

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda was formally adopted in October 2000 through the **United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325**. This landmark resolution acknowledged the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls and stressed the importance of women’s involvement in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction. The UN has continued to expand the WPS agenda through subsequent resolutions, including UNSCRs 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, and 2242. These resolutions address women’s participation in peacebuilding, the protection of women from gender-based violence (GBV), and the need for integrating gender perspectives in conflict prevention.

Including women in peace processes increases the probability of peace by:

20%

lasting at least 2 years

35%

lasting at least 15 years

Key Pillars of the WPS Agenda

Participation



Women’s inclusion in decision-making, peace negotiations, and post-conflict recovery.

Protection



Safeguarding women and girls from GBV, trafficking, and human rights abuses in conflict settings.

Prevention



Preventing conflict and violence against women, including addressing the root causes of gender inequality.

Relief and Recovery



Post-conflict recovery programs address women’s specific needs

The adoption of the bipartisan **Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017** institutionalized the U.S. government’s commitment to promoting women’s meaningful participation in peace and security efforts. The WPS Act mandates the Department of State, Department of Defense, U.S. Agency for International Development, and Department of Homeland Security to develop and implement agency-specific plans that align with the national strategy:



Promoting women’s participation, supporting political & civic engagement, and addressing GBV.



Increase the role of women in military operations, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution

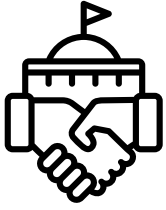


Incorporates gender equality in U.S. development programs



Emphasizes the protection of women and girls, including addressing human trafficking

Key Challenges, Gaps, and Opportunities



Engaging the Private Sector: In the past, the private sector has been left out of conversations about WPS between civil society and government. While companies are not traditionally seen as actors in the peace and security space, their influence on economic stability, employment, and community development means they have a key role to play in supporting women's empowerment and advancing peace.



Underrepresentation in Peace Processes: Despite progress, women's participation in peace negotiations, mediation, and decision-making remains minimal. Women constitute less than 20% of negotiators and only a small fraction of peace agreement signatories. Governments, regional organizations, and the UN should adopt quotas, financing mechanisms, and gender-sensitive policies to ensure women's inclusion in peace negotiations, conflict resolution, and peacekeeping missions.



Inadequate Funding: There is a persistent funding gap in implementing the WPS agenda. Allocations for gender-specific programs within humanitarian and peacebuilding budgets are insufficient, limiting the capacity to implement effective strategies. Ensuring dedicated funding for WPS initiatives within national and international budgets is crucial. Donor agencies and multilateral organizations should allocate resources explicitly for the WPS agenda, including GBV response and women's economic empowerment.



Inequitable Implementation: While some countries have adopted National Action Plans (NAPs), many lack the necessary resources, political will, and coordination mechanisms for effective implementation. Disparities exist between countries and regions in how the WPS agenda is operationalized. Enhancing accountability through monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms for NAPs will support more effective implementation. Linking WPS indicators with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can also provide a holistic approach to peace, security, and gender equality.



Incorporating WPS in New Security Challenges: Addressing emerging security issues, such as climate change, health crises, and violent extremism, through a WPS lens can ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all aspects of U.S. foreign policy and national security.