

DISCUSSION PAPER No. 245

Rhetoric and real progress on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Africa

GENDER

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SUMMARY

This paper looks at how the European Union and the African Union promote the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Africa.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda enjoys high visibility among African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) member states. Despite regional variations, many countries have adopted national action plans to promote UN Security Council resolution 1325.

In both regions, efforts and policies to promote gender and women's empowerment and the WPS agenda are not fully linked up. Although they are conceptually similar, implementation has taken place in parallel tracks, by different actors and institutions.

In the EU, for instance, the WPS agenda largely remains in the remit of the European External Action Service, while gender equality and women's empowerment fall under the European Commission's scope of action. Some recent initiatives such as the new EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace, Security and joint reporting may remedy this disconnect.

The African Union Commission does not have a clear strategy on how to implement the WPS agenda, despite the laudable efforts of the AU Special Envoy on women, peace and security. The recently launched AU Strategy on Gender and Women's Empowerment could complement efforts to promote the WPS agenda and eventually improve the implementation across the AU.

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Acronyms

AAP	Annual action plans
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
APDF	Association pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits des Femmes
APF	African Peace Facility
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
AU	African Union
AUCapEO	African Union Capacity in Election Observation
CA	Comprehensive Approach
CASF	Central African Standby Force
CBSS	Country Based Support Scheme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CFR	Continental Results Framework
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COHOM	Council Working party on Human Rights
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EUPOL COPPS	European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	Chief Security Officer
CVE/CT	Countering violent extremism/counter-terrorism
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DG DEVCO	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
DG ECHO	Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EAC	Eastern African Community
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
EASF	East African Standby Force
EC	European Commission
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFI	External Financing Instruments
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
ERM	Early Response Mechanism
ESF	ECOWAS Standby Force

EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EUITF	EU informal task force on women, peace and security
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia
EUTF	EU's Trust Fund for Africa
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FPI	Foreign Policy Instrument
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-based violence
GE	Gender equality
GESF	Gender and Elections Strategic Framework
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GNA	Government of National Accord
GPSP	Gender, Peace and Security Programme
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HLC	High-Level Committee
HoA	Horn of Africa
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IHRDA	Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JAES	Joint EU-Africa Strategy
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex
MAAP	Multi-annual Action Programmes
MEWC	Make Every Woman Count
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MIP	Multi-annual indicative programme
NAP	National Action Plan
NARC	North Africa Regional Capability
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NGOWG	NGO Working Group on Women and Armed Conflict
NIP	National indicative programmes
NoA	North of Africa
PAC	Pan-African Centre
PAG	Principal Advisor on Gender
PanAf	Pan-African Programme
PCRD	Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development
PI	Partnership Instrument
POW	Panel of the Wise
PRIDA	Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	Peace and Security Department

PSO	Peace support operation
PVE	Preventing violent extremism
REC	Regional Economic Community
RIP	Regional indicative programme
RM	Regional Mechanism
RO	Regional organisation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAH	Sahel and Lake Chad
SASF	Southern African Standby Force
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNIOGBIS	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
WGDD	Women and Gender Development Directorate
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPS	Women, peace and security

Introducing the paper and key findings

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is an integral part of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy (JAES) and thus a shared commitment between both regions. The European Union (EU) and African Union (AU), which both play prominent roles in this field, have been historical supporters of the WPS agenda and have made the promotion of the WPS agenda a central element of their peace and security policies and instruments. Both regions have made considerable efforts to put in place a policy architecture to promote the WPS agenda. In Africa, this has occurred both at the continental and regional levels with some discrepancies, notably in North Africa.¹

Progress towards implementing the WPS agenda in Africa is, however, lagging in some areas, including women's participation in peacemaking/peace processes and addressing the causes of sexual and gender-based violence. Other areas have seen some progress, including in the ratio of women in peacekeeping missions and training missions, and the percentage of women in national parliaments – an area where several countries in Africa outperform European countries.

This paper will focus on the EU's external engagement in Africa to promote the WPS agenda as part of the EU-Africa partnership. The paper aims to contribute to the ongoing analysis and policy dialogue of how regional organisations in Europe and Africa have promoted the WPS agenda. Previous research looked at the implementation of the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325² internally in the European Union (EU) institutions and actors, as well as at the level of the African Union (and to a more limited extent sub-regional organisations (ROs)).³ In order to do so it will aim to answer a number of questions. What is the state of play for implementing and promoting the WPS agenda in Africa under the umbrella of Europe-Africa relations? Which policies are in place on both continents, and which instruments and approaches have been used? What are some of the shortcomings of these approaches, and what has worked well?

Our main findings are the following:

1. Our research shows that the WPS agenda has achieved high visibility in both Africa and Europe. There is a high prevalence of national action plans to promote UNSCR 1325 both in AU and EU member states, as well as in sub-regional organisations in Africa. This stands in contrast to the generally vague references to the WPS agenda in national and regional indicative programmes in Africa, under the European Development Fund. Indeed, regional and national gender policies in Africa rarely go beyond making simple references to UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions (and other global commitments, such as CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action). As a result, this leads to few concrete entry points for synergies with the WPS agenda, which connects to our second observation.

¹ The authors of this paper acknowledge that gender relations refer to (different groups of) men, women, boys and girls and that this is particularly pertinent in conflict situations. However, this paper will focus specifically on women, because as a gender group they continue to be distinctly excluded from political, social and economic life, especially at the higher levels of decision-making, when compared to men.

² See for example: Sherriff & Barnes (2008), Olsson & Sundström (2013), the [Gender Equality Index](#), EPLO, UNSCR 1325 IN EUROPE 20 case studies of implementation, November 2013.

³ See for example: Desmidt, Apiko, and Fannar Sævarsson (2017), Abdullah (2017) and Alaga, Birikorang and Jaye (2011) 105.

2. Both in Africa and in Europe, policy frameworks to promote the WPS agenda and gender equality (GE) are not fully joined up. While the same decision-making bodies might adopt these frameworks, they are often implemented separately. The EU's efforts to promote the WPS agenda in its external engagements, including in Africa, are implemented under the 'Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security' (CA 1325/1820). They are led by the European External Action Service (EEAS), notably by the office of the EU/EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender (PAG). As for the promotion of gender equality (and women's empowerment), the EU's commitments are guided by the EU Gender Action Plan II (GAP II), and are led by the European Commission (EC). Both parties have made efforts to coordinate the reporting mechanisms on the WPS agenda and GE, for example, by including monitoring of the WPS agenda in the annual implementation of the GAP II. Ideally, the EU's efforts towards the WPS and GE agendas should be mutually reinforcing, as conceptually they are closely interlinked. However, at the institutional level, they are still implemented separately. The newly adopted EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security may remedy some of this institutional disconnect.
3. Similarly, GE policies and WPS/1325 policies in Africa are also insufficiently linked up, with efforts to create an AU policy gender and women's empowerment and to promote women, peace and security taking place in parallel. The AU has no clear strategy on how to implement and promote the WPS agenda in Africa more systematically. Most of its efforts – albeit laudable – are limited to a small office, in much the same way as in the EU. The AU recently launched the Strategy on Gender and Women's Empowerment, which emphasises peace and security in the AU Commission's approach to gender. This new strategy could result in a Commission-wide implementation. In contrast to the EU/EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender (PAG), the AU Special Envoy has used considerable political leverage, participated in high-level engagements (investigations and mediation) and contributed to institutional reform processes, for example, through the High-Level Committee on misconduct, launched in 2018.
4. Although various aspects of the WPS agenda feature in projects and programming under EU external financial instruments, when looking at EU programming and EU-funded projects, we found only a limited number of projects take the WPS agenda as a starting point. The EU is not a key supporter of promoting national action plans (NAPs) in Africa, despite support to NAPs being an indicator in its 'CA 1325/1820'⁴ as well as in its newly adopted 'EU Strategic Approach on women, peace and security'. Other actors, such as UN Women or UN regional offices, fill this role. A closer look at which aspects of the WPS agenda are promoted in EU instruments and how this was done, suggests activities and projects have focused on protection rather than prevention, participation or relief and recovery. But, participation (in political decision-making and peace mediation) is increasingly featuring as an important pillar.

⁴ See: "Indicator: 3.1 Number and name of partner countries with whom the EU and its Member States are engaged in supporting actions on furthering WPS, specifically through the development, implementation and evaluation of National Action Plans (NAPs), strategic documents or other national policies related to UNSCR 1325" European Council, *Revised Indicators for the Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security*, September 2016.

The structure of this discussion paper will be as follows. Section 1 starts with an introduction to the WPS agenda, UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, and their state of play in Africa. In section 2, we provide an overview of policies in place at the level of the AU, sub-regional organisations and the national level among AU member states. Section 3 discusses EU policies and instruments of the WPS agenda, including the main financial instruments to support the promotion of the WPS agenda in Africa. In section 4, we will analyse examples of efforts to promote the WPS agenda under the EU-Africa partnership. More specifically, we will discuss three ‘implementation avenues’, namely the support to establish and implement national action plans 1325 (in line with the EU’s strategic approaches and indicators for supporting the WPS agenda), activities deployed through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), and commitments under the African Peace Facility (APF). In section 5, we will present our concluding observations.

1. Background on the Women, Peace and Security agenda, UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions

1.1. UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions

United Nations Security Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) is (still) regarded as a groundbreaking and historical document. It is the first resolution adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) which “dealt specifically with gender issues and women’s experiences in ‘conflict’ and ‘post-conflict’ situations”⁵ and the central role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. For this reason, UNSCR 1325 is considered the pinnacle of the global WPS agenda.

A long history of research and advocacy by gender activists, feminist scholars, civil society and practitioners preceded the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000. This activism highlighted the need to focus on the different roles played by men and women, during conflict, the different impact of conflict on men and women, and the need to increase the participation of women in peace and security structures and processes.⁶

According to Pratt and Richter-Devroe (2011), the ‘Agenda for Peace’, launched by UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali in 1992, represents a crucial breakthrough for women’s groups advocating for women to become a central consideration in development.⁷ Following the Agenda for Peace, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (2000) were adopted.⁸ In June 2000, during the 23rd special session of the UN General Assembly on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, a review found that the area of ‘Women in Conflict’ has not been sufficiently addressed.

This led to the establishment of the NGO Working Group on Women and Armed Conflict (NGOWG), which explicitly lobbied for the adoption of a resolution by the UN Security Council, to ensure the topic of women in conflict is better addressed.⁹ At the same time, Namibia, which had hosted the meeting that adopted the Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action, took the monthly rotating presidency of the Security Council in October 2000. The Namibian presidency responded to the NGOWG call by hosting an open session on women, peace and security and organising an Arria Formula meeting on the issue, which led to the adoption of UNSCR 1325 on 31 October 2000.¹⁰

UNSCR 1325 has three main objectives:

1. To increase women’s participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping;
2. To protect women’s rights in armed conflict, including protecting women against sexual and gender-based violence and other violations of international human rights; and
3. To adopt a gender perspective in conflict preventions resolutions, peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

⁵ Pratt & Richter-Devroe (2011) 13:4, 489-503.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Hendricks (2017).

⁹ Pratt & Richter-Devroe (2011)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the UN has adopted seven follow-up resolutions, which either reinforce aspects of UNSCR 1325 (e.g. UNSCR 1820 adopted in 2008) or complement the resolutions with accountability mechanisms (e. g. UNSCR 1960 adopted in 2010) (see box 1 below).

Box 1: Overview of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions¹¹

United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), adopted on 31 October 2000;

- Is the first resolution in which the Security Council addresses the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women;
- Recognises the undervalued and under-utilised contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding;
- Stresses the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security.

United Nations Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), adopted 19 June 2008:

- Recognises sexual violence as a weapon and tactic of war;
- Notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide;
- Calls for training of troops on preventing and responding to sexual violence;
- Calls for more deployment of women in peace operations.

United Nations Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), adopted 30 September 2009:

- Reiterates that sexual violence exacerbates armed conflict and impedes international peace and security;
- Calls for leadership to address conflict-related sexual violence;
- Calls for the deployment of a Team of Experts where cases of sexual violence occur.

United Nations Security Council resolution 1889 (2009), adopted 5 October 2009:

- Focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding and women's participation in all stages of peace processes;
- Calls for the development of indicators to measure the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000).

United Nations Security Council resolution 1960 (2010), adopted 16 December 2010:

- Reiterates the call for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict;
- Sets up "naming and shaming" listing mechanism, sending a direct political message that there are consequences for sexual violence. These include listings in the Secretary-General's annual reports, referrals to UN Sanctions Committees and to the ICC, international condemnation, and reparations.

United Nations Security Council resolution 2106 (2013), adopted 24 June 2013:

- Focuses on operationalising current obligations rather than on creating new structures/initiatives;
- Includes language on women's participation in combating sexual violence;
- Supports recourse to legal action.

United Nations Security Council resolution 2122 (2013), adopted 18 October 2013:

- Explicitly affirms an "integrated approach" to sustainable peace;
- Sets out concrete methods for combating the deficit in women's participation;
- Recognises the need to address root causes of armed conflict and security risks faced by women;
- Calls for the provision of multisectoral services to women affected by conflict;
- Links disarmament with gender equality and mentions the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)¹².

¹¹ Based on an overview of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women, Peace and Security programme.

¹² The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is an international treaty signed by 130 countries that regulates the international trade in conventional arms – from small arms to battle tanks, combat aircraft and warships – which entered into force on 24 December 2014.

United Nations Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), adopted on 13 October 2015:

- Encourages the assessment of strategies and resources in regards to the implementation of the WPS agenda;
- Highlights the importance of collaboration with civil society;
- Calls for increased funding for gender-responsive training, analysis and programmes;
- Calls for gender to be included as a cross-cutting issue within the CVE/CT Agendas;
- Recognises the importance of integrating the WPS agenda during consultations on country-specific situations on the Security Council's agenda.

