

"Women, Peace, and Security":

Embracing a New Political Ambition and Concretizing Commitments

Interim Evaluation Report of France's third National Action Plan (2021-2025)
on implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on
"Women, Peace, and Security"

Evaluating Institutions

This report is the result of a collective effort carried out within the framework of a joint working group between the High Council for Gender Equality (HCE) and the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH), under the supervision of the "Feminist foreign policy, European and International Issues" Commission of the HCE and the "International Humanitarian Law and Humanitarian Action" Sub-Commission of the CNCDH. It was adopted by the members of the CNCDH convened in plenary assembly on May 23, 2024, as well as by the members of the HCE on September 23, 2024.

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Table of contents

Evaluating Institutions	3
Acronyms	7
Preamble	9
Recommendations	11
Introduction	15
1. Strengthen Political and Managerial Leadership and Ensure Sustainable Resources	20
1.1 <i>Increased Inter-ministerial Mobilization but Uneven Ownership</i>	20
1.2 <i>Lack of Leadership and Overall Coherence of the Strategic Framework</i>	23
1.3 <i>Absence of Dedicated Resources and Uncertainties About Funding Sustainability</i>	29
2. Amplify Efforts to Concretize and Implement Commitments	32
2.1 <i>Prevention: Develop a More Comprehensive Approach to the Pursued Objectives and Actions</i>	32
2.2 <i>Protection and the Fight against Impunity: Raise the Level of Ambition by Building on Progress and Addressing Gaps</i>	37
2.3 <i>Participation: Promoting Effective and Equal Participation of Women</i>	45
2.4 <i>Priority Geographic Areas: Strengthening the Plan’s Reach in Conflict Zones</i>	50
3. Engage, as of 2024, in a Broad Consultation on the Fourth Plan and Address Contemporary Challenges	52
3.1 <i>“Internal” Accountability of the Plan: An Imperfect Follow-Up Framework but a Useful Interministerial Tool</i>	52
3.2 <i>“External” Accountability of the Plan: Partial Implementation of the Monitoring Framework and Nearly Non-Existent Involvement of Civil Society and Parliamentarians</i>	54
3.3 <i>New Challenges: Addressing Contemporary Issues and Incorporating Them into the Future Plan</i>	56
Appendices	61
APPENDIX 1: Specific Objectives of the Four Pillars of the National Action Plan (2021-2025)	61
APPENDIX 2 - List of Documents Received	63
Acknowledgements	67
Audited Individuals	67

Acronyms

AFD: French Development Agency

ATT: Arms Trade Treaty

CDCS: Crisis and Support Center (MEAE)

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CICID: Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development

CJEU: Court of Justice of the European Union

CNCDH: National Consultative Commission on Human Rights

CNDA: National Court of Asylum

COP: Conference of the Parties (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)

CPD: Presidential Council for Development

CSDP: Common Security and Defense Policy (of the European Union)

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

CSW: United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

DAC: OECD Development Assistance Committee

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

EEAS: European External Action Service

EU: European Union

FGE: Generation Equality Forum

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

FRANCOPOL: International Francophone Police Training Network

FSOF: Support Fund for Feminist Organisations

GAP: EU Gender Action Plan

HCE: High Council for Gender Equality

ICC: International Criminal Court

IFDD: Institute of Francophonie for Sustainable Development

IFE: Euromed Feminist Initiative

LOP-DSLIM: Law on Development Solidarity and the Fight against Global Inequalities

MEAE: Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

MERU: Minimum Emergency Response Unit

MINARM: Armed Forces Ministry

MIOM: Ministry of the Interior and Overseas

MIPROF: Interministerial Mission for the Protection of Women against Violence and the Fight against Human Trafficking

MOOC: Massive Open Online Course

NAP: National Action Plan

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

OCLCH: Central Office for the Fight against Crimes against Humanity and Hate Crimes

ODA: Official Development Assistance

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OFII: French Office for Immigration and Integration

OFPRA: French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons

OIF: Organisation internationale de la Francophonie

OSCE: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PKO: Peacekeeping Operation

PNAT: National Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor's Office

SALW: Small Arms and Light Weapons

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

SHRF: French Republic's Humanitarian Strategy

SRHR: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

UN: United Nations

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WILPF: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WPS: Women, Peace, and Security

Preamble

Adopted for the period 2021-2025, **France's 3rd National Action Plan (NAP) on implementing the United Nations Security Council resolutions on "Women, Peace, and Security" (WPS) designates the High Council for Gender Equality (HCE) and the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) as the institutions evaluating the plan's implementation.**

This joint report is based on interviews with representatives of the institutions and civil society involved in the plan, exchanges with interministerial focal points on "Women, Peace, and Security," who held regular monitoring meetings as part of coordination led by the United Nations and International Organisations Directorate of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), as well as written data provided by the institutions, particularly on monitoring the objectives and indicators of the four pillars of the commitment table attached to the action plan.

