correspondence with a CSO representative from Brazil, 8 December 2021; an international consultant working on small arms control, 10 December 2021; and a CSO representative from Burkina Faso, 23 December 2021.
- 37 See, for example, WILPF and MADRE (2015, p. 2); Buchanan (2021, p. 37); Shiva and Kharazmi (2019).
- 38 Author correspondence with a CSO representative from the Philippines, 2 March 2022.

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