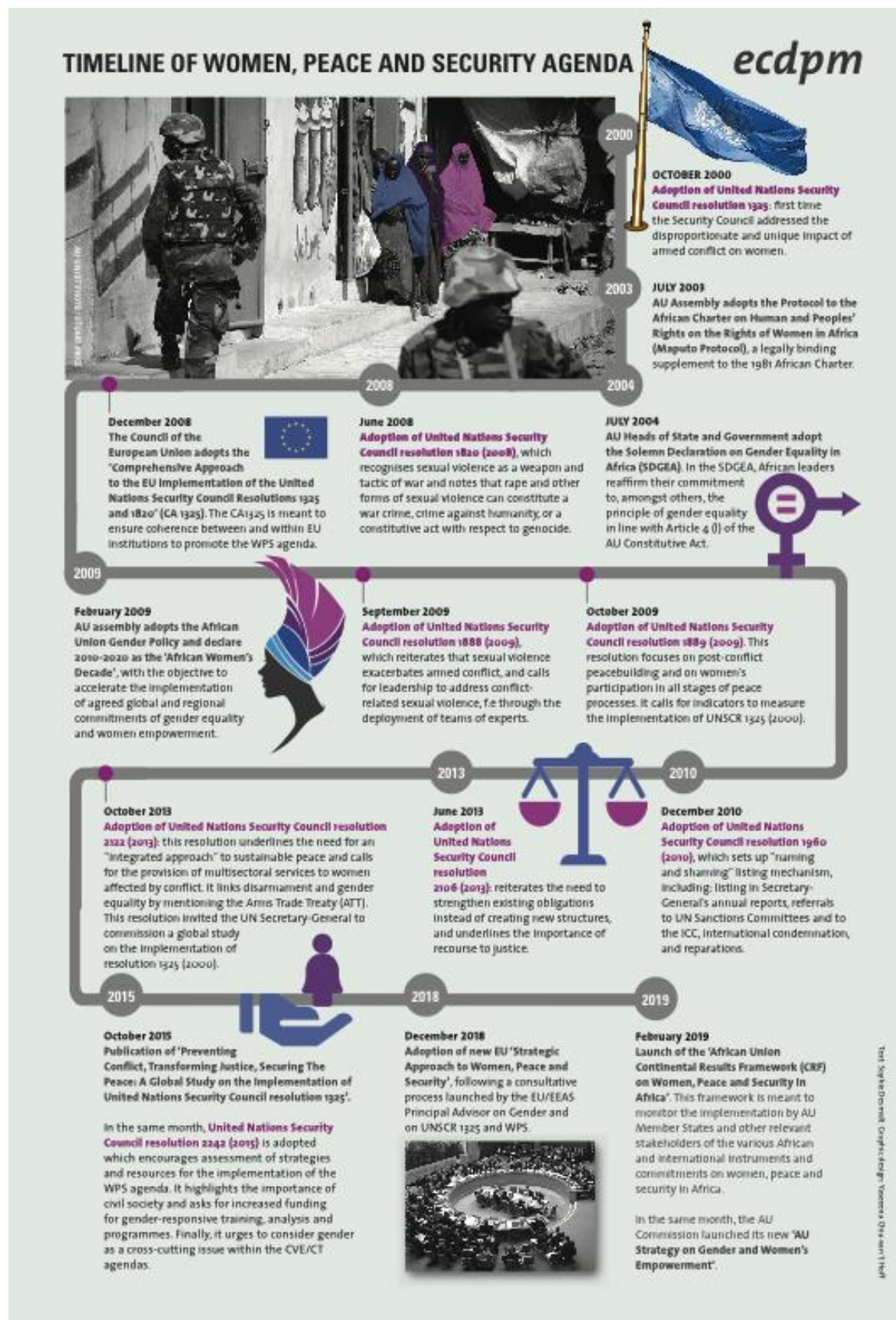
UNSCR 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, together with the Beijing Platform for Action, the Windhoek Declaration, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹³, constitute the global Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Since the adoption of UNSCR1325, the EU and AU have adopted several policies and strategies to promote the global WPS agenda and gender equality agenda. Figure 1 on the next page shows a timeline of these various policies and strategies, which are discussed in more detail in section 2 and 3.

Hendricks (2017), Pratt & Richter-Devroe (2011) and others have noted that UNSCR 1325 deserves to be lauded as a historical moment for women's peace activism and the expansion of a global agenda on women, peace and security. But it has also been criticised as a largely minimalist and state-centric agenda, divorced from the feminist debates that originally gave rise to it. Nevertheless, this paper will not provide an in-depth overview of the theoretical and conceptual critique of UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda. Instead, it will focus on the mainstream approaches to the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325, while acknowledging the critique in other pieces of work.¹⁴

¹³ In particular, CEDAW General Recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations).

¹⁴ See for example: Pratt & Richter-Devroe (2011) and Davis (2018).

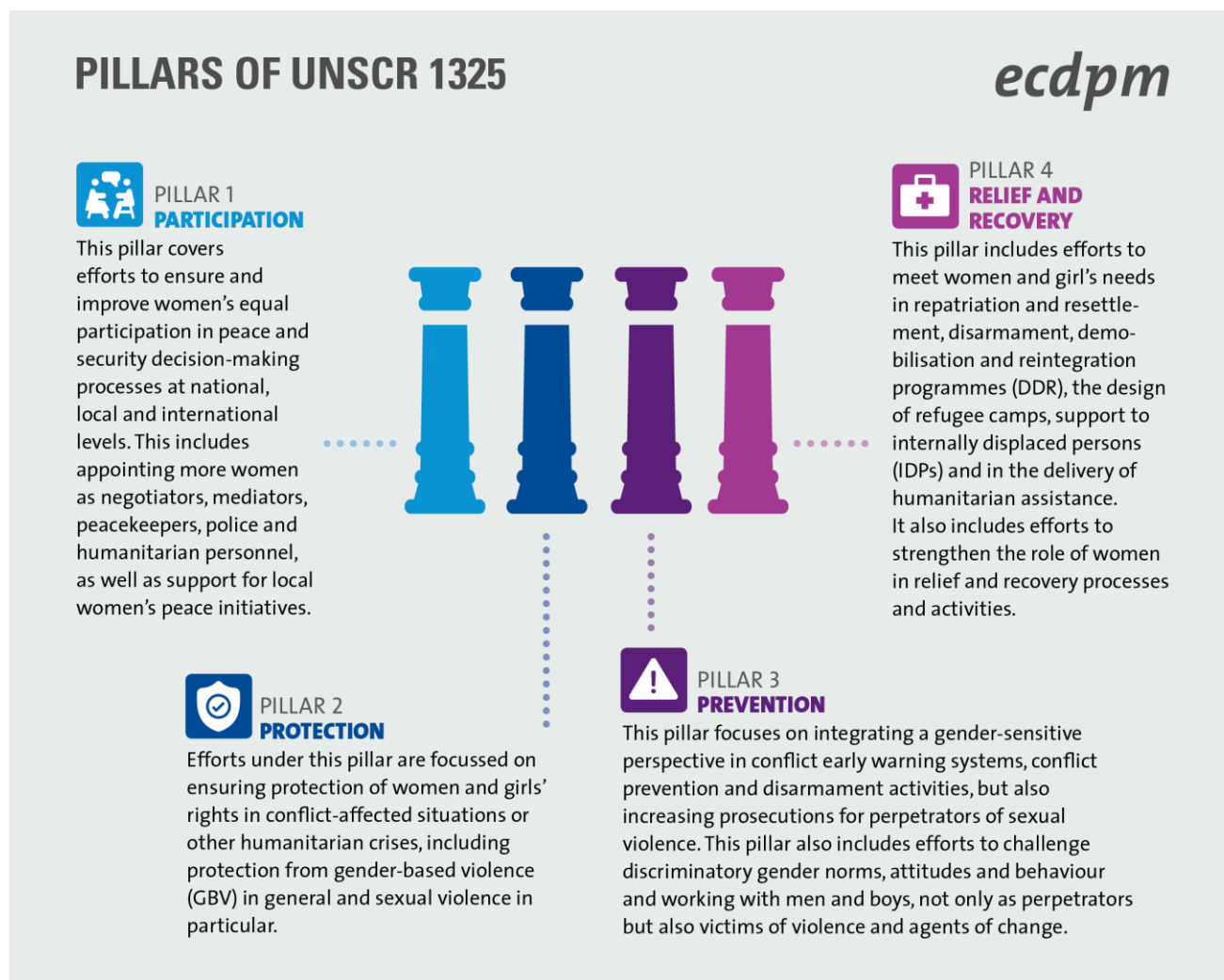
Figure 1: Timeline of women, peace and security agenda



1.2. Implementation of the WPS agenda, UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions

The implementation of the WPS agenda, including UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, can be grouped under four pillars: 1 Participation, 2. Prevention, 3. Protection and 4. Relief and recovery.¹⁵ Figure 2 below discusses these four pillars in more detail.

Figure 2: Pillars of UNSCR¹⁶



In 2015, the UN conducted a large-scale study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (the 'Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security').¹⁷ The Global Study highlighted a number of achievements since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions. These resolutions required, amongst other things, "that UN peacekeepers receive training on how to prevent, recognise and respond to

¹⁵ Hendricks (2017)

¹⁶ See: UN Women (2015), SIDA (2015) and USIP (2018).

¹⁷ UN (2015).

sexual violence; [...] that the UN sanctions regime should include those who commit sexual violence in conflict; and [that] the position of Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict [be established].”¹⁸ Monitoring is one area that has seen progress. Indeed, the UN has created several monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on sexual violence. In addition, the UN Secretary-General’s annual reports are required to list all parties to conflicts that perpetuate patterns of sexual violence (called for in UNSCR 1960 (2010)). The reports also include the global indicators for monitoring UNSCR 1325 (2000) (called for in UNSCR 1889 (2009)). Lastly, in 2011, the UN adopted a Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security with specific targets for 2014 and 2020.¹⁹

However, according to the Global Study, more work is needed: “[...], much of the progress toward the implementation of resolution 1325 continues to be measured in ‘firsts,’ rather than as standard practice. Obstacles and challenges still persist and prevent the full implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda.”²⁰ The scarcity of funds for the WPS agenda has led to a “disparity between policy commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the financial allocations to achieve them.”²¹ This has also been visible in the national action plans (NAPs) 1325, which will be discussed in detail in section 4 below. Many of the NAPs for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, while having galvanised efforts at the national level between civil society actors and governments, have weak implementation mechanisms and/or inadequate budgets available.²² Monitoring and reporting remain rather weak. For example, the 2017 and 2018 UN Secretary-General reports do not include a list of all parties to conflicts that perpetuate patterns of sexual violence.

1.3. The women, peace and security agenda in Africa

According to Hendricks (2017), the WPS agenda is firmly rooted in Africa and several AU member states played an important role in advancing the adoption of relevant resolutions at the UN. Namibia was president of the UN Security Council when it adopted UNSCR 1325, while South Africa co-sponsored the follow-up resolution 1820 (see figure 2 above). The extent to which these efforts have gone beyond rhetorical support for the WPS agenda will be discussed in more detail in section 2. With regards to each of the four pillars of the WPS agenda, there are both considerable achievements and shortcomings to note in Africa.

The advances made in women’s political representation and participation across Africa show signs of improvement. In countries such as Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa, female representation in parliaments has increased.²³ In October 2018, Ethiopia appointed a new gender-balanced cabinet, including a female minister of national defence and a minister of peace, as well as a female president. Notwithstanding, despite gender parity being a central principle, to which the AU and its member states subscribe (for example in the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, see below), female heads of state or government and female ministers of foreign affairs are still rare. There are various contexts in which different groups of women continue to face significant exclusion from political, economic and social life. Women are more likely than men to be engaged in the informal economy, potentially excluding them from legal protections and social benefits that come from formal

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Analysis: Progress and Challenge, accessed October 2018.

²⁰ UN (2015).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ World Bank (2018), Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (%), accessed October 2018, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>.

employment. In sub-Saharan Africa, 74% of women, compared to 61% of men, are likely to be employed in lower-paying, informal jobs.²⁴ This leaves women vulnerable to exploitation, low job security, extreme poverty, and largely excludes them from policy support programmes. Furthermore, women remain underrepresented in peace negotiations, notably as top mediators.²⁵ The mid-term review report of the African Women's Decade confirmed that gender-based violence continues to be a serious problem throughout the continent, perpetuated by cultural complicity in violence against women, lack of legal protection for women and weak law enforcement.²⁶

When assessing the achievements in promoting the WPS agenda, it is important to pay sufficient attention to intersectionality (the interconnection between different identity markers) gender identity does not automatically overlap with gender power dichotomy (men as powerful and women as powerless). There are powerful women and powerless men as well. Shepherd (2008) argues that the language of the WPS agenda has equated women's *agency* with women's *capacity* to act, ignoring the structural causes, such as poverty, which enable or inhibit women to be agents of transformational change. This is also true for some men. In fact, and these structural causes are closely intertwined with the participation of both men and women in social, political and economic life. How different groups of men and women engage with the WPS agenda will vary considerably and will form an important factor in identifying the pockets of resistance to and support for advancing the WPS and gender equality agendas.

As the authors of a recent report on masculinities note: "The fact that many of the world's poorest men are also disempowered—albeit in different ways from women—compared to men with more income and better social positions is nearly always left out of gender analyses and discussions but is a central issue in terms of how men view their own sense of power, and whether they view themselves as allies or beneficiaries of gender equality."²⁷ This has a considerable impact on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, notably through the so-called national action plans (NAPs) for UNSCR 1325, and how the injustices linked to intersectionality and inequality risk being perpetuated. While UNSCR 1325 and the NAPs to promote it have led to increased funding being available, many of the funded projects are at risk of being run by "elite, urban and middle-class women, which leaves most of the rural and disadvantaged populations disengaged from the agenda" (Aroussi, 2017).

Furthermore, especially in fragile and conflict situations, gender and gender relations are fluid and fast-changing, and 'gender norms both influence and are influenced by conflict and violence.'²⁸ There is a growing body of research that aims to improve our understanding of how interventions in peacebuilding and conflict prevention have had unintended consequences on the agency of men and women and the relations between men and women in different contexts. For example, research by Saferworld (2014) shows that, in "Somalia, protracted conflict and the resultant economic hardship have made it difficult for many men to fulfil the traditional masculine gender role of economic provider for and physical protector of their families".

Authors of a recent UN report on violent extremism in Africa note that "it is now recognised that [preventing violent extremism] (PVE) programming has tended until recently to be gender-blind", with "the gendered impacts of PVE programmes themselves" being overlooked.²⁹ A recent article by the Institute for Security Studies highlights the diverging roles and functions women play in different violent extremist groups in West Africa, and

²⁴ International Labour Organisations, Five facts about informal economy in Africa, June 2015.

²⁵ Desmidt, Apiko & Sævarsson (2017).

²⁶ Make Every Woman Count (2016).

²⁷ UNFPA (2014).

²⁸ Saferworld (2014).

²⁹ UNDP (2017).

how they are targeted for different ‘strategic reasons’.³⁰ In this context, El-Bushra and Gardner (2016) have argued for a shift from a *women, peace and security* agenda to a ‘Gender, Peace and Security agenda’, informed by a political economy approach that addresses the challenges of (different classes of) women and men and the ‘gender order’ in society as a whole.