The "Four Pillars" of the 3rd National Action Plan on "Women, Peace, and Security"

France's action is structured around four commitments (the "4 Ps"), emphasizing four decisive aspects of the "Women, Peace, and Security" agenda:

- ▶ **Prevention through awareness-raising** on issues related to gender-based violence, women's rights, and gender equality;
- ▶ **Protection** of women and girls from gender-based and sexual violence and violent extremism in conflict and post-conflict situations, and the **fight against impunity**;
- ▶ **Participation** of women in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts;
- ▶ **Promotion** of the agenda and the national action plan.

A **commitment table** with 77 indicators is attached to the action plan¹. These commitments are implemented through actions by the institutions involved². The plan also defines priority geographic areas for its implementation. It provides for interministerial coordination and monitoring, involving a network of focal points, the HCE, the CNCDH, and other civil society actors during regular meetings.

1 - France's 3rd NAP for Women, Peace and Security is available at https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/pna_eng_vf_cle0c99c8.pdf

2 - The Armed Forces Ministry (MINARM), the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas Territories (MIOM), the Ministry of Justice (MINJUST), the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of National Education and Youth, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the Ministry for Equality between Women and Men and the Fight against Discrimination, as well as the Interministerial Mission for the Protection of Women against Violence and the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings (MIPROF), the French Development Agency (AFD) and the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA).

The CNCDH and the HCE would like to express their gratitude to the actors of the institutions and organisations engaged in monitoring and implementing the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda for the quality of the interviews and exchanges, as well as for the coordination work in submitting written data to the co-evaluating institutions. This interim evaluation provides initial findings on the implementation of France’s commitments related to the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda and formulates a series of 14 recommendations in this regard.

Recommendations

AXIS 1: Strengthen Political and Managerial Leadership and Ensure Sustainable Resources

Recommendation 1: Reaffirm the strategic importance of the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda at the highest level of the State and ensure the coherence of France’s international commitments in all relevant intervention frameworks.

Recommendation 2: Effectively establish high-level governance of the “Women, Peace, and Security” plan, both interministerially and within each institution, and strengthen the mobilization and coordination of actions on the ground in conjunction with local actors.

Recommendation 3: Enhance the promotion and communication of actions related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda in all dialogue and bilateral exchange formats, particularly during important events, such as the Summit for the Future in 2024 and the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325 (2000) in October 2025, and in all forums (security forums, CSW, OIF, COP climate...).

Recommendation 4: Promote a feminist conception of peace and security issues in all forums, particularly within the European Union, in coordination with involved partners, and ensure the implementation and renewal of the European Union’s “Women, Peace, and Security” action plan (2019-2024), the concrete implementation of commitments in missions and operations under the Common Security and Defense Policy, as well as in the EU’s regional policies, programs, and partnerships, and more active participation of women in peace and security.

Recommendation 5: Budget for the “Women, Peace, and Security” plan and secure dedicated resources:

- ▶ Establish a dedicated budget line for the “Women, Peace, and Security” plan and human resources guaranteeing the implementation of the set objectives and activities;
- ▶ Secure sustainable resources, particularly through existing financial tools, by achieving the following bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) objectives by 2025: 75% of projects dedicated to gender equality marked 1 and 2, including 20% of DAC 2, in accordance with the law of August 4, 2021, and

by 2027, the objective of 85% of dedicated projects in accordance with the EU Gender Action Plan, and by strengthening the objectives of the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund to sustainably reach nearly 100% of projects marked 1 and 2 (including at least 20% of DAC 2);

- ▶ Strengthen the coordination of short, medium, and long-term financing to support local feminist civil society organisations sustainably, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations.

AXIS 2: Amplify Efforts to Concretize and Implement Commitments

Recommendation 6: Systematize prevention actions through an ambitious training policy and develop expertise on Women, Peace and Security issues:

- ▶ Implement more systematic and coherent training actions on gender equality, women's rights, and the "Women, Peace, and Security" agenda by setting mandatory training objectives (initial, continuous, and throughout the career), integrating these issues transversally into training plans, and ensuring that all focal points and management/high command have received specific training on these topics.
- ▶ Identify and mobilize expertise on Women, Peace and Security issues (including in priority countries) and fund research to develop a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and resolution that integrates gender issues.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen the level of commitment to protection and the fight against impunity:

- ▶ Reaffirm the importance of respecting international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls by parties to an armed conflict, condemn violations, and contribute to the adoption of measures against their perpetrators.
- ▶ Amplify efforts to protect and combat conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence in crisis areas, including support measures for survivors, such as preventing the stigmatization of victims and children born of rape.
- ▶ Reaffirm a zero-tolerance policy towards perpetrators of sexual violence and strengthen policies to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), both internally and in external operations and missions.
- ▶ Develop more concrete and coherent actions to strengthen the fight against impunity: strengthening alert and investigation capacities for conflict-related sexual violence; strengthening the means of national authorities in charge of

investigations related to crimes under the Rome Statute and lifting conditions that hinder the exercise of universal jurisdiction; strengthening training on testimony collection; supporting civil society organisations that monitor and support victims.

- ▶ Ensure that women and girls in conflict zones have secure access to physical and mental health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- ▶ Strengthen measures to protect and include women and girls fleeing conflict-related violence.