The following section will provide an overview of the policy commitments to the WPS agenda in Africa, at the continental and sub-regional level. It will look at how these commitments are being implemented and what some of the gaps are in this policy architecture, notably within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

2. The promotion of the WPS agenda by the AU and regional organisations

African governments and regional institutions have adopted a long list of policies aligned with the WPS agenda³¹ and several regional and sub-regional organisations in Africa have also adopted an extensive gender equality policy framework. This suggests the normative framework of the WPS agenda and the principle of gender equality enjoy significant visibility, both at the level of regional organisations (RO) and the AU. Haastrup (2013) has referred to this as an ‘emergent gender equality regime’, while Abdullah (2017) notes the AU has “adopted the issues of peace and security and gender equality as part of its social transformation agenda on the continent.”³² Yet, Haastrup (2013), Abdullah (2017), and Hudson (2017) also criticised the lack of an effective strategy for implementation of these policy commitments and the rather narrow, security-focused conceptualisation of the WPS agenda. The latter is despite the advances the AU has made towards a more human security-focused conceptualisation in its gender equality regime. One example of these advances is Article 10 on ‘the Right to Peace’ in the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted in 2003.³³

These criticisms suggest that, despite multiple commitments by the AU and ROs in theory, the WPS agenda (including UNSCR 1325) has not been institutionalised sufficiently in practice. One of the reasons for this is the lack of an AU Commission-wide action plan or strategy for its implementation. Currently, the WPS agenda file sits between the AU’s Peace and Security department and the Bureau of the AUC Chairperson. The Bureau’s main implementation plan is the Gender, Peace and Security Programme, yet this might not be sufficient to ensure implementation across the AU Commission. The new launched AU Strategy on Gender and Women’s Empowerment, which was only launched in February 2019, could remedy some of this. It covers the entire AU Commission, and includes peace and security as one of its four pillars. At the time of writing, a final version was not yet publicly available, but, according to the draft, one of the objectives of the strategy is to “develop and review monitoring and evaluation tools for tracking progress towards gender equality within the Commission, Regional Economic Commission (RECs) and at Member State level.”³⁴

³⁰ Abatan (2018).

³¹ Hudson (2017).

³² Abdullah (2017).

³³ ACHPR (2003).

³⁴ AU (2017).

There is also a disconnect between where implementation takes place (mainly at the level of member states) and where regional and global WPS agenda commitments are designed, monitored and evaluated. In principle, the various policies on gender equality provide AU members with entry points to the principles of UNSCR 1325 (and follow-up resolutions) and the WPS agenda. But, as we will discuss in the below overview, the implementation avenues for the AU's policies on gender equality and the WPS agenda remain separated, in the same way they do in the EU.

2.1. The African Union, gender equality and the promotion of the WPS agenda

This section will provide an overview of the AU's main policy frameworks for the promotion of gender equality and the WPS agenda, in particular UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. Gender-related policies have mostly been adopted by the AU Assembly, while decisions on the WPS agenda are discussed and adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). This is mostly related to procedural and timing-related reasons, rather than being an indication of the political weight given to these topics.³⁵ This section will also give an overview of the departments and offices responsible for implementing the AU's commitments on WPS and gender equality in Africa and assess to what extent these two sets of policies intersect.

Gender equality at the AU

Article 4(I) of the African Union Constitutive Act (2000) specifically provides that the AU “shall function in accordance with the promotion of gender equality”, thereby making the promotion of gender equality one of its principles.³⁶ Some of the complementary key policy documents, described in detail below, are:

1. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol, 2003);³⁷
2. The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004);³⁸
3. The 2009 African Union Gender Policy³⁹, now replaced by the 2019 ‘Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment’; and
4. ‘Agenda 2063: Africa We Want’, the AU's development master plan, which includes several commitments towards improving gender equality across Africa.⁴⁰

1. In July 2003, the AU Assembly adopted the **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the so-called Maputo Protocol)**.⁴¹ The Maputo Protocol is a legally binding supplement to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter), which was adopted in 1981⁴². For example, Article 18(3) of the African Charter requires states to eliminate any form of discrimination against women and ensure the protection of their rights, as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. The Maputo Protocol entered into force in 2005 and outlines a range of human rights to which women are entitled and the state's obligation to uphold, promote, and protect these. The most important articles are Articles 9, 10 and 11, which focus on the right to political participation in political and

³⁵ Interview, February 2019.

³⁶ Desmidt, Apiko & Sævarsson (2017), see also: AU (N.d.).

³⁷ ACHPR (2003).

³⁸ AU (2004).

³⁹ AU (2009a).

⁴⁰ AU (2014b).

⁴¹ ACHPR (2003).

⁴² ACHPR (1981).

decision-making processes, protection of women in armed conflict and women's rights to peace, respectively. The Maputo Protocol also demands increased participation of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation processes. These objectives are very similar to the themes and pillars of UNSCR 1325, which the opening paragraphs of the Maputo protocol refer to.

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights is responsible for monitoring implementation of the Maputo Protocol through member states' submission of periodic reports under the African Charter, or to rule on files provided by other actors. This happened for the first time in May 2018, when the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights ruled that certain provisions of the Malian Persons and Family Code were inconsistent with provisions of the Maputo Protocol. The case had been filed by the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) and its Malian partner, Association pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits des Femmes (APDF).⁴³

2. At a summit in July 2004, the AU Heads of State and Government adopted the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). In the SDGEA, state leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of gender equality, in line with Article 4 (I) of the AU Constitutive Act, and other existing commitments, principles, goals, and actions set out in the various regional, continental and international instruments on human and women's rights. AU leaders committed to expanding and accelerating efforts to promote gender equality as well as UNSCR 1325. Furthermore, they committed to reporting annually on progress made in terms of gender mainstreaming, to support and champion all issues raised in the SDGEA (both at the national and regional level) and regularly provide each other with updates on progress made during AU Ordinary Sessions.
3. In 2009, AU heads of state and government adopted the African Union Gender Policy. Its main purpose was "to establish a clear vision and make commitments to guide the process of gender mainstreaming and women empowerment to influence policies, procedures and practices which will accelerate the achievement of gender equality, gender justice, non-discrimination and fundamental human rights in Africa".⁴⁴

In February 2009, the AU Assembly decided to declare 2010-2020 as the 'African Women's Decade'⁴⁵ with the objective of accelerating the implementation of agreed global and regional commitments of gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE).⁴⁶ Special focus was to be given to ten themes.⁴⁷ The Nairobi Declaration on the African Women's Decade in October 2010 marked its official launch.⁴⁸ The organisation Make Every Woman Count (MEWC), a non-governmental lobby group, was in charge of monitoring African countries' progress regarding women's rights and gender equality. In 2015, MEWC published a mid-term

⁴³ African court on Human and People's Rights (2018).

⁴⁴ AU (2009a).

⁴⁵ AU (2009b).

⁴⁶ AU (2018a).

⁴⁷ The ten focus themes for the Women's Decade are: 1. Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women and Entrepreneurship, 2. Agriculture and Food Security, 3. Women's Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV & AIDS, 4. Education, Science and Technology, 5. Environment and Climate Change, 6. Peace and Security and Violence Against Women, 7. Governance and Legal Protection, and 8. Finance and Gender Budgets, 9. Women In Decision Making position, and 10. Mentoring Youth (Men and Women) to be champions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

⁴⁸ AU (2010).

review of the African Women's Decade, reporting extensively on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the promotion of the WPS agenda (amongst other issues) for all 55 AU member states.⁴⁹

Following consultations in 2017 and 2018, the AUC Commission drafted a new AU Gender Strategy for the period 2018-2027, to align it with Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.⁵⁰ A Specialised Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment took place in May 2018. In February 2019, the new AU 'Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' was launched, during the 32nd AU Summit. According to the AU's press release, "the strategy is closely informed by all existing legal and policy frameworks"⁵¹ and built around four pillars (one of which focuses on security and resilience): 1. Maximising Outcomes, Opportunities and Tech E Dividends; 2. Dignity, Security and Resilience; 3. Effective Laws, Policies and Institutions; and 4. Leadership, Voice and Visibility.⁵²

4. In addition to these policies, the AU's flagship development agenda 'Agenda 2063: Africa We Want' includes several commitments towards improving gender equality.⁵³ This includes efforts towards a universal culture of good governance and human rights as well as gender equality (Aspiration 3: An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law), peace (Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa), and the participation of women in the development of the continent (Aspiration 6: An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of the African people, especially its women and youth, caring for children).

In the next section, we take a closer look at how the WPS agenda is integrated in the AU's gender policies and commitments.

WPS in the AU's commitments to gender equality

Overall, the quality and quantity of references made to the WPS agenda in AU gender policies are mixed. The AU's gender policies refer to the WPS agenda to varying degrees, which creates potential entry points for the promotion and implementation of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, and the WPS agenda more broadly. Some policies make more explicit references than others. The 2009 AU gender policy refers to UNSCR 1325 as a foundation for its gender policy and a key commitment. According to this policy, AU organs, sub-regional organisations (ROs) and AU member states should "integrate gender in policies, programmes and activities in the peace process, by using the frameworks of UN Resolutions 1325 and 1820."⁵⁴ According to the AU 'Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment', launched in February 2019, peace and security is one of the four pillars. One of the specific objectives of the draft document is to "strengthen the Women, Peace and Security programme to ensure that all African countries adopt and implement UN Resolution 1325 including provision of Transitional justice and reparations."⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Make Every Woman Count (2016).

⁵⁰ AU (2017).

⁵¹ AU (2019).

⁵² *Ibid.*; At the time of writing the final version of this new AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was not publicly available yet. The press release notes that the Strategy would be "rolled-out starting 2019"

⁵³ AU (2015a).

⁵⁴ AU (2004).

⁵⁵ AU (2017).

Similarly, the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) refers to the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), CEDAW and UNSCR 1325, amongst others. In the SDGEA, AU leaders agreed to “ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace processes including the prevention, resolution, management of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa as stipulated in UN Resolution 1325 (2000) and to also appoint women as Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the African Union”.⁵⁶

Although the Maputo Protocol merely recalls UNSCR 1325 in its introductory paragraphs, it contains many aspects of the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325. The Maputo Protocol in itself was not explicitly intended to bolster the implementation of the global WPS agenda (i.e. UNSCR 1325, follow-up resolutions and other legal instruments). However, as a legal instrument, it could potentially serve as a tool for increased accountability and monitoring of African and regional WPS policies. On the other hand, observers believe it should instead be used to strengthen the implementation of African commitments.⁵⁷ Currently, national reporting against the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol is fragmented, with considerable divergences in compliance between signatory states.⁵⁸

As part of its commitments to the African Women’s Decade 2010-2020, the AU claims it will work with the AU Peace and Security Department (PSD), the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Panel of the Wise (PoW) on UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889, with particular focus on Violence Against Women (VAW), peace building and reconstruction. This is a rather weak statement, as it is not clear how or why work to promote UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions was not already included in the mandate of the PSC, AU Department of Peace and Security (AU PSD) or the Panel of the Wise (PoW). In contrast with other focus themes of the Women’s Decade, such as political affairs or health, initially, the AU had not spelled out concrete targets for the 2010-2020 period regarding peace and security. This was done later, in a separate document, the Gender, Peace and Security Programme (2015-2020) (GPSP), launched in 2014 by the AU PSD. However, based on publicly available information, the complementarity or coordination between these two initiatives is not clear or explicit.

While the AU’s development agenda, Agenda 2063, makes no reference to UNSCR 1325 or related resolutions, it does refer to the Beijing Women’s Conference. Furthermore, any references to women in Agenda 2063 are often in juxtaposition with ‘youth’, ‘children’ or civil society. Thus, referring, in broad terms, to groups that are currently excluded from political participation and socio-economic life or subject to sexual violence and discrimination. Conversely, the sections about food security and agriculture, and health take a more intersectional approach, as they sometimes mention different *groups* of women.⁵⁹

WPS in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

This section will provide a short overview of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and how it implements the WPS agenda.

The institutional framework of the APSA

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the AU’s main framework for developing responses to peace and security challenges in Africa. The APSA’s main pillars were established in line with the 2000 Constitutive Act and the 2002 Peace and Security Protocol. They include the Peace and Security Council (PSC),

⁵⁶ AU (2004).

⁵⁷ Interview, February 2019.

⁵⁸ ACHPR (2019).

⁵⁹ AU (2015a), see pages 31 and 32.

the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the African Standby Force (ASF), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), and the AU Peace Fund. Box 2 below gives a brief overview of the different roles these pillars play.

Box 2: Background - The institutional framework of the APSA⁶⁰

With the establishment of the AU and the APSA, a number of other bodies were created. They function as the institutional skeleton of the AU's and sub-regional organisations' (ROs) day-to-day interventions and activities on peace and security in Africa. The APSA is institutionally diverse and far from static. The APSA and its institutions build on the experience and mandates of ROs and similar structures in the ROs. In this way, the APSA's institutions function as a platform for cooperation and coordination, with similar bodies at the level of the ROs, as well as external partners. It is composed of the following elements:

The **Peace and Security Council (PSC)** is the AU's standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts (PSC Protocol, Art. 2(1)) and is the cornerstone of the APSA. The PSC is made up of 15 members, 10 of which are elected for a term of two years, while five are elected to serve for three years. The PSC is designed to provide "a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa."⁶¹

The **African Union Commission (AU Commission)** is responsible for implementing PSC decisions and provides operational support. This happens mainly through the AU Commission Chairperson and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, who report to the PSC on the implementation of PSC decisions and their own initiatives. The Chairperson and Commissioner are supported by the Peace and Security Department (PSD).

The **African Standby Force (ASF)** is the multi-dimensional force of the APSA covering police, military and civilian dimensions. It was established by Article 13 of the PSC Protocol⁶² and is made up of five regional and multidisciplinary brigades.⁶³ The ASF includes military, civilian and police elements, which are expected to complement each other when mandated to implement PSC decisions that have to do with Peace Support Operations (PSO).

The **Panel of the Wise (PoW)** is an advisory component of the APSA with 'silent' and preventive diplomacy as its main areas of engagement. It consists of five prominent African personalities. Each member represents one of the five regions of the continent. Members of the Panel act to promote peace and resolve conflicts either on the invitation of the PSC, the Chairperson of the Commission or on their own initiative.⁶⁴ The Panel of the Wise has been engaged in different conflict contexts since its inauguration in 2007, including Madagascar, Egypt and Kenya.

The **Peace Fund (PF)** is a financial instrument created under Article 21 of the PSC protocol. The PF shall provide the necessary financial resources for the operationalisation of the APSA. The Peace Fund is supposed to be funded through contributions from donors, member states, private sector, civil society and individuals.⁶⁵

The **Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)** is the AU's early warning system and aims to provide timely and reliable data to warn the PSC and the AU Commission of potential conflicts and outbreaks of violence. Where possible, the CEWS coordinates efforts with similar structures in the ROs.

⁶⁰ See also: Desmidt & Hauck (2017).

⁶¹ Bah et al. (2014).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ These include: East African Standby Force (EASF), South African Standby Force (SASF), Central African Standby Force (CASF), North Africa Regional Capability (NARC) and ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF).

⁶⁴ Bah, et al. (2014).

⁶⁵ Since 2017, the AU has committed itself, as part of a wider process of institutional reforms, to increasing the self-sufficiency of the organisation by covering 100% of its operational, 75% of programmatic and 25% of peace and security costs by 2021. The AU – through its AU High Representative for Financing of the AU and the Peace Fund, Dr Kaberuka – proposed that its MS impose a 0.2% levy on selected import items and forward the revenue to the AU. This includes a

Of these six pillars, the AU PSC plays a central role in decision-making and policy formulation on peace and security issues in Africa. The work of the PSC is guided by the AU Constitutive Act (2001), the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (2002), the Solemn Declaration of a Common African Defence and Security Policy (2004), and the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development policy (2006).

There are two main documents that guide the APSA's work: 1. the 'AU Master Roadmap Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns by 2020'⁶⁶ and 2. the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020. Both documents contain commitments to mainstreaming gender, including enhancing the role of women in peace and security activities by the AU (and ROs). In the 'Roadmap to Silence The Guns by 2020', one of the concrete action points to be realised by 2020 is training mediators, women in particular, to participate in preventive diplomacy (conflict prevention). The establishment of the African Network of Female Mediators (FemWise-Africa) partly responds to this objective.

The APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 was launched in 2015 as a guide for the further development of the APSA's institutional pillars. In the Roadmap, the AU confirms, "UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions are the cornerstones of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, supplemented by the AU's and regional commitments and declarations."⁶⁷ Moreover, the AU admits more work is needed to mainstream gender in the APSA, including the development of appropriate indicators and monitoring tools, as well as adding more staff capacity to implement gender programmes.⁶⁸ How (through which departments, programmes or offices) these commitments to promote the WPS agenda are implemented is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Integration of WPS in the APSA

At present, the AU has not created a regional action plan (RAP) on UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. As noted in the above section, several AU-wide policies on gender equality include references to the WPS agenda, including UNSCR 1325, but to varying degrees. In fact, the two key documents guiding the APSA institutions' activities, 'AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns by 2020'⁶⁹ and the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 are both weak in terms of their references to UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda. Neither document clearly sets out how the WPS agenda will be promoted under the umbrella of the APSA. UNSCR 1325 is not mentioned once in the Master Roadmap, and women are only mentioned four times, including three times where women and youth are mentioned in juxtaposition. The AUC's Gender, Peace and Security Programme (GPSP) was developed at the same time as the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020. The GPSP was expected to mainstream gender across the Peace and Security Department and thus across the deployment and operationalisation of APSA instruments (see box 2).⁷⁰ The GPSP includes the work plan of the Office of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, but is not AU Commission-wide and thus limited to the Peace and Security Department of the AUC.

funding target of 400 million for the Africa Peace Fund, which will then be used to fund 25% of the peace and security costs of the Union.

⁶⁶ AU (2016).

⁶⁷ AU (2015b).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ AU (2014b). See also: AU (2016).

⁷⁰ Interview, February 2019

Main WPS policies and strategies

The APSA roadmap incorporates gender as a ‘cross-cutting issue’. According to the AU, the APSA Roadmap “should be seen as a key contribution to mainstreaming gender issues into the continental peace and security agenda and ensuring women’s increased participation and protection in time of conflict.” In addition to enhancing the capacities of African regional organisations to integrate gender, the AU aims to support regional peace and security organisations and mechanisms “in implementing regional action plans on Resolution 1325 and other key resolutions and strengthening capacity to monitor national action plans.”⁷¹

It is not clear how the APSA Roadmap or the Roadmap to Silence the Guns are able to mobilise forces, nor is it entirely clear how these two documents relate to each other. The APSA Roadmap is ambitious and has received significant external funding, but it is unclear who is driving its implementation. A recent evaluation noted that the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 is “seen by some as too complex a document, difficult to work with and therefore less helpful as an operational instrument [...]”. In fact, it does not feature in public events or discourse (such as AU PSC communiqués), and in practice seems to lack strong ownership.⁷² By contrast, the AU bodies (AUC and AU PSC) refer more regularly and extensively to the “African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by Year 2020”.⁷³

The AU’s central policy and decision-making organ on peace and security is the AU PSC. Its work is underpinned by a number of policies. Of these, the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy is most advanced in terms of its gender-sensitive language and programming, while the AU Constitutive Act is the least gender sensitive.⁷⁴ The PCRD policy mainstreams gender and women-specific issues across all its sections and addresses women and gender as standalone issues. It is quite detailed in its recommendations and explicitly calls for the ratification of, accession to, and domestication and implementation of the relevant AU and international instruments relating to women’s rights, such as UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1880 and 1889 (see box 1 above).⁷⁵

Not surprisingly, the AU Constitutive Act makes no references to the policies on gender equality (such as the AU Gender Policy) or the WPS agenda that the AU adopted after it was signed. Indeed, the AU Constitutive Act was adopted in July 2000, before the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in the UNSCR. Despite the importance of the gender parity principle promoted in the AU Constitutive Act (art. 4(l)), observers note that much more needs to be done to increase the representation and participation of women in all of its peace and security structures and mechanisms.⁷⁶ Over all, the text of the AU Constitutive Act is rather inconsistent in terms of being gender sensitive. On the one hand, it refers to ‘his or her deputy or deputies’ for the AU Commission ‘chairman’. Then it refers to women only where it establishes the importance of partnerships between governments and “all segments of civil society, *in particular women*, youth and the private sector” (own emphasis).

According to Alaga, Birikorang and Jaye (2011), the AU should consider revising the AU Constitutive Act, so it contains more explicit references to other legal instruments and policy documents that aim to promote gender equality and the WPS agenda. These policy documents include the Maputo Protocol, the AU Gender Policy and

⁷¹ AU (2015b).

⁷² Mackie et al. (2018).

⁷³ AU (2015b).

⁷⁴ Alaga, Birikorang and Jaye (2011).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

global commitments related to UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions. A revision of the Act would provide an opportunity to update the language and make it more gender sensitive. It might also better reflect the AU's various commitments to gender equality and WPS as well as other relevant developments since 2000. But there are other options as well. The PSC Protocol, which guides the work of the PSC, a central body within the APSA, is being revised under the AU's current reform process. In the medium term, according to observers, these discussions could serve as a more strategic starting point to incorporate and update the language related to women, gender, peace and security.⁷⁷

In May 2018, the AU PSC adopted the Continental Results Framework (CRF) on Women, Peace and Security in Africa. This framework is meant to “monitor the implementation by AU Member States and other relevant stakeholders of the various African and international instruments and other commitments on women, peace and security in Africa.”⁷⁸ It was officially launched in February 2019. The AU PSC also asked the AU Commission, through the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, to provide the PSC with annual reports on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Africa. Currently, the Special Envoy reports on WPS to the PSC on a quarterly basis. The first annual report was published in July 2016⁷⁹ and contains a zero draft of the recently launched CRF.

Implementation of the WPS agenda in the AU

The AU's WPS commitments are implemented through a number of departments and offices. These include the Women and Gender Development Directorate (WGDD), under the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission, the Office of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, and the Women, Gender, Peace and Security Programme (2015-2020), under the Department of Peace and Security.

The WGDD was established in 2000 and sits in the highest political and administrative office – that of the AUC Chairperson. The AUC Chairperson has the ultimate responsibility for gender mainstreaming within the AU.⁸⁰ The WGDD's main task is to promote gender equality and facilitate gender mainstreaming across the AU Commission (AUC). The AUC has developed two action plans on mainstreaming gender in peace and security, in 2010 and 2013 respectively. In 2011, a gender advisor was appointed to the Department of Peace and Security of the AUC to ensure implementation of these decisions, but this position has been vacant for the last two years.⁸¹ Since 2014, a coordinator for the Gender, Peace, and Security Programme as well as a network of Gender Focal Points have been created in all divisions of the AUC Peace and Security Department. The WGDD hosts a gender pre-summit before the AU summits are held in January each year.

In January 2014, the AU appointed a Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security. Her mission is two-pronged: to promote the protection and advancement of the rights of women and children, in particular those affected by violent conflicts in Africa; and to ensure gender mainstreaming and equal participation of women in peace processes, including in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and peacebuilding.⁸² Women's representation in peace processes is lagging far behind. The Special Envoy has worked on increasing the capacity for women in mediation, including through high-level missions and cooperation with training centres such as the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre (KA IPTC) and the Pan-African Centre (PAC). There

⁷⁷ Interview, February 2019

⁷⁸ AU (2018b).

⁷⁹ AUC (2016).

⁸⁰ AU (2009a).

⁸¹ Interview, February 2019.

⁸² African Union Peace and Security (2017a) accessed November 2018.

is now a roster of African women for mediation and election observation⁸³ and in 2017 the African network of female mediators (FemWise-Africa) was established.⁸⁴ The Special Envoy was also appointed as a member of the High-Level Committee (HLC) on allegations of institutional malpractice and sexual harassment in the AUC. The AUC Chairperson established the HLC in May 2018, in response to allegations of harassment against women at the AU Commission.⁸⁵

In 2014, the AU launched the Gender, Peace and Security Programme (2015-2020) (GPSP) in the AU Commission's Department of Peace and Security. The programme serves as a "framework for the development of effective strategies and mechanisms for women's increased participation in the promotion of peace and security [...] and to enhance protection of women in conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa."⁸⁶ The GPSP includes some gender sensitive language and objectives, e.g. where it states it will also consider men's experiences and potentialities. The GPSP will be running until 2020. So far, no evaluation of the programme has been made publicly available. How the recently launched AU Strategy on Gender and Women Employment will complement this programme remains to be seen, given that one of the Strategy's four pillars relates to peace and security.

2.2. WPS and gender equality in the sub-regional organisations

In an effort to promote the WPS agenda, various African sub-regional organisations and national governments have created dedicated strategies or action plans to implement UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. The extent to which these national action plans (NAPs) are adopted varies widely across the regions. While West Africa has the highest concentration of NAPs, there is only one NAP for UNSCR 1325 in North Africa. In addition, several sub-regional organisations have adopted regional action plans.

National and regional action plans in Africa towards the implementation of the WPS agenda

Overall, 24 out of 55 AU member states (43.6% of all AU member states) have UNSCR 1325 NAPs, which is slightly better than at the global level. At the moment, 79 UN member states (40.9% of all UN member states) have UNSCR 1325 NAPs. In the European Union (EU), 17 out of 28 EU member states (60.7% of all EU member states) have adopted 1325 NAPs⁸⁷. This is considerably better than the global average. The high prevalence of NAPs in EU and AU member states shows significant support for the WPS agenda – at least on paper. However, there are considerable regional variations. In 2018, Tunisia became the first, and so far only, North African country to adopt a NAP. Not all regional organisations that form part of the APSA have adopted regional action plans either. As we will see in the next section, looking at whether national and regional action plans for UNSCR 1325 are complemented with regional or national gender policies, gives a mixed picture.

West Africa has the largest concentration of countries to adopt a NAP 1325 (13 of its 15 member states have NAPs), and the regional organisation, ECOWAS, has adopted a regional action plan for UNSCR 1325. In 2010, ECOWAS adopted the *Dakar Declaration & ECOWAS Plan of Action for the Implementation of United Nations*

⁸³ African Union. Peace and Security (2017b).

⁸⁴ Diop & Desmidt (2017).

⁸⁵ AU (2018c).

⁸⁶ AU (2014a).

⁸⁷ This figure includes the United Kingdom.

*Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 in West Africa.*⁸⁸ This regional action plan was updated in 2013, during a mid-term review exercise.⁸⁹ This review identified a number of challenges, such as the absence of a large-scale popularisation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820, poor enforcement of national legal instruments for the protection of women's rights, and low participation of women and girls in formal peace processes, amongst others.⁹⁰ It seems ECOWAS' regional action has not been updated since 2015.

In addition, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) is currently also developing a gender policy. Most of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states have also adopted national gender policies. However, there is a much lower prevalence of 1325 NAPs in Southern Africa, compared to West Africa and ECOWAS. Indeed, only four out of 16 SADC member states (Angola, Namibia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mozambique) have adopted NAPs on 1325. In August 2018, the SADC adopted a Regional Strategy on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2022), which calls on member states to adopt NAPs 1325.

In East Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) has a 'Regional Action Plan for Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) (2011-2015)'. The EU directly supported it through funds provided under the EU's African Peace Facility. In 2008, Uganda became an early adopter of a NAP 1325, although it has not revised it since. Other countries that adopted NAPs more recently are Kenya (2016) and South Sudan (2015). The East African Community (EAC), as a whole, adopted an EAC Regional Framework on UNSCR 1325 (2015-2019),⁹¹ but little publicly available information was available on its status of implementation.

In Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2010), Burundi (2012), Rwanda (2009), the Central African Republic (2014) and Cameroon (2017) have all adopted NAPs 1325. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) is in the process of creating a regional action plan. Yet, the 2006 Pact on Peace, Stability, and Development in the Great Lakes Region, adopted by the ICGLR, had already integrated elements of UNSCR 1325.⁹² The regional action plan for the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) was validated and adopted in May 2018.

As mentioned above, there is only one NAP for UNSCR 1325 in North Africa. In 2017, UN Women conducted a baseline study, funded by the Government of Finland, on the UNSCR 1325 implementation in Tunisia. The objective was to identify the priorities that could feature in a future NAP. In May 2018, the final version of the NAP 1325 was adopted, and submitted to the Tunisian Cabinet for approval. Research by the US Institute for Peace on the promotion of NAPs for UNSCR 1325 across the Middle East and Africa, shows that the general lack of awareness has been "a major obstacle to both launching viable campaigns for 1325 and recruiting actors necessary for its implementation" across the region.⁹³ This was particularly the case in Tunisia and as Egypt,

⁸⁸ Dakar Declaration & ECOWAS Plan of Action for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 in West Africa, September 2010.

⁸⁹ The review meeting was organised by the UN office in West Africa (UNOWA). Participants include government and civil society representatives, as well as participants from United Nations peacekeeping missions in the sub-region at the time (UNOCI in Cote d'Ivoire, UNIOGBIS in Guinea-Bissau and UNMIL in Liberia), the West African Regional Office of UN WOMEN, and representatives from the Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in West Africa.

⁹⁰ UN (2013).

⁹¹ FAWE (N.d.).

⁹² Miller, Pournik & Swaine (2014).