Recommendation 8: Promote effective and equal participation of women:

- ▶ Strengthen advocacy for the inclusion of a gender perspective in all peace agreements.
- ▶ Support the systematic and equal participation of women in decision-making processes on peace and security issues.
- ▶ Increase funding for actions and programs to strengthen the capacities of women negotiators or mediators, feminist associations, and human rights defenders.
- ▶ Raise objectives and intensify actions to enable women's access to leadership positions, particularly in military functions within the French armed forces, and strengthen women's participation in external operations and all missions (civilian and military) related to peace and security.

Recommendation 9: Strengthen the impact of the plan in conflict zones by setting more specific objectives for target countries while maintaining a flexible and comprehensive approach.

AXIS 3: Engage, as early as 2024, in Broad Consultation for the 4th Plan and Address Contemporary Challenges

Recommendation 10: Fully implement the monitoring mechanism provided for in the national action plan by organizing high-level annual meetings in 2024 and 2025, involving the HCE and the CNCDH, civil society, and local civil society, in accordance with the action plan.

Recommendation 11: Develop a more transversal approach to the plan by involving other relevant institutional actors and include Expertise France among the actors implementing the 3rd national action plan by setting objectives related to its missions.

Recommendation 12: Promote the involvement of parliamentarians in implementing the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda by preparing, as of now, the presentation of the national action plan’s assessment before the relevant committees of the National Assembly and the Senate and by organizing regular exchanges.

Recommendation 13: Improve the monitoring framework and develop, in preparation for the 4th national action plan, a new accountability framework focused on specific and measurable results and impact indicators, involving the concerned actors.

Recommendation 14: Establish the modalities for consulting civil society organisations, parliamentarians, and researchers to include the process of developing the 4th national action plan within a broad consultation framework, in conjunction with the concerned institutions, to engage in reflection on the next steps and priority issues, while addressing contemporary challenges (climate change, food insecurity, disarmament and arms control, the role of the private sector, intersectionality, etc.).

Introduction

THE “WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY” AGENDA

France’s 3rd National Action Plan (2021-2025) for implementing the United Nations Security Council resolutions on “Women, Peace, and Security” was adopted during the “Generation Equality Forum” held in Paris from June 30 to July 4, 2021, as part of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995³. It aims to support France’s commitments to implementing the ten United Nations Security Council resolutions on this theme, which make up the normative framework. These resolutions have gradually enriched what is commonly referred to as **the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda since the unanimous adoption of the first resolution, Resolution 1325 (2000), by the Security Council on October 31, 2000.**

Resolution 1325 (2000) represents a crucial turning point, as it was the first time the Security Council, the United Nations’ main body for international peace and security, addressed the links between women and international peace and security issues in a thematic resolution. **It recognized the disproportionate and specific impact of armed conflicts on women and their contribution to conflict resolution and the sustainability of peace.** It also reflects a long process of advocacy by feminist associations worldwide for greater consideration of women and gender issues by global governance actors. More generally, Resolution 1325 (2000) paved the way for new approaches to conflict prevention and resolution and other ways of addressing collective security by integrating new concepts such as gender equality. The resolution is based on **four pillars**: 1) the role of women in conflict prevention, 2) the participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding, 3) the protection of women’s and girls’ rights during and after conflicts, and 4) their specific needs during repatriation, resettlement, and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction phases.

Since 2000, the Security Council has adopted nine additional resolutions, including the two most recent in 2019⁴. These thematic resolutions fall into two categories: **the full and effective participation of women in peacebuilding** and **the prevention and protection of women from conflict-related sexual violence**. It has been recognized since Resolution 1820 (2008) of June 19, 2008, that when used as a weapon of war, sexual violence can significantly exacerbate conflicts and hinder

3 - The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women are available at <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

4 - These were resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019). These resolutions were all adopted unanimously, with the exception of resolution 2467 (2019), which was adopted with 13 votes in favor and 2 abstentions (from Russia and China). A draft resolution submitted by Russia in 2020 was not adopted.

the restoration of international peace and security, and that preventing and punishing acts of sexual violence can significantly contribute to maintaining international peace and security.

The annual reports of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict provide an overview of the progress and gaps in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. While the framework for action has been strengthened and numerous initiatives have been launched, such as the creation of the Global Survivors Fund (for and with survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence) by two Nobel Peace Prize laureates (Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad), the global situation remains alarming. During the annual Security Council debate in October 2023, the United Nations Secretary-General highlighted that women and girls remain the primary civilian victims of conflicts, with 614 million women and girls living in crisis areas in 2022, a 50% increase compared to 2017. The participation of women in peace processes has not increased: only 6 out of 18 peace agreements concluded in 2022 contain provisions related to women, girls, and gender, a proportion that has barely changed in recent years⁵. They remain the most exposed to gender-based violence and rape as a weapon of war on all continents, while impunity remains the norm, as emphasized annually by Pramila Patten⁶, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict, calling on States to strengthen processes aimed at holding perpetrators accountable for their actions. The emergence of new conflicts and the escalation of existing ones, intensified by the proliferation of weapons and increased militarization⁷, have only reinforced these observations.