⁹³ Rayman, Izen and Parker (2016).

where “[f]or those aware of 1325, it is perceived as irrelevant in the Egyptian context, as the country is neither at war nor experiencing protracted violent conflict.”⁹⁴

Gender policies in the regions

In some regions in Africa, regional bodies have adopted policy architectures on gender equality. This is the case in West Africa, under ECOWAS, but also in Southern Africa with the SADC, and in Eastern Africa, with the IGAD and the EAC. In general, there is very little synergy between these gender policies and the regional action plans on UNSCR 1325. In most cases, they lack clear indications for entry points for the WPS agenda, or guidance on how these two agendas could be interlinked and mutually reinforcing. This risks entrenching a divide in terms of implementation, budgeting and results monitoring. This is despite the fact that, conceptually, both the debate on gender equality, women’s empowerment, the WPS agenda, and their respective objectives are closely interlinked.

In West Africa, the regional gender equality policies consist of the ECOWAS Gender Policy (2004), the Supplementary Act relating to Equality of Rights between Men and Women for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region⁹⁵ (2015), ECOWAS Policy for Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access⁹⁶ (2015), the Gender Strategy of the ECOWAS Parliament 2010-2020⁹⁷, and the ECOWAS Gender and Elections Strategic Framework (GESF) and Action Plan (2016)⁹⁸.

In Southern Africa, the SADC established a Gender Unit in 1996 and adopted a Declaration on Gender and Development in 1997.⁹⁹ The SADC Gender Policy was adopted in 2007.¹⁰⁰ In 2008, SADC Heads of State and Government signed and adopted the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development¹⁰¹, with the exception of Botswana and Mauritius. The protocol was intended to harmonise all actions by the SADC and SADC member states with international commitments and resolutions to which they have subscribed, including UNSCR 1325. It only entered into force in 2013, following the ratification of the instrument by the requisite two-thirds of member states. A review of the targets and indicators of the SADC Protocol on Gender, in line with Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and follow-up resolutions to UNSCR 1325, took place in 2015. The Revised SADC Protocol on Gender and Development entered into force in 2016. 12 SADC member states¹⁰² have now signed the agreement amending the SADC Gender Protocol. Annual monitoring of the achievements against the indicators and targets of the SADC Gender Protocol is done by civil society, such as Gender Links¹⁰³, an NGO based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ ECOWAS (2015b).

⁹⁶ ECOWAS (2015a).

⁹⁷ ECOWAS (2010).

⁹⁸ ECOWAS (2016).

⁹⁹ SADC (1997).

¹⁰⁰ SADC (2007).

¹⁰¹ SADC (2008).

¹⁰² Namibia, Seychelles, Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kingdom of Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Malawi and South Africa are yet to sign the amendment. The remaining two member states, the Union of Comoros and Mauritius, cannot sign the amendment, as they are not parties to the protocol. Comoros is a new member of SADC after having been formally admitted into SADC by the 38th SADC Summit held on 17-18 August 2018. Mauritius is not part of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development because it is not in line with the civil code of the country, which allows children to marry below the age of 18 but above 16 with parental consent.

¹⁰³ *GenderLinks* coordinates the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance, a grouping of 40 NGOs that lobbied for the adoption and implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. In 2018, the Southern African Gender

The IGAD has adopted several gender policies, including the IGAD Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan 2016-2020 (2015) and the IGAD Strategy for Higher Representation of Women in Decision Making Positions (2013). Its Regional Strategy 2016 made gender affairs a priority area, and adopted gender sensitivity as a key principle.¹⁰⁴ In East Africa, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) passed the EAC Gender Equality and Equity Bill in 2017 and the Eastern African Community (EAC) adopted a new EAC Gender Policy in 2018.

In North Africa, there is neither a regional gender policy framework nor is there an effective regional body spearheading efforts in the field of (women) peace and security. Other regional bodies that have adopted gender policies are COMESA and ECCAS. For COMESA, these include the 2002 COMESA Gender Policy and the 2008 COMESA Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Action Plan. It is not clear whether these plans have been reviewed or updated.

2.3. Current shortcomings in the efforts to promote the WPS agenda in Africa

The AU has been able to live up to some of its commitments as regards gender equality. The AU Commission has adhered to gender parity, and the appointment of Ms Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as the AU Commission Chairperson in 2012 “signalled an important shift in female representation.”¹⁰⁵ Although there is no continental action plan to implement UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, this is not a necessary condition to advance the WPS agenda. Especially, since the AU adopted the ‘Continental Results Framework for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa’ in May 2018. This framework, which was officially launched in February 2019, aims to strengthen monitoring through a common tool. Hence, it could lead to better results as regards member states’ and other stakeholders’ implementation of the WPS agenda. The results framework was validated by member states and sub-regional organisations (ROs), some of which already have national and regional action plans in place. Other initiatives to monitor and evaluate against the AU policies on gender and the WPS agenda are already in place, such as the 2015 Mid-term Review of the African Women’s Decade. However, it is not always clear how these policy processes, evaluations and reviews intersect and how much uptake there has been at the AUC and PSC level.

The AU Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security who was appointed in 2014 has played an important role in promoting the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325.¹⁰⁶ While she has enjoyed leverage and independence in setting out her agenda, her office does not hold direct decision-making power, as the AU PSC (supported by the AU Commission) decides on her mandate. The Special Envoy has provided high-level leadership, including through annual reports on the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa, which are discussed in the AU PSC. Despite being appointed by the former Chairperson of the AU Commission, her office continued to receive political support under the new AU Commission. Compared to the EU/EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender (PAG) and UNSCR 1325/WPS, the AU Special Envoy has higher-level access to political decision-making bodies, such as the AU PSC. She has demonstrated considerable political clout, for example, by ensuring AU member states and ROs validate the WPS continental results framework. Given the scope of the WPS agenda and the challenges that threaten progress on its various components, both the offices of the Special Envoy and the WGDD are understaffed (though not necessarily underfunded).

Protocol Alliance published its annual SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, retrieved from: <http://genderlinks.org.za/what-we-do/sadc-gender-protocol/sadc-protocol-barometer/sadc-gender-protocol-barometer-2018/>.

¹⁰⁴ IGAD (2016).

¹⁰⁵ UN Women (2015).

¹⁰⁶ Diop & Desmidt (2017).

Despite high levels of political support and the creation of extensive policy frameworks for the WPS agenda, progress on the ground has been limited. For example, research on leadership in AU and REC/RM-led mediation shows that, between January 2012 and December 2016, only four peace agreements were signed following a female leading mediator or guarantor. In other words, 86% of peace agreements were signed with male leading mediators or guarantors.¹⁰⁷ WPS and gender issues are often limited to rhetoric and “portrayed as women’s concerns and priorities, not as critical issues for national advancement and development”.¹⁰⁸ For these reasons, the AU has been criticised for lacking an effective strategy to implement WPS policy commitments and its rather narrow conceptualisation of the WPS agenda in Africa.

There is a mixed record in the adoption of policies on WPS and NAPs for UNSCR 1325 across the different regions in Africa. Some regions are strongly committed to UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, both at the national and the regional level (for example in West Africa and ECOWAS). Other regions have implemented a regional action plan for 1325, but only a limited number of states have adopted NAPs 1325 (for example in the Horn of Africa and the IGAD, and in Southern Africa with the SADC). In North Africa, where there is no regional organisation potentially driving the regional WPS agenda, Tunisia is the only country to have adopted a NAP 1325. This begs the question what role the AU could play in promoting the adoption and, more importantly, the implementation of the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325 in those regions that lag behind, in line with its continental mandate.

3. The EU and the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Africa

This section will discuss how the European Union (EU) has promoted the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in its external action, in particular in Africa, as well as the EU gender action plan. It provides an overview of how the WPS agenda is included in the key policies that affect the EU’s relationship with Africa. It will also discuss the main external financing instruments that have been used by the EU to promote the WPS agenda. This section focuses only on the EU institutions and excludes bilateral activities undertaken by EU member states to promote the WPS.

3.1. EU policies with regards to Women, Peace and Security

Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820

The EU’s first strategy to coordinate efforts to implement UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolution 1820, the so-called EU ‘*Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820*’ (CA 1325/1820), was adopted in 2008, eight years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325. In 2010, the Council of the EU adopted indicators to monitor implementation of CA 1325. These indicators were revised in 2016. Three implementation reports have been published to date.

¹⁰⁷ Desmidt, Apiko and Sævarsson (2017).

¹⁰⁸ Abdullah (2017).

By 2018, the CA 1325/1820 was out of date: the WPS resolutions adopted after UNSCR 1820 were not included¹⁰⁹, and the tone and priorities of the document were arguably also in need of updating in light of best practice and lessons learnt from the WPS community. The creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and recent EU policy developments, including the shift in priorities towards stemming migration, preventing and countering violent extremism and counter-terrorism, and the significant gendered-dimensions of these, were also not addressed in the 2008 policy.

In 2017, the EU/EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and on UNSCR 1325/WPS (PAG), Ambassador Mara Marinaki, initiated a consultative process that gathered pace during 2018. This consultative process engaged stakeholders from across the EU institutions, organs and missions, member states, and civil society to revise and update the CA 1325/1820. The revised document, the EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security, was adopted in December 2018.

The CA 1325/1820 emphasised the EU's ambition to 'protect, support and empower women'¹¹⁰, reflecting a more generalised positioning of women in conflict-affected situations. That is, primarily, as victims to be protected, usually after the fact of violence, rather than as agents to be empowered. Hence the prevention of violence, in general, and specifically against women and girls, by addressing both the root causes of gender inequality, which leads to gender- and sexually-based violence, and the gendered causes of conflict, is absent from the text. This framing also overlooks male victimhood, particularly that of sexual violence.

The CA 1325/1820 also emphasises the importance of promoting gender equality, but the implementation reports give no indication of what initiatives EU actors have undertaken, if any, to promote gender equality outside the EU. The main focus of the implementation reports is on gender equality within the EU, and particularly the gender balance in peace and security posts. The reports do not demonstrate progress in this limited area of gender parity: only 14% of EU senior managers are women, a figure which remained unchanged between 2013 and 2015, while the percentage of women Heads of Delegation has fallen from 23% to 20%.¹¹¹

The EU's Strategic Approach to WPS is a stronger policy than the CA 1325/1820. It emphasises women's leadership and agency over victimhood, and that all EU external action should be based on robust gender and conflict analysis. The challenge, however, remains in implementation; an action plan is expected in early 2019 and this should include rigorous and transparent indicators to measure progress.¹¹²

The CA 1325/1820 led to the creation of the EU informal task force on WPS (EUITF), which provides a platform for exchange between different EU stakeholders and member states on pertinent issues. The EUITF often includes civil society representatives, and monitors the adoption and revision of NAPs within the EU. It meets at both strategic and working levels, and has been the main forum of consultation for the reviewing and drafting of the new EU Strategic Approach to WPS.

¹⁰⁹ Such as: UNSCR 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2272 (2016) and 2331 (2016).

¹¹⁰ Council of the EU (2008).

¹¹¹ Council of the EU (2017b).

¹¹² Davis (2018).

While the EUITF has provided a much-needed platform for exchange, its informal nature points to a significant challenge for implementing the CA 1325. That is, its lack of a clear home, in comparison say to the Council Working party on Human Rights, COHOM, in the policy hierarchy from which to influence external policy.

The EU/EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and UNSCR 1325/WPS

This position of Principal Advisor on Gender (PAG) was created in 2015, and Ambassador Mara Marinaki is its first incumbent. The position was created without a clear mandate or significant resourcing; in September 2016, Sweden seconded an expert to the office to support the PAG. In addition to chairing the EUITF, or co-chairing the task force with a representative of the Presidency, the PAG has created space for exchange and coordination between different EU and member state stakeholders.¹¹³ In the absence of adequate resourcing, the PAG's role has been largely limited to persuasion, with apparently some success, as the revision process for the CA 1325/1820 has demonstrated.

To date, however, the senior management within the EEAS and Commission has not adequately prioritised the WPS agenda. As a result, its concerns have not been translated sufficiently into all external policy areas. This includes the priority areas of stemming migration, preventing and countering violent extremism and counter-terrorism, and technical areas most closely related to WPS, such as the conflict prevention, resilience and guidance on conflict analysis.¹¹⁴

This lack of adequate political support to and implementation of the WPS agenda is reflected in the implementation reports, which state that only 53% of EU Delegations (EUDs) reported on 1325 implementation for 2010-2012, and only 42% for 2013-2015.¹¹⁵ For the year 2017, 60 of 139 EUDs responded (43%).¹¹⁶ In contrast, 100% of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions consistently report. This demonstrates differential enforcement of compliance with reporting requirements by different parts of the hierarchy, and underscores the importance of enforcing policy implementation, including reporting.

The EU Gender Action Plan (GAP)

The Joint Staff Working Document *"Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020"*, also known as the second Gender Action Plan (GAP II)¹¹⁷ was published on 21 September 2015 and adopted just as the EU's programming cycle for the period 2014-2020 ended. It was followed by the "Council Conclusions of the 26th October 2015 on the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020".¹¹⁸ It succeeded the previous GAP (2010-2015), which "as a roadmap for translating the EU's global [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment] commitments into action and results" was deemed not fit for purpose.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Davis (2018).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Council of the EU (2017b), *ibid* p.9.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ EC (2015b).

¹¹⁸ Council of the EU (2015).

¹¹⁹ EC (2015a).

The GAP outlines four key areas of work, two of which are directly related to the WPS agenda. The four areas are:

1. Ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity;
2. Promoting the economic and social rights/empowerment of girls and women;
3. Strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation;
4. Shifting the Commission services' and the EEAS' institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments.

This latter area – shifting the institutional culture – overlaps with the concerns of the CA 1325/1820 implementation reports with improving the gender balance within the EU peace and security architecture. There are also other areas of synergy between the two processes: Area 1 ('Ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity') relates to the protection pillar of UNSCR 1325 and area 3 ('Strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation') is related to the participation pillar of the resolution.

Overall however, references to and connections between the WPS agenda and the relevant UNSC resolutions are meagre. There is also an institutional disconnect as the WPS agenda sits with the EEAS and the GAP with the European Commission's Directorate-General for International cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO). Moreover, the association of (or limiting of) the WPS agenda to situations in conflict presents a challenge that is both conceptual and institutional. The gender equality concerns of WPS are the same as those in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG5), and there may be pockets of instability in otherwise 'safe' countries where DEVCO is present. The need for conflict-sensitive Development Aid that Does No Harm is well understood. The GAP does not, however, disaggregate reporting by situations of fragility; if it did so, this would enable greater policy coherence between development aid and WPS.