The global situation is also marked by an unprecedented rollback of women's and girls' rights on all continents, in a context of shrinking civic space, weakening rule of law, and increasing humanitarian needs due to conflicts, climate change, and other factors (economic, health, etc.)⁸. The United Nations Secretary-General thus calls on States to **"urgently bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality" and to transform gendered power dynamics in the field of international peace and security**⁹ to eliminate all forms of violence against women and ensure their equal participation in all areas.

National action plans are essential tools for contributing to bridging this gap by concretizing commitments. **More than a hundred countries** (107 to date, or 55% of United Nations Member States) have adopted national action plans (NAPs) to

5 - Report of the Secretary-General, S/2023/725, September 28, 2023.

6 - Report of the Secretary-General, S/2023/413, 22 June 2023.

7 - Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, S/2024/292, April 4, 2024.

8 - See the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) World Humanitarian Outlook 2024 published on December 1, 2023, available at <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2024-enarfrres>

9 - See reports S/2023/725 and S/2024/292.

implement the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda¹⁰. International organisations (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie) or regional organisations (European Union, African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations) have integrated it into their strategies and roadmaps. Thirteen regional organisations have adopted plans on women, peace, and security, and some play a key role in developing networks of women mediators. However, the United Nations Secretary-General has highlighted two major gaps in the current national action plans: the lack of a monitoring mechanism and communication of information across all administrations, and insufficient funding to achieve the NAPs’ objectives.

EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FRANCE’S 3rd NAP ON “WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY”

Since the adoption of Resolution 1325 (2000), France, one of the driving States for defending the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda at the Security Council, has adopted three national action plans (2010-2013; 2015-2018; 2021-2025)¹¹. The delay in adopting France’s 3rd action plan, published more than two years after the expiration of the second, while Resolution 1325 (2000) celebrated its 20th anniversary in October 2020, reflects the discrepancies between announced commitments and priorities and the willingness to implement them concretely. The adoption of the 3rd plan, albeit late, was welcome in the context of the Generation Equality Forum, 25 years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

France has a particular responsibility as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and a key role as a Member State of the European Union in amplifying actions and implementing them at the regional level. This role is essential in a concerning international context marked by the challenge to multilateralism, the regression of democracies worldwide¹², and the increasingly unabashed affirmation of anti-rights movements that advocate for the rollback of women’s rights and States that attempt to weaken the language and scope of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, particularly regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), or even challenge the agenda itself.

France’s commitment is also part of its announced **feminist foreign policy** in 2019, whose transformative approach implies the highest level of ambition in all aspects of foreign policy, including international peace and security, by developing a feminist perspective on international security. The implementation of the agenda, based on obligations under international humanitarian law and international human

10 - Report of the Secretary-General, S/2023/725 and data from Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) available at <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/>

11 - According to the WILPF, it is one of the fifteen or so states to have reached their 3rd NAP: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/>.

12 - This is measured, for example, by the Swedish Varieties of Democracy Institute in its 2023 annual report, which compiles the largest database of democratic indicators in the world: 72% of the world’s population lives in an autocratic system in 2022, compared with just 28% in a democracy, the sharpest decline in 20 years: https://v-dem.net/documents/29/V-dem_democracyreport2023_lowres.pdf

rights law, is also reflected in France's priorities in the context of its candidacy for the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2021-2023 term¹³ and the **Call for Humanitarian Action**, launched jointly with Germany in 2019¹⁴. This commitment to strengthening respect for international humanitarian law and facilitating humanitarian action based on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence is essential. In 2024, an estimated 300 million people worldwide will need humanitarian assistance and protection, particularly due to conflicts, and women and girls are disproportionately affected¹⁵.

France has played an active role in promoting and maintaining the Agenda on the Security Council's agenda despite a difficult context, advocating for progressive positions on preventing and combating conflict-related violence and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Some progress has been noted compared to the previous plan, with increased interministerial mobilization and new initiatives. However, it remains difficult to translate the action plan into concrete actions, as its current monitoring framework remains incomplete and partially unexploited, while its ownership, political leadership, and funding remain major challenges. The budget cuts announced in 2024 could threaten some progresses, while the multiplication of crises and conflicts and their impact on women's and girls' rights justify France increasing its financial commitments.

Certain shortcomings have also been identified in the ownership of the plan's conceptual approach, although it is essential for strengthening the guiding principles for public authorities' actions and better reflecting the agenda's transformative ambition:

- The rights-based approach, which implies the effective participation of women and feminist organisations, including in peacekeeping and conflict management decision-making processes;
- The integrated gender approach and the cross-cutting analysis of gender and conflict issues for a more systemic consideration at all phases of the policy cycle, from conception, and by all actors;
- The broad approach, extended to all areas of intervention, both external and internal, aimed at Call for Humanitarian Action, political, and organisational leadership;
- The accountability of the plan, in accordance with existing indicators (UN, EU...).

13 - See the application form at https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/en_candidature_cdh_cle8d3188.pdf. Among the priorities is the strengthening of international mobilization in favor of respect for women's rights, with specific mention of its action in favor of the implementation of the Security Council's Women, Peace and Security resolutions.