During 2017, there has been some improvement in coordinating reporting, in that the implementation reporting for the GAP II and WPS are now on the same form, even if they are not truly integrated. There is however hope for greater coherence and efficiency with the December 2018 European Council Conclusions on the GAP and separate conclusions on WPS, also published in December 2018. This may prepare the ground for greater institutional and practical coherence between the EEAS and DEVCO, and between development aid, gender equality and WPS in the future.

3.2. EU policies and financial instruments for Africa

EU policies and cooperation with Africa

Broadly, cooperation between Africa and the European Union takes place under the umbrella of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). The JAES was adopted in 2007 and sets out common objectives and priorities. One of the four priority areas is peace and security, while gender equality was adopted as a key principle. The JAES is implemented through various instruments including the European Development Fund (EDF), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) for North Africa and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). These instruments are implemented by the EEAS, the Foreign Policy Instrument, and European Commission Directorates General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO).¹²⁰

¹²⁰ For the purpose of this paper, we largely left out activities of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) and actions under the common Foreign and Security (CFSP), including Common Security and

The EDF is also the EU's main financial instrument to implement commitments under the Cotonou Agreement, the partnership agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). It is worth mentioning, however, that the Cotonou Agreement does not refer to UNSCR 1325 (2000), or follow-up resolutions, despite the revisions in 2005, 2010 and 2014. Broad references are made to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the Cotonou Agreement only refers to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in its preamble, and notes that “the situation of women and gender issues in all areas — political, economic and social” will be considered in a systematic manner. Gender is incorporated as a cross-cutting issue, with strong references to equal participation of men and women in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life.¹²¹ With regards to peacebuilding and conflict prevention and resolution, references to women are rather weak and limited to their protection (together with children) and ensuring more active involvement of women in reconciliation efforts. So, while UNSC resolutions on women, peace and security are not mentioned, there are linkages, to varying degrees, with aspects of the WPS agenda.

Financial instruments and support for WPS in Africa

The EU allocated an estimated EUR 6.5 billion to gender equality in 2015. Of this total, according to the EU's input into the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security (2015), it spends approximately EUR 200 million annually on WPS specifically.¹²² At the time of writing, more detailed information for the years 2016-2018 was not publicly available, nor was information available on how much of these funds were allocated in Africa specifically.¹²³ As mentioned earlier, the funding instruments used by the EU to disburse WPS funds in Africa are the IcSP, the EDF for the African Peace Facility (APF), the DCI for the Pan-African Programme and the EIDHR. Desk-based research for this paper found that, in practice, the most commonly used funding instruments to promote and support the WPS agenda in Africa are the IcSP and the EDF, which includes the APF. EDF funds are disbursed through two regional indicative programmes (RIPs) and national indicative programmes (NIPs). In the section below, we give a more extensive overview of how these instruments have been applied and how WPS commitments are reflected within them.

The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)

The IcSP is one of the EU's External Financing Instruments (EFIs) designed to support the EU's external objectives and actions. The scope of actions under the IcSP is laid down in its regulation.¹²⁴ The IcSP regulation includes ‘gender equality and the empowerment of women’ as a cross-cutting issues for its programming. It is one of the EU's main instruments for security initiatives and peacebuilding activities and came into force in 2014. It replaces the former Instrument for Stability (IfS) and several earlier instruments (which focused on drugs, landmines, uprooted people, crisis management, rehabilitation and reconstruction).

Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations. Based on publicly available information, we could not find any activities towards WPS deployed through DG NEAR in Northern Africa.

¹²¹ The Cotonou Agreement 2010 (revised), signed 2014.

¹²² UN (2015). See also: Council of EU (2017b).

¹²³ Globally, WPS funds are channelled through five financing instruments, including the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the European Development Fund (EDF) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Tracking how much is spent on WPS-related objectives is not straightforward: Commission staff uses a combination of different OECD markers to gather an approximation of how much of these funds are dedicate to WPS specifically (Interview, February 2019); *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ EU (2014).

The IcSP provides short-term assistance, in the face of immediate crisis or conflict (Article 3 of the IcSP regulation), or to support conflict prevention, peacebuilding and crisis preparedness (Article 4). It provides long-term assistance to tackle global and transborder threats and to build capacity for lasting socio-economic development (Article 5). Activities deployed under Article 5 fall under the remit of European Commission Department for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), while crisis management (Article 3) and peacebuilding (Article 4) activities are managed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI or Instrument).¹²⁵ For the period 2014-2020, a financial envelope of almost EUR 2.34 billion is foreseen.¹²⁶

According to the 2017 IcSP evaluation, “[d]ata on mainstreaming across the Instrument suggests important contributions to conflict prevention, democracy and good governance, but less on gender and human rights.”¹²⁷ A review of the evaluation of the annual action plans (AAPs) for 2014-16 shows that “only 11% of the programmes tackle gender equality and empowerment of women directly, but all programmes contain elements of these areas.” The evaluation concluded that the mainstreaming of gender and human rights in the Instrument’s interventions could be improved.¹²⁸ The 2017 external evaluation of the IcSP did not fully distinguish between gender mainstreaming and the promotion of the WPS agenda. However, it did note “thematically funding under Article 4 of the regulation for Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS)” created “complementarity with other EU foreign policy activities.”¹²⁹ In section 4, we will take a closer look at how projects under the IcSP have aimed to promote and implement the WPS agenda, including UNSCR 1325.

The Pan-African Programme under the EU’s Development Cooperation Instrument

The Pan-African Programme (PanAf) was established in 2014 in order to give the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) a dedicated financial instrument. The programme is funded under the EU’s Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) with a budget of EUR 845 million for the period 2014-2020. Overall, projects undertaken under the PanAf programme made no direct references to the implementation of the WPS agenda (including UNSCR 1325), despite a number of notable projects that targeted gender equality and women’s empowerment directly (see box 3 below). Some of these projects are relevant to certain aspects of the WPS agenda, including participation in decision-making mechanisms, early warning and the strengthening of legal provisions on women’s rights. However, despite this instrument being directly attached to the JAES, one of the centrepieces of the EU-Africa partnership, it has not emerged as an important avenue to promote the WPS and UNSCR 1325.

¹²⁵ The FPI is a European Commission service that reports directly to the EU High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission. It works closely with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and with EU Delegations.

¹²⁶ EC (2018b).

¹²⁷ EC (2017).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

Box 3: PanAf projects funded with a perspective on gender equality and women's empowerment

One of the main objectives of the project 'Enhancing civil society's role in Pan-African issues' (2014) was gender equality. Some of the results expected from this project were the increased participation of CSOs, including women's representatives and organisations, in the implementation of the peace and security agenda in Africa (including through policy formulation and early warning system through risk analysis), and increased participation of CSO to the domestication, implementation and monitoring of the provisions of the Maputo Protocol (AU Protocol on the Rights of Women). The project on 'The African Union Capacity in Election Observation (AUCapEO)' (2014) included the development of an AU Handbook on election observation and guidelines on analysis of campaigns including women's participation.

The project on 'Strengthening the African Human Rights System'¹³⁰(2015) also had gender equality as a main objective, with a view to strengthening the institutional capacity and capability of the human rights organs of the African human rights system, including with regards to women's rights. The project entitled 'Contribution to the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – Phase 2' aimed to "contribute to the complete abandonment of female genital mutilation, a violation of girls and women rights". Furthermore, gender equality was a significant objective in the 'LIVE2AFRICA: Pan-African Support to the AU-IBAR for a Sustainable Development of Livestock for Livelihoods in Africa' project in 2015. This project also included gender and youth as cross-cutting issues. In addition, it formulated specific targets regarding women, including the goal to provide access to forage and drought information to 30% of women.

None of the projects deployed in 2017 under the PanAf had gender equality or women's empowerment as a policy objective. On the other hand, the 'Classifying goods for African trade'¹³¹ project and the 'Initiative for Digital Africa (PRIDA)' aim to assess the role of women in trade and digitalisation respectively.¹³²

The European Development Fund (EDF)

For the purpose of this paper, we looked at how the promotion of the WPS agenda and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (and follow-up resolutions) featured in National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) and regional indicative programmes (RIPs), which are funded under the EDF.¹³³ There are currently two RIPs in place for specific regions of Africa; one for West Africa (2014-2020) and one for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) (2014 – 2020).

One component of the West Africa RIP concerns building ECOWAS' capacity in conflict prevention and mediation. This component places particular emphasis on promoting the participation of women in conflict prevention, the development of expertise on gender issues in conflict prevention and management, and peace education.¹³⁴ Despite these commitments, the RIP offers little opportunity for a joint commitment to or an implementation strategy of the global WPS agenda. This stands in contrast to the high prevalence of national and regional action plans in West Africa for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions. Potential examples of stronger efforts could be to include a clear financial commitment to WPS or the launch of a dedicate initiative through the RIP.

¹³⁰ EU (2015).

¹³¹ EU (2017a).

¹³² EU (2017b).

¹³³ Council Regulation (EC) No 215/2008 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the 10th European Development Fund; and Council Decision 2013/759/EU of 12 December 2013 regarding transitional EDF management measures from 1 January 2014 until the entry into force of the 11th European Development Fund.

¹³⁴ EU & ECOWAS (2015).

The RIP for the EA-SA-IO region covers the financial support given to the SADC, the IGAD, the EAC and COMESA, as well as the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC); all of which either have regional action plans for UNSCR 1325 (SADC and IGAD) or gender policies (IGAD, SADC, EAC, IOC and COMESA).¹³⁵ In this RIP, peace, security and regional stability is an overall priority area, yet it receives just 12% of the total amount of financial resources, compared to 65% for regional economic integration. The text contains a few references to existing policies on women, peace and security and gender equality; most explicitly for the SADC region. Further, the EA-SA-IO RIP makes a broad reference to the EU's 2011 development policy, *Agenda for Change*, including a commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. In box 4 below, we take a closer look at how the WPS agenda and related policies are reflected in the RIP, for each of the regional organisations.

Box 4: References to the WPS agenda in the EA-SA-IO regional indicative programme

COMESA's main priority area is regional economic integration. Yet, a reference to its gender policy shows its focus lies on women in socio-economic transformation and sustainable growth. The **EAC's** priority area is peace and security. It focuses on the promotion of democratic governance and election monitoring, on the one hand, and countering violent extremism, transnational crime and illicit trade, on the other hand. Despite women's widely documented underrepresentation, there is no mention of the importance of increasing their role in preventive diplomacy and mediation activities, or in election monitoring missions.¹³⁶ As regards the fight against terrorism, the RIP notes that the role of regional peace networks will be strengthened with particular attention paid to youth and women.

Peace, security and regional stability is also a priority area for the **IGAD**, which has adopted a regional action plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The regional action plan's specific objectives focus on strengthening early warning and responses, improving mediation and conflict prevention, and countering transnational threats. Yet we found no references to the WPS agenda, the role of women or their under-representation in mediation and conflict prevention structures. Similarly, the **IOC** does not make any references to the role of women in its three selected priority areas either.

In contrast, the **SADC** chapter of the EA-SA-IO RIP mentions that improving the social and human capital, including that of women and youth, is a key issue for the SADC region. It also mentions that the SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) will include a dedicated programme on gender equality. For SADC, peace, security and regional stability is a priority area. In order to strengthen SADC institutions for peace, security and regional stability, the RIP foresees a number of activities, which include ensuring due attention is given to the participation of women in electoral processes as voters, candidates and electoral staff. The RIP also seeks to support the SADC Secretariat Mediation unit, paying particular attention to the role of women in conflict mediation, in line with UNSCR 1325. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development is mentioned under the objective to strengthen the respect for rule of law and enhance public security in the SADC region. This includes ensuring equal access to justice for women and protecting women and children from trafficking. Under this objective, women are juxtaposed with disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society.

Finally, the EA-SA-IO RIP includes a separate chapter on peace and security in the Great Lakes region. This is because the EU aims to support the overarching goal (sustainable regional peace and security) of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (**ICGLR**). The RIP also includes the goal, shared by all regional organisations (ROs), to ensure regional peace and stability. In order to do this, ROs participated in the 2013 Peace and Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. However, women were only mentioned once, under the planned activities to increase conflict-sensitivity discourse in media, with a focus on women.

¹³⁵ EU, COMESA, SADC, IGAD and the IOC (2015).

¹³⁶ Paffenholz, et al. (2016).

Funds from the EDF are also disbursed bilaterally according to the agreed national indicative programmes (NIPs). An analysis of the text and priorities of publicly available NIPs suggests that references to the WPS and UNSCR 1325 do not feature heavily. Based on our desk research, only Liberia's NIP included a direct reference to UNSCR 1325, namely, the goal to mainstream gender across all priority sectors.

The African Peace Facility (APF) was established in 2004, in response to a request by African leaders and is financed through the EDF. Although the APF is funded through the EDF (and it has its legal basis in the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement), it is focused on Africa only, making continental and regional organisations in Africa the only eligible beneficiaries. As such, it is closely aligned with the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and has the roadmap that accompanies the JAES as its overarching policy framework (which is also referenced several times in the consecutive APF action programmes).

Given its scope and the amount of funding the APF receives, it is one of the main sources of funding to support the operationalisation of the APSA. It also funds the AU's and sub-regional organisations' activities in the area of peace and security. In section 4 below, we take a closer look at how the APF and some of its components have contributed to the implementation and promotion of the WPS agenda, including UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions.

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is an external funding instrument aimed at supporting projects on human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, with a strong focus on civil society organisations.¹³⁷ The EIDHR's multi-annual indicative programme (MIP) for 2014-2017 outlines its planned activities and priorities, which contain several references to the WPS agenda, UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions. Through this instrument, the EU aims to support projects fighting against sexual and gender-based violence and femicide, in line with relevant global and European policies.¹³⁸ The EIDHR also aims to "support the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security, in particular ensuring women's equal involvement in all work to maintain peace and security, including transitional justice initiatives and post-conflict reconstruction."¹³⁹ The MIP did not specify the allocation for WPS-related projects in particular.

According to a 2017 evaluation, gender equality (including for LGBTI persons) and the rights of women and children were a clear priority for the EIDHR. Gender equality and the rights of women were directly or indirectly supported in EIDHR Annual Action Programmes (AAPs) for 2014 and 2015 and the 2016-2017 Multi-annual Action Programmes (MAAPs). The evaluation also found that specific actions in favour of women were also included in global calls and the Country Based Support Scheme (CBSS).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Regulation (EU) No 235/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for democracy and human rights worldwide.

¹³⁸ These include the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), EU Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls and Combating all Forms of Discrimination against Them, the 'EU Comprehensive Approach on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security', the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-15, and the strategy for equality between women and men 2010-15.

¹³⁹ EU (N.d.).