14 - Call to action, joined by 53 signatories (December 2023): <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/france-and-the-united-nations/multilateralism-a-principle-of-action-for-france/the-call-for-humanitarian-action/>

15 - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Humanitarian Overview 2024", available at www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2024-enarfres.

As the international community prepares to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325 (2000) in 2025 and France implements its 3rd national action plan, **the Women, Peace and Security agenda is still too little known**. In a context where civilian populations, particularly women and children, pay the heaviest toll in armed conflicts, while women's rights are among the first to be violated, the HCE and the CNCDH encourage public authorities to give new impetus and better visibility to the implementation of this agenda, both internationally and nationally. A strengthened concretization of commitments, supported by heightened ambition, should contribute to achieving the Women, Peace and Security agenda's **ultimate goal**, designed as **a lever for profound transformation** in gender equality in the context of international peace and security. This aims to guarantee women's equal participation in all decision-making processes, eliminate conflict-related sexual violence and all other violations of their fundamental rights, and provide them with access to justice. **The upcoming United Nations Summit for the Future in September 2024 and the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325 (2000) in 2025 should be landmark moments to launch new substantial initiatives** alongside like-minded States and coalitions.

In preparation for the final assessment of the plan by the end of 2025, the CNCDH and the HCE, **publishing a joint evaluation for the first time**, formulate a series of 14 recommendations for public authorities to embrace a new political ambition and make tangible the commitments of the national action plan around the following three axes:

- ▶ **Reaffirm** the strategic importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and ensure its **high-level** governance, ensuring better transversal ownership and overall coherence of actions and commitments with existing strategic frameworks, and dedicating sustainable resources to it.
- ▶ **Amplify** efforts and raise the level of ambition to valorize advances, address the plan's gaps, and give more substance to these resolutions **through concrete actions** on women's participation in conflict management, **prevention, protection, and the fight against impunity**.
- ▶ **Engage** immediately **in broad consultation on the priority issues** and main challenges of the next national action plan, mobilizing the concerned institutions, partners and actors, particularly French civil society organisations and those in crisis-affected countries, and involving parliamentarians.

1. Strengthen Political and Managerial Leadership and Ensure Sustainable Resources

The HCE and the CNCDH note that the implementation of the 3rd National Action Plan has been marked by a new institutional dynamic, with enhanced monitoring through regular inter-ministerial coordination among focal points. The mobilization of relevant services has enabled the deployment of actions and activities under the four commitments of the national action plan, some of which are highlighted in the second part of this report. However, the plan remains relatively unknown beyond expert circles. The lack of political and managerial support and dedicated resources appear to be significant obstacles to its implementation. The CNCDH and the HCE recommend strengthening high-level political leadership to improve cross-cutting ownership and ensure policy coherence, and guaranteeing a dedicated and sustainable budget line and resources to achieve the objectives.

1.1 Increased Inter-ministerial Mobilization but Uneven Ownership

1.1.1 A New Institutional Dynamic

The CNCDH and the HCE note progress compared to the previous plan, with the establishment of regular inter-ministerial consultations, approximately every two months, involving all institutional actors designated by the plan. A list of about twenty “inter-ministerial focal points” (reference persons) has been established for the implementation and monitoring of the 3rd plan in each relevant ministry and institution, albeit at varying hierarchical levels. It should be noted that this list does not include focal points in field posts or agencies.

About a dozen inter-ministerial focal point meetings were held from 2021 to 2023, which is a novelty compared to the previous plan. Hearings reveal that inter-ministerial meetings at the expert level have enabled monitoring of actions by various administrations and information sharing, even leading to certain adaptations (inclusion of priority zones and integration of thematic issues not covered in the plan, such as climate challenges or arms control) and have fostered a common working dynamic. Some thematic working groups have been initiated (e.g., security-

defense group with three relevant ministries), but the results of these efforts or common strategic objectives related to the agenda have not been communicated.

Enhanced engagement from the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas Territories (MIOM) resulted in the appointment in 2021 of a delegate for the “Women, Peace, and Security” action plan at the cabinet level of the General Secretariat. The delegate’s mission is to promote the agenda in collaboration with the Prefect, Senior Official for Equal Rights. Regular inter-service coordination has been established, leading to the production of a first execution report in 2022 on the Women, Peace and Security plan at MIOM. This report provides an initial assessment of actions undertaken by the ministry and sets the stage for future strategy development. The focus has been on training personnel, promoting gender diversity in professions, and implementing mechanisms to combat violence and human trafficking in line with the national legislative framework. However, further efforts are needed to ensure better coherence between public policies and France’s international commitments and external action to implement the agenda more concretely.

The designation of new plan actors, particularly the French Development Agency (AFD), in line with the recommendations of the HCE’s final evaluation report in 2018, has been a significant advancement for project implementation, complementing actions by other actors. However, the AFD’s mandate only covers part of the National Action Plan (NAP) and does not include security and defense issues. Expertise France, integrated into the AFD group since January 2022, is not among the operators involved in implementing the 3rd plan, which appears to be a gap, even though it has participated as an observer in inter-ministerial consultations (and the informal security-defense group) since autumn 2023. Expertise France should play a more significant and complementary role, given its specific missions related to security and defense, particularly through its Peace, Stability, and Security Division, and should be explicitly included among the plan’s actors in the future.