¹⁴⁰ EU (2017c).

According to the 2017 monitoring report on the CA 1325/1820, the EIDHR is one of the main funding instruments to disburse WPS funds, worldwide.¹⁴¹ But there is little public or more detailed information available on how this instrument has promoted the WPS agenda in Africa in particular. There is no mention of how the EIDHR has supported the implementation of the WPS agenda, including UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, in the 2017 evaluation. Similarly, the 2017 GAP implementation report offers no information on how the EIDHR has supported the WPS agenda in the EU's external engagement. In contrast with the 2014-2017 MIP, the 2018-2020 MIP for the EIDHR contains no references to WPS or UNSCR 1325 or follow-up resolutions. The 2018-2020 Action fiches make several references to women's rights and gender equality, but do not outline any direct support to the promotion or implementation of UNSCR 1325 or follow-up resolutions. This suggests that, in theory, the EIDHR could be used as a funding channel for targeted support to the WPS agenda in Africa, for example, given its strong focus on CSOs, by supporting women's organisations. However, in practice, this has not happened on the basis of publicly available sources consulted for this paper.

3.3. Current gaps in the EU's policies to promote the WPS agenda

The UNSCRs and the CA 1325/1820 specifically call for the integration of a gender perspective across all areas of peace and security policy, which includes all areas of EU external action. Yet today, the EU's external action has reduced the WPS agenda to its own internal policy sphere. This is largely because this policy area lacks the necessary political leadership to enforce mainstreaming and implementation. As a result, key policy areas of the EU-AU strategic partnership, such as preventing and countering violent extremism, counter terrorism, and stemming migration lack adequate gender perspectives. This carries tangible risks, for example for migration, including in conflict-affected and fragile countries. While Cascone and Knoll (2018) observe that the bulk of projects under the EU's Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF)¹⁴² mention women (and youth) as vulnerable groups, they also found that at times, EUTF projects framed gender engagement primarily 'as a means to achieve migration-related objectives.'¹⁴³ This, they note, "risks targeting female human capital in order to achieve migration-reduction objectives through their economic empowerment and development, rather than empowering women's economic power *per se*."¹⁴⁴ Driven by short-term emergency needs, projects under the EUTF did not really address longer-term issues, such as cultural changes and harmful practices, stereotypes and gender-bias. In addition, even policy areas that are more closely connected to WPS, such as 'The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises' (2013), resilience and guidance on conflict analysis remain too gender-blind.¹⁴⁵

The PAG has made significant progress in developing WPS policies and actions, but this is insufficient in itself. It lacks the necessary staff, expertise and political (hierarchical) power to ensure implementation and must rely on persuasion alone.

¹⁴¹ Council of the EU (2017b).

¹⁴² EU Emergency Trust funds are EU-funded instruments established to provide support in response to emergencies, fragility and other thematic or geographic priorities. They are intended to address the root causes of destabilisation, displacement and irregular migration, by promoting economic and equal opportunities, security and development; and have been set up in three regions: The Horn of Africa (HoA), the Sahel and Lake Chad (SAH), and North Africa (NoA). See: [website of The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#); Cascone and Knoll (2018).

¹⁴³ Cascone and Knoll (2018).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Davis (2018).

Although gender equality is at the heart of both WPS and the Gender Action Plan (GAP), the institutional gaps between the two policy areas have meant that, at best, implementation risks duplication and inefficiency, and at worst, the two policy areas may pull in different directions. The Strategic Approach to WPS and the GAP III should address and overcome these structural challenges and improve inter-institutional effectiveness for gender equality across these policy areas.

Future of WPS under the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

On 14 June 2018, the European Commission (EC) published the full details of its proposal for the next MFF external action heading, which will run from 2021 to 2027.¹⁴⁶ This proposal includes a new external financing instrument (EFIs) for Europe's external engagement under the 'Neighbourhood & the World' heading, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). This NDICI would replace several existing EFIs, including the DCI, the EDF, the EIDHR, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the IcSP and the Partnership Instrument (PI).

Several of these have been important instruments for the promotion of the WPS agenda, UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions. However, CSOs criticise the absence of a strong stance on gender equality in the newly proposed NDICI. Moreover, the EC's communication around the new proposal did not make any explicit reference to gender equality or the WPS agenda, as a key political priority. As such, the new proposal does not provide any details as to how the next MFF might implement gender mainstreaming. It does propose a 20% spending target for social inclusion and human development, which specifically includes gender equality and women's empowerment. However, at this point, it does not provide further details on what this means in practice for programming.¹⁴⁷ Lastly, the proposal does not make any reference to the GAP II or its target of 85% gender mainstreaming for future EU initiatives.

The development sector has advocated for more ambitious goals. The European NGO confederation for Relief and Development, CONCORD urged the EU to strive towards 85% of all EU external assistance having dedicated actions on gender equality as a principal or significant target.¹⁴⁸ In addition, these actions should be complemented with stronger gender-responsive budgeting, gender analysis and more effective evaluation.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ The overarching proposed framework was published on 2 May 2018, retrieved from: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3570_en.htm.

¹⁴⁷ Jones et al. (2018).

¹⁴⁸ The DAC gender equality policy marker is based on a three-point scoring system: gender as a principal objective (score G-2); gender as a significant target (score G-1) and gender is not targeted (score G-0) means that the project/programme has been screened against the gender marker, but has not been found to target gender equality. See also: DAC gender equality policy marker, accessed January 2019.

¹⁴⁹ CONCORD (2018).

4. Efforts to promote the WPS agenda under the EU-Africa partnership – selected examples

Peace and security is a priority area in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), and includes several references to the WPS agenda. The JAES, adopted in 2007, states “the two sides also commit themselves to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 on Women in Peace and Security and 1612 on Children in Armed Conflicts.”¹⁵⁰ Given the date of its adoption, it does not include references to later UN resolutions adopted on women, peace and security.

In the 2014-2017 Roadmap for the implementation of the joint strategy, the EU and AU claimed they would “strengthen the human rights dimension of [their] cooperation on peace and security” and focus on ending sexual violence and on protecting civilians, in particular women and children. In addition, they would pay special attention to ensure “the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace and security processes.”¹⁵¹

The language used in this commitment reflects some of the mainstream discourse, for which the WPS agenda has been criticised. First, it addresses women in juxtaposition with children, as a weaker group to be protected. This suggests a reductive view of women and contradicts the EU’s and AU’s other commitments for women’s empowerment. These commitments include contributing to longer-term societal changes that counter the exclusion of women from political, economic and social life as a result of gender discrimination. Second, protection has priority over participation. Yet the latter would have more impact in reshaping the norms and cultures that allow sexual violence and which create the need for protection from sexual and gender-based violence.

In practice, these commitments are operationalised through dedicated instruments and policies on both continents. In the sections below, we take a closer look at two EU financial instruments used to promote and implement the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325 in Africa. A separate section will look at the EU’s support for the development and implementation of NAPs 1325 in Africa. The fact that there are numerous NAPs in both Europe and Africa suggests the WPS agenda enjoys wide acceptance and high visibility. Indeed, both the EU’s Comprehensive Approach on UNSCR 1325/1820 and the newly adopted Strategic Approach aim to support the creation of NAPs.

¹⁵⁰ Africa-EU Strategic Partnership (2007).

¹⁵¹ Africa-EU Strategic Partnership (2014).

4.1. The African Peace Facility and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace

The activities funded through the African Peace Facility (APF) fall under three broad areas:

1. Capacity building, 2. The Early Response Mechanism (ERM), and 3. Financing for African-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs).

Between 2004 and 2017, a total of EUR 2.7 billion was allocated to the APF. The vast majority of this amount (some 91% of total funding) was earmarked for peace support operations, e.g. to cover troop per diem payments or provide equipment support. 7.3% of total APF funding contributed to capacity-building of the AU and REC/RMs in the area of peace and security, thus supporting the operationalisation of the APSA and increasing planning and conduct capabilities for peace support operations. Finally, a small share of the APF (some 1.2%) was reserved for an Early Response Mechanism to allow for quick and flexible responses to urgent crises across Africa.¹⁵²

The 2017-2018 Action Plan for the APF aims to mainstream relevant guidelines on human rights, the protection of women and children in armed conflicts, and the role of women as active participants. This will include the “promotion of the implementation of the protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), as well as the full application of all UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and on the protection of children affected by armed conflict.” According to the Action Plan, “these will be systematically integrated and followed up throughout the programme by promoting the increased participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building efforts by the AU/RECs.”¹⁵³

The CA 1325/1820 monitoring reports do not include reporting on the activities under the APF. The 2017 ‘*Third Report on the EU Indicators for the Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security*’ does not mention the APF. This is despite the fact that it plays a pivotal role in the EU-Africa partnership on peace and security and is the EU’s largest tool to support the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Arguably, this makes it difficult to draw any lessons or identify the gaps in the way this instrument contributes to the EU’s overall efforts to promote the WPS agenda. The APF’s 2015, 2016 and 2017 Annual Reports do not provide any detail on whether or how their activities contributed to the promotion and implementation of the WPS agenda.

Box 5 below aims to explain how the WPS agenda has been supported through the APF, based on evidence found in publicly available documents (such as multi-annual action programmes and annual action plans). The box tries document to what extent the WPS agenda has been integrated in the EU’s support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

¹⁵² EC (2018a).

¹⁵³ Council of the EU (2017a).

Box 5: Support to AMISOM under the APF: how is WPS promoted?

For this paper, we took a closer look at publicly available documents on programming and projects under the APF in Somalia. The broad lines of APF programming are laid out in the APF's 2017-2018 action programme.¹⁵⁴ Gender equality is not a main or even a significant objective of APF programming for 2017-2018. However, the promotion of the WPS agenda is included as a cross-cutting issue, with commitments to implement the protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and the "full application of all UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and on the protection of children affected by armed conflict." According to the APF action programme, these protocols and resolutions will be "systematically integrated and followed up throughout the programme by promoting the increased participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building efforts by the AU/RECs."

The action programme also places heavy emphasis on the protection pillar of the WPS agenda. It notes the "APF is part of EU efforts to end sexual violence and protecting civilians, in particular women and children who are the most affected by armed conflicts." In this respect, it foresees taking specific measures and actions, such as **preventing and responding to sexual violence and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and promoting and strengthening gender components in PSOs**. The action programme will also include specific budget lines to finance these activities. Furthermore, the programme foresees **training activities in Human Rights and gender**, for measures that have been adopted and for the cases reported and investigated by the AUC or REC/RM to prevent gender and sexual violence in PSOs. Finally, the design of activities should be viewed through an "**atrocities prevention lens**", in line with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Box 6 below provides a short overview of IcSP projects between 2014 and 2018, and how support for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and promotion of the WPS agenda featured in those projects. In total, 326 projects have been implemented under the IcSP since 2014. 13 of these projects were implemented in Africa with 'women, peace and security' as a central project theme. Only one of these projects had the implementation of UNSCR 1325 as a direct objective. Several other projects had an indirect bearing on aspects of UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, including by supporting mediation (Mozambique) and political and reconciliation processes (The Gambia and Central African Republic, respectively). None of the projects that directly targeted the development or implementation of NAPs 1325 took place in Africa. By contrast, three of them were in Southeast Asia.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Box 6: IcSP projects and the promotion of WPS¹⁵⁵

The overview of IcSP projects, starting from 2014 until December 2018, based on available action fiches, shows that 13 projects (out of 330 projects in total), which had 'women, peace and security' as a central project theme, have been or were being implemented in Africa. Only one project had the support for the promotion of UNSCR 1325 as a specific objective. This project, which targeted Niger and Burkina Faso, aimed to strengthen the participation of "at least 200 women's organisations and networks in peacebuilding processes, therefore enabling them to influence the decisions and behaviours of public actors." As such, the assumption was that the project would "contribute to the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (in particular resolutions 1325 and 1820) in Niger and Burkina Faso."¹⁵⁶

There were three other projects that supported the implementation of UNSCR 1325 more explicitly, and none of these took place in Africa. These IcSP-funded projects were located in **Pakistan** (awareness raising of UNSCR 1325 among Pakistan parliamentarians and government departments), **Nepal** (capacity building for civil society, the private sector, government institutions, and local authorities to implement the Nepalese National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820) and **Afghanistan** (direct support to the eight-year National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325).¹⁵⁷

Twelve other projects in Africa had Women, Peace and Security as a central project theme, without referring to the promotion of UNSCR 1325. They included an economic recovery, livelihoods and community resilience project in the Lake Chad region (2014-2017), support for mediation processes in Mozambique (2017-2018), the reconciliation process in the Central African Republic (2017), two youth and dialogue (2017-2019) and youth leadership (2017-2020) projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, two projects to support the electoral process and political dialogue in The Gambia (2017), a community cohesion project in Mali and Burkina Faso (2015-2016), a transitional justice project with activities in Mali and the Central African Republic (2015-2018), a project in support of women's participation in parliament in Somalia (2018-2020), support for the participation of women in the national dialogue process in Libya and activities to support the Government of National Accord (GNA) (2015-2017), and an awareness raising initiative (through reality television) around effective peace-building and women's leadership in Kenya (2017-2019).¹⁵⁸

4.2. National Action Plans for UNSCR 1325 (and follow-up resolutions)

National action plans on UNSCR 1325 (and follow-up resolutions) outline a policy or course of action that a country plans to follow in order to fulfil the objectives and goals set out in a given resolution. National action plans (NAPs) adopted by EU and AU member states to implement and promote UNSCR 1325 vary considerably. Indeed, they differ in terms of the leading agencies/actors drafting the plans, priority areas, budgeting, implementing partners, indicators and monitoring and evaluation. In most countries in Africa, these NAPs were developed by the Ministries of Gender and Development, Women and Children's Affairs, or Social Affairs, amongst others, and involved other agencies and ministries (e.g. Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Health,

¹⁵⁵ European Union, Foreign Policy Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace: overview of projects, <https://icspmap.eu/#>, accessed November 2018 and January 2019; Interview, February 2019

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Interior).¹⁵⁹ By contrast, in most EU member states the first NAPs 1325 were developed by Ministries of Foreign Affairs.¹⁶⁰

Several observers and experts have taken a critical view of the actual impact of NAPs to promote UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions.¹⁶¹ In most of these action plans, the priority areas are structured along the four pillars of UNSCR 1325¹⁶² and few include broader reflections on or references to gender equality policies. This confirms the risk for a potential disconnect in practice between gender equality strategies, and WPS policies and programmes, as flagged by Aroussi (2017). In fact, most national action plans (both in Europe and Africa) focus on UNSCR 1325 (and to an extent resolution 1820), but less so on more recent UNSC resolutions.