1.1.2 Uneven Ownership

Beyond expert services, the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda remains relatively unknown within relevant administrations and institutions and suffers from a lack of visibility and crosscutting ownership.

The ownership of specific agenda issues related to conflict situations remains a major challenge. While noting measures implemented for gender equality and the integration of gender considerations, the CNCDH and the HCE observe that many actions often represent **a transcription of existing initiatives developed** outside

the “Women, Peace, and Security” framework and are integrated into this framework **post hoc, without sufficient strategic coherence**. While important, many of these actions seem more related to other dynamics, both nationally (e.g., gender equality declared a major cause of the five-year term of President Macron, inter-ministerial plan for professional equality, Grenelle interministerial meeting against violence, and national mechanisms to combat violence) and internationally (e.g., international strategy for gender equality and the announcement of feminist foreign policy by the government in 2019). These initiatives have contributed to better awareness of prevention and combating violence, as well as women’s participation in decision-making processes, but they do not appear sufficiently linked to the plan.

Gender issues are addressed in a very fragmented manner in the defense sector, which tends to focus on “diversity,” understood as promoting gender equality at work (both civilian and military), or on training and awareness-raising activities about gender-based violence in conflict situations¹⁶. However, the Armed Forces Ministry has expert services and a High Official for Equality representing it in various international events related to the agenda, as well as personnel specifically trained on these issues. For example, a French military woman officer currently holds the Gender Advisor position at the NATO Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk. However, the agenda remains overlooked at the high level and benefits from insufficient ownership from the command, which does not consider it a major issue in the context of high-intensity warfare. This is largely due to the Armed Forces Ministry not having developed a genuine gender-based approach to place ownership at a more strategic and operational level. The notion of gender continues to face significant resistance within the military, considerably limiting the integration of the agenda into defense and security policies. The HCE and the CNCDDH also note recent testimonies about sexual violence experienced by female military personnel in the line of duty and the impunity despite mechanisms like the *Thémis* unit¹⁷, which aims at receiving complaints and conducting investigations. The two institutions note that an investigative mission has been announced in this regard¹⁸.

Efforts should be made for a **better articulation** between the various domains relevant to the agenda, including **combating discrimination and sexual violence** within the armed forces, **considering gender as a major strategic issue on the international stage, and in the planning and conduct of operations**. Three lines of recommendation could be:

16 - See also: Camille Boutron, *Le ministère des armées face à l’agenda Femmes, paix et sécurité : évolution des approches et défis de mise en œuvre (The Ministry of Armed Forces and the Women, Peace and Security agenda: evolving approaches and implementation challenges – in French)*, IRSEM, Étude n°88, October 2021.

17 - The *Thémis* unit, set up in 2014 by the Ministry of Defense, is responsible for collecting reports of sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexist outrages and (since 2021) discrimination of any kind, and ensuring that they are properly dealt with.

18 - MINARM, “Violences sexuelles dans les armées : ouverture d’une mission d’enquête” (Sexual violence in the armed forces: opening of a fact-finding mission – in French), April 12, 2024 : www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/violences-sexuelles-armees-ouverture-dune-mission-denquete.

- Identify experts on agenda-related issues among civilian and military defense personnel, who are currently dispersed across various services with under-evaluated competencies.
- Strengthen coordination on agenda-related issues through an expert network, both in internal policies and strategic and operational frameworks.
- Integrate all dimensions of the Women, Peace and Security agenda into the initial training of military personnel, going beyond the prevention of gender discrimination and making it a genuine theme for acquiring knowledge useful for defense.

Generally speaking, hearings reveal **uneven ownership and understanding** of the agenda among actors. Despite progress in promoting a culture of equality and developing networks of gender/equality or “diversity” focal points within ministries and institutions (nearly 1,100 diversity representatives within the armed forces) to enhance ownership and serve as relays, it is necessary to systematize and improve specific knowledge of Women, Peace and Security issues across all networks, including at the high level. Regular training should be made mandatory for management/high command and focal point networks, especially in conflict-affected countries.

It is important **to strengthen crosscutting ownership of Women, Peace and Security issues in the mandates and roadmaps** of gender/equality focal points and those responsible for security and strategic affairs, whose mandates overlap. Encouraging cross-learning and broader reflection on information exchange, including with security/defense actors, while respecting confidentiality requirements, is crucial. It is essential to integrate fully these issues into letters of mission, action plans of embassies and local development committees, roadmaps, and to regularly report on actions taken under the agenda in relevant areas, which could be a topic for the annual meetings provided for in the plan.

1.2 Lack of Leadership and Overall Coherence of the Strategic Framework

1.2.1 Strengthen Political and Institutional Leadership of the Plan

Despite progress compared to the previous plan, the HCE and the CNCDH note that the **political leadership of the plan remains generally insufficient given current challenges**. The absence of a high-level strategy specifically focused on the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda does not promote ownership of these issues beyond expert focal points, nor does it provide an overall vision. Hearings reveal a lack of managerial support and overall coordination of field actions, which are

crucial and serve as a lever to mobilize teams, close to local realities and needs, and to ensure coherence and synergy across all services.

The CNCDH and the HCE note that none of the high-level annual follow-up meetings that should have been organized between 2021 and 2023, in accordance with the 3rd NAP, particularly at the level of central administration directors and involving the HCE and the CNCDH, have been held. The same applies to meetings with civil society organisations (CSOs), including those from priority countries.

The current NAP provides for *“high-level leadership ensured by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the organisation of annual meetings with all relevant actors at the level of central administration directors to monitor and present the results of the implementation of the ‘Women, Peace, and Security’ agenda.”* These meetings are to be organized in collaboration with the High Council for Gender Equality and the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, which may also involve other civil society actors engaged in the *“Women, Peace, and Security”* agenda and on the ground. It also provides for *“annual follow-up meetings on the implementation of the National Action Plan in priority countries, involving civil society on the ground.”*

The HCE and the CNCDH note the lack of implementation of this leadership and follow-up mechanism, which was a positive advancement of the 3rd plan. Its implementation thus has insufficiencies in terms of leadership, method, and results:

- ▶ In terms of political leadership and internal follow-up, these meetings should be an opportunity to promote the agenda and draw lessons from the plan’s implementation, for example, regarding the designation of priority countries.
- ▶ In terms of method, particularly with the insufficient consideration of the rights-based approach (which implies the participation of affected persons) and the exercise of external accountability involving civil society.
- ▶ In terms of results, as this mechanism would have allowed drawing lessons with all stakeholders and increasing the agenda’s visibility.

Internal leadership should be strengthened at the highest level within each ministry and institution, particularly foreign affairs and the armed forces, to better support inter-ministerial coordination and strengthen field actions. The example of the concertation established by the MIOM under the auspices of its General Secretariat appears to be a practice that should be encouraged, as does the leadership of the MEAE General Secretariat for the international strategy for gender equality 2018-2022, which must remain a distinct process from the NAP, which responds to specific international obligations.

Inter-ministerial leadership could involve the general secretariats and directorates-general of relevant ministries and institutions during high-level annual meetings. Establishing a steering committee could be considered e.g. organised alternately within the involved administrations, to endorse the NAP at the highest level of each institution and drive new initiatives.

Moreover, **broader and more public communication** could be developed to increase the visibility of these issues, particularly during important milestones. Specifically, the approach of the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325 should be an opportunity to highlight initiatives or actions explicitly linked to the agenda and to take a new step in political leadership.

1.2.2 Strengthen Coherence of Policies and Strategies with “Women, Peace, and Security” Commitments

The CNCDH and the HCE note progress in considering gender issues in an increasing number of institutional strategies. Advances are noted in the consideration of the gender marker (DAC 1 and DAC 2 projects¹⁹), particularly in bilateral humanitarian and stabilization projects linked to the objectives of the August 4, 2021 law, with an increase in DAC 1 projects (75% in 2022 compared to 58% in 2020) and DAC 2 projects (12.2% in 2022). Strategic documents refer to other relevant strategies, such as the renewal of feminist foreign policy and the new French Republic Humanitarian Strategy (FRHS) (2023-2027), which strengthens the gender component.

However, there is a **lack of overall coherence** and fragmentation of strategies and action plans that are not always connected to each other. The mention of a strategy on paper does not necessarily imply its effective articulation in practice. It is essential that **relevant links and synergies are effective in implementation**. Often, issues are addressed in silos, and there is a lack of an overall strategy as well as interconnection of Women, Peace and Security issues with peace/security/humanitarian/development strategies. It is important to integrate the Women, Peace and Security perspective into missions and projects from their conception and to ensure that the various cycles of operations and projects integrate these specific issues upstream.

In the field of development aid, strategic priorities seem to have been largely redefined during the Presidential Council for Development (PCD) and the Inter-ministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) in the summer of 2023²⁰, both thematically and in terms of resource allocation.

19 - DAC: statistical tool established by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Projects/programs marked “Significant Objective” (DAC 1) or “Main Objective” (DAC 2) are counted by the DAC as aid geared towards gender equality.

20 - Guidelines for International Cooperation Policy and Official Development Assistance (in French), CICID, 2023 : https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/orientations_cle017322.pdf

However, the language appears to retreat from previous exercises in considering gender in crisis zones. While the issue of addressing fragilities and intervention in conflict zones was mentioned in the CICID of 2016 and 2017 and in the Law on Development Solidarity and Combating Global Inequalities of August 10, 2021 (LOP-DSLIM), this issue is not mentioned in the conclusions of the PCD or the CICID of 2023, unlike gender equality, which is one of the 9 priorities (but with less ambitious indicators than the 2021 law).

In a study on “Gender and Conflicts” conducted for the AFD²¹, it is noted that “France’s commitments on gender and conflicts are not systematically articulated. They are fragmented across multiple strategic frameworks and lack a clear and unique accountability mechanism. The materialization and operationalization of gender equality objectives in crisis zones remain relatively low, partly due to the lack of ownership of these issues by some key actors in the 3D framework (Defense, Diplomacy, Development), although progress is noted.”