In addition, as these resolutions are not instruments of international law, observers and experts believe there is a need to strengthen the connections between the WPS agenda and the UN human rights system. This could include the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which holds signatory countries accountable. Concerns have also been raised about the lack of adequate funding attached to NAPs, the limited role of civil society in the drafting and implementation processes, the lack of solid monitoring and evaluation systems, the question of local ownership of NAPs, and diversity and representativeness of women and women's organisations in the development and implementation of NAPs.¹⁶³

Some discourse analysis has been done on African NAPs. For example, researchers have analysed the presence of gender equality language in African NAPs. Hudson (2017), who looked at four African NAPs (Kenya, Uganda, and Liberia), found that, while the language in the plans “equates women with gender, and women with girls (children), there is evidence across all four plans that rudimentary attention was paid to the intersecting needs of particular groups”. For Hudson, these NAPs can offer space for critical thinking around power and gender, beyond a security-focused interpretation of the WPS agenda.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, the linkages between WPS and gender equality policies, and how this is integrated in NAPs, are areas that merit more research and reflection.

Despite these flaws observed in NAPs across Europe and Africa, there is a high prevalence of NAPs 1325 in both regions (see box 7 and figure 3 below). This suggests they might still be seen as a useful tool to implement and promote the WPS agenda at the national level. Support for the development and implementation of NAPs is one of the indicators of the EU's Comprehensive Approach 1325/1820 and is retained in the EU's new Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security. The EU's objectives are broad: The Strategic Approach claims it will “continue to support and promote the effective implementation of national action plans in countries where the EU external actions are carried out supported by the EEAS [PAG] and [UNSCR] 1325” and will see to it that the provisions of the EU strategy on WPS can be found in future NAPs of EU member states as well as non-EU countries.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ See Miller, Pournik, & Swaine (2014) for their extensive analysis of 41 national action plans.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ See also Aroussi (2017) and her summary of key debates on the NAPs.

¹⁶² Also see figure 2; UNSCR 1325 four pillars are: 1. Participation, 2. Prevention, 3. Protection and 4. Relief and recovery.

¹⁶³ Aroussi (2017)

¹⁶⁴ Hudson (2017)

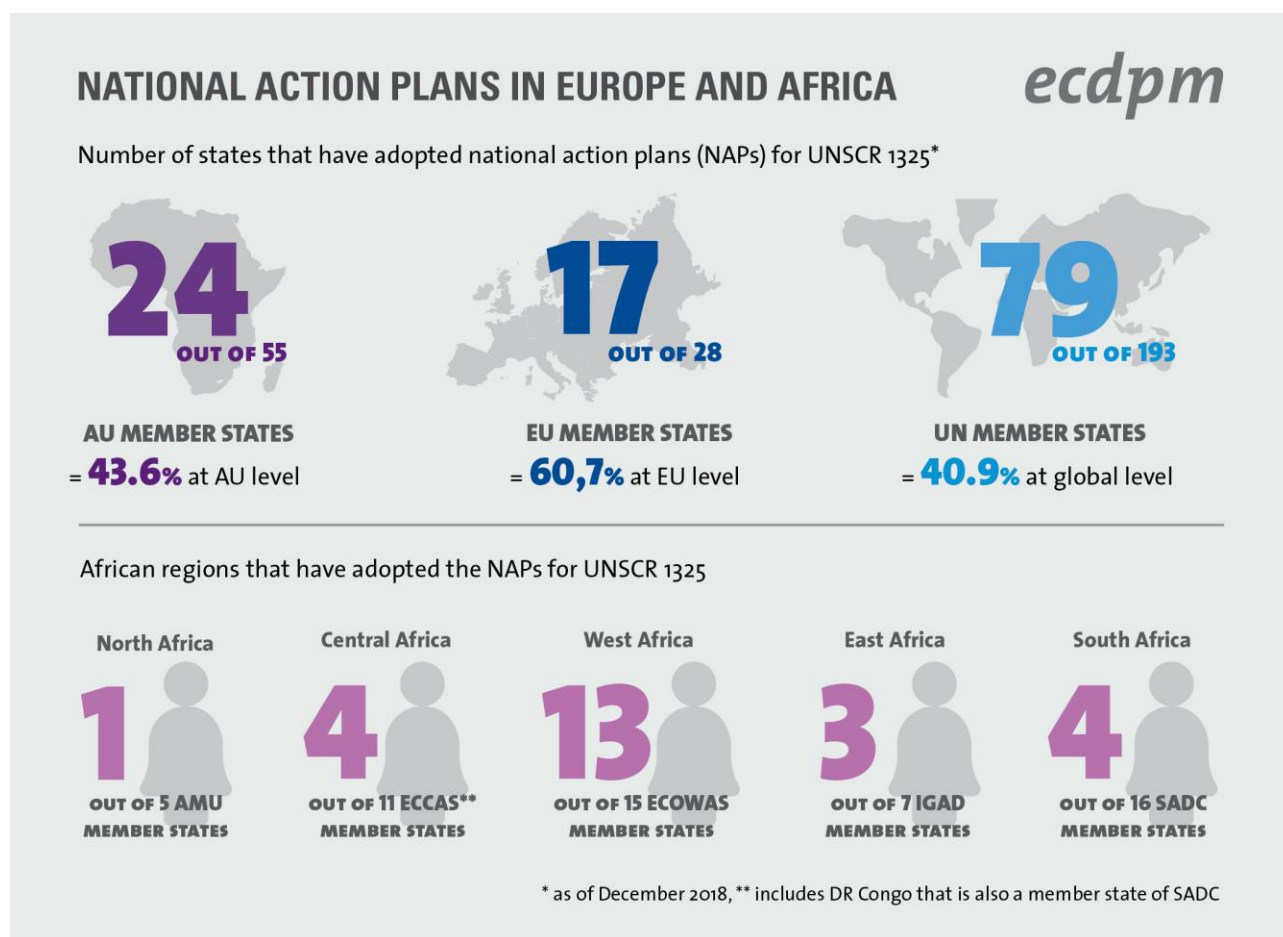
¹⁶⁵ European External Action Service, EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security, December 2018; and European Council Conclusions on Women, Peace and Security, 10 December 2018

Box 7: National action plans in the European Union and Africa

In Africa, **24 out of 55 AU member states (or 43.6%) have adopted NAPs**. This rate is slightly better than at the global level. Analysis shows that 79 UN member states (40.9% of all UN member states) have UNSCR 1325 NAPs.¹⁶⁶ In addition, several regional organisations have adopted 1325 regional action plans (see section 2 above). **In Europe, 17 out of 28 EU member states** have adopted NAPs (this includes the United Kingdom). At 60.7% this is significantly better than the global average. The EU's high rate of adoption suggests, at least in principle, member states find NAPs to be a useful tool to promote and implement UNSCR 1325.

Most NAPs in Africa are inward-looking, while many EU NAPs are outward-looking and mainly focus on conflict-affected countries. Some NAPs 1325 of EU member states include commitments to offer technical or financial assistance to other governments to develop a NAP.¹⁶⁷ For example, the Government of Finland supported the development of the Kenyan NAP 1325 in 2016, as part of its own NAP objectives.¹⁶⁸ In general, UN Women (or its predecessor UNIFEM) has been the largest and most visible supporter (including through technical support) of the development of NAPs on UNSCR 1325 in Africa. In several countries, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) also played a prominent role, as did certain UN regional offices (UNOCA).

Figure 3: National action plans in Europe and Africa



¹⁶⁶ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, PeaceWomen programme, accessed November 2018

¹⁶⁷ Aroussi (2017)

¹⁶⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland, Women, Peace and Security Finland's National Action Plan 2018-2021.

Since the adoption of the EU's CA 1325, in 2008, the EU has provided direct (financial) support for the development of NAPs in only a limited number of countries. Overall, very little information is publicly available (for example in the EU's monitoring reports on the 1325 indicators) on *how* and *in how many* partner countries (in Africa) the EU has supported the development of NAPs 1325. Maguire (2013) puts it as follows:

“[L]ack of clarity or ambiguity may prompt responders to give confused or confusing responses. For instance, Indicator 1 asks for the number of partner countries in which the EU is engaged in supporting actions ‘furthering women, peace and security’ and/or drawing up national policies and plans. It is not clear, therefore, whether this indicator really aims to encourage MS and institutions to support the creation of NAPS or simply to help partner countries to do something that furthers the WPS agenda.”¹⁶⁹

In 2016, the EU adopted revised indicators for the implementation of the CA 1325/1820. However, it remains unclear how and to which extent exactly the EU has supported the development of WPS policies and NAP 1325. The revised Indicator 3: “Support of the EU and its Member States to partner countries on developing, implementing and evaluating WPS policies” now includes the target “3.1: Number and name of partner countries with whom the EU and its Member States are engaged in supporting actions on furthering WPS, specifically through the development, implementation and evaluation of National Action Plans (NAPs), strategic documents or other national policies related to UNSCR 1325.”¹⁷⁰

In fact, it seems that reporting against this indicator lacks extensive data. According to the 2017 CA 1325/1820 monitoring report, “[t]he EU in its external action has been actively promoting and supporting the adoption of National Action Plans by third countries, and advocating in favour of a strong WPS agenda.”¹⁷¹ The European External Action Service also provided support through the IcSP for “civil society initiatives aiming to inform and support the design, adoption and implementation of National Action Plans and the strengthening of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Niger and Burkina Faso.”¹⁷² Since the 2017 CA 1325/1820 report, the EU has provided explicit support for the development of more recent NAPs. This was the case in Nigeria, which adopted a revised NAP in 2017. EUCAP-Sahel provided support and inputs to the NAP 1325 of Niger, adopted in 2017.

All in all, these examples and numbers suggest that the EU is not a major actor in supporting the development of NAPs or national policies related to UNSCR 1325 in Africa, despite setting this as an indicator in its former Comprehensive Approach to UNSCR 1325, and newly adopted Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security. Other actors, such as UN Women, or UN regional offices, and in a limited number of countries, EU member states, seem to play a more prominent role in supporting national governments in establishing a NAP. There could be a variety of reasons for this, including that individual EU member states might play a bigger role and that the EU institutions or delegations do not see an added value in NAPs. How the support of the EU institutions and EU member states for NAPs for UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions is complementary on the ground is food for thought for further research.

¹⁶⁹ Maguire (2013).

¹⁷⁰ Council of the EU (2016).

¹⁷¹ Council of the EU (2017b).

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

5. Concluding observations

Overall, this paper shows the WPS agenda enjoys high visibility in both Africa (the AU and regional organisations) and Europe (the European Union and its member states). There are some regional differences however, with stronger rhetorical support for the WPS agenda in Western and Central Africa, and less support in Northern Africa. African regional organisations and member states have also adopted gender plans and policies, but concrete synergies with the WPS agenda are missing. Regional and national gender policies in Africa most often do not go beyond simple references to UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions (and other global commitments, such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action).

Although the EU and AU have committed to the WPS (including UNSCR 1325) in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, a strong collective implementation strategy is missing. The EU recently developed a new 'EU Strategic Approach on women, peace and security', supported by the Principal Advisor on Gender (PAG). In 2014, the AU appointed a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security. Regional organisations have adopted regional action plans on UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions. And there is a high prevalence of national action plans to promote UNSCR 1325 (and follow-up resolutions) both amongst members of the AU and the EU. Several countries have gone through second or third iterations of their plans.

The WPS and gender equality agenda are closely interlinked conceptually. But policy frameworks to promote WPS and gender equality (GE) are not fully joined up, both in Europe and Africa. And while often adopted by the same decision-making bodies, the implementation avenues at times remain separated. The EU's effort to promote the WPS agenda in its external engagements, including Africa, is led by the EEAS and the EU Principal Advisor on Gender (PAG). The EU's commitments to promote gender equality (and women's empowerment) are guided by the EU Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) and are led by the European Commission (EC). Monitoring against WPS commitments has been integrated in the annual implementation of the GAP II, but institutionally the implementation remains separated.

Similarly, gender equality and WPS/UNSCR 1325 policies in Africa are insufficiently linked up, with efforts to create a gender policy and efforts to promote women, peace and security taking place in parallel. The AU Special Envoy has benefitted from stronger leverage and political support compared to her European counterpart, but the AU lacks a clear implementation strategy for the WPS agenda across the AU. According to interviewees, the new AU Gender Policy, drafted over the course of 2018, will have a peace and security dimension and therefore could feature as an AUC-wide implementation strategy.¹⁷³

Policy commitments need to be implemented on the ground. In many countries across the world, governments have adopted national action plans to implement UNSCR 1325. Despite criticism about the effectiveness and conceptual strength of these plans, or how they have been insufficiently financed and supported by weak monitoring systems, they continue to receive wide support in both regions. There are some interesting differences between national action plans amongst EU member states and those in Africa. For example, EU national action plans are outward-looking and often sponsored or led by Ministries of Foreign Affairs, making support for the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325 part of their foreign policy. In Africa, national action plans are often more inward-looking, and drafted by government departments dealing with social, women and children's affairs, or family affairs.

¹⁷³ Interview, February 2019.

Support for the promotion and implementation of national action plans was an indicator in the EU's (now outdated) Comprehensive Approach to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and is retained in the EU's new Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security. However, for national action plans developed in Africa, the EU did not feature as a prominent actor, which contradicts its ambition to 'actively promote and support the adoption of national action plans by third countries'.¹⁷⁴ The EU has a whole series of instruments at its disposal to promote and support the WPS agenda in its external action. A closer analysis reveals the IcSP, the APF (partly because of its scale and importance in funding the APSA) and the EDF, primarily through its funding of regional indicative programmes, are the most used instruments to promote the WPS agenda in Africa. Despite its potential for supporting women's organisations and women's rights defenders, it seems the EIDHR has not been used extensively to support the WPS agenda in Africa. Only a limited number of projects took the WPS agenda explicitly as a starting point. Where this was the case, most activities and projects focused on protection rather than prevention. Participation (in political decision-making and peace mediation), on the other hand, increasingly features as an important pillar, especially in IcSP projects.

This paper aimed to contribute to the ongoing analysis of how best to promote, advance and implement the women, peace and security agenda, with a focus on Africa and the potential for the Europe-Africa relation therein. While the foundation of the WPS agenda are gender equality and women's rights, there continues to be a disconnect between gender equality and WPS agendas. Building on lessons learned and evaluation, the EU has developed a new Strategic Approach to women, peace and security, which may remedy some of this institutional disconnect, and could benefit the lack of synergies on the ground. The AU launched a new gender policy in February 2019. How this will be institutionalised and link up with the work of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security remains to be seen. How these developments will unfold and impact the promotion of WPS will be the subject of future ECDPM research and policy analysis.

¹⁷⁴ Council of the EU (2017b).

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