The CNCDH and the HCE recommend aligning the entire strategic framework to fully consider the commitments of the Women, Peace and Security program and to ensure the sustainability and strengthening of already initiated activities. Specifically, they recommend:

- ▶ **Ensuring harmonization and articulation with peace/security/humanitarian/development strategies**, such as the French Republic Humanitarian Strategy (2023-2027), the French international strategy on sexual and reproductive health and rights (2023-2027), the Prevention, Resilience, and Sustainable Peace Strategy (2018-2022), the 3rd National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2024-2027), the LOP-DSLIM law of 2021, CICID, and equality roadmaps. Other sectoral strategies, particularly on environmental issues (climate, biodiversity, disaster risk management), should progressively integrate more links with conflicts and gender-based violence, as the ecological crisis has repercussions on local and regional conflicts.
- ▶ **Ensuring the best possible articulation with the feminist foreign policy strategy**, which should promote a more transversal integration of the gender perspective into strategic frameworks and maintain a high level of ambition without diluting the action plan. The Women, Peace and Security dimension, considered a priority in the international strategy for gender equality (2018-2022), should be strengthened in the next feminist foreign policy strategy, contributing to a new impetus and broader dissemination of these issues. However, the NAP should not be minimized or “absorbed” as it responds to a specific international normative framework and faces unique challenges in terms of coordination, expertise, and funding.

21 - Technopolis Group, “Gender and Conflict” study aimed at improving and systematizing gender mainstreaming in operations in crisis and conflict zones, July 2023.

By comparison, a study by the think tank ECDPM²² notes that the integration of the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda into the EU’s Gender Action Plan (GAP III) has positive aspects by strengthening gender integration, making training and/or professionalization of gender focal points on Women, Peace and Security mandatory, and becoming a component of their missions, giving new momentum to these issues. However, it does not appear to have had a significant direct impact on the agenda’s implementation (which was stimulated by parallel internal efforts and other reference documents of the EU’s Common Security and Defense Policy) nor has it overcome challenges related to its implementation (expertise, coordination, and funding).

- ▶ **Ensuring the articulation of Women, Peace and Security commitments with other international obligations**, particularly those made during the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 (Beijing +25 platform) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (mentioned in the plan). It is also essential that the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda is based on the effective respect of international human rights law obligations, such as those arising from the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**²³, and those relating to international humanitarian law. It should also be **framed within a European and pan-European context** (EU, OSCE, Council of Europe) to ensure coherence and **possible synergies between French and (pan-)European instruments**, whose annual objectives can sometimes differ, as noted during hearings (e.g., strengthening the coherence of objectives set for Expertise France, a state operator that is also an agency accredited with the EU, representing half of its activities).

1.2.3 Strengthen Leadership in All Forums, Particularly the European Union

Political leadership on these issues should be strengthened in all forums, dialogue formats, and forums on security issues (Munich Conference), within international organisations on defense and security (NATO, OSCE) and regional organisations (EU), of which France is a member and which play a determining role in achieving the objectives of the Women, Peace and Security program²⁴.

In this regard, France could play a leading role **within the EU**, alongside the most active states in promoting gender equality and a feminist European foreign policy,

22 - Gender Equality in the EU’s External Action: The Gender Action Plan and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, Study by the ‘European Center for Development Policy Management,’ in partnership with the ‘Center for Africa-Europe Relations,’ April 2023, available at <https://ecdpm.org/application/files/8116/8171/8756/Gender-equality-EU-external-action-gender-action-plan-women-peace-security-agenda-FCDDPM-briefing-note-162-2023.pdf>

23 - See in particular: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations, 18 October 2013, CEDAW/C/GC/30. See also: *Leveraging the synergies between the CEDAW and the Women, Peace and Security Framework - UN Security Council Arria Formula Meeting*, 12 March 2024: UN debate in Arria format to 1/ identify best practices and build on synergies between CEDAW and the WPS agenda, 2/ strengthen state accountability for implementation of the WPS agenda and CEDAW, 3/ highlight CEDAW’s potential as a tool to support women’s participation in peace processes: <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1f/k1f6ji2235>

24 - Press release, “Security Council: the role of regional organisations highlighted in achieving the goals of the agenda for women and peace and security”, June 15, 2022: <https://press.un.org/fr/2022/cs14932.doc.htm>.

to advocate for better consideration of the agenda in EU policies and its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), and to promote a more active role for women in peace and security, particularly in the context of the renewal of the EU's Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, which expires in 2024, and the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III, 2021-2025), which will end next year.

The EU and the “Women, Peace, and Security” Agenda

The EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2024²⁵) defines **6 key priority areas**: i) prevention; ii) protection; iii) relief and recovery assistance, as well as three crosscutting principles: iv) women's participation; v) gender perspective integration; and vi) leading by example. It includes an accountability framework with short, medium, and long-term objectives.

The European Commission has adopted the Strategy for Gender Equality (2020-2025) and the **EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III)** titled “An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU's external action” (2021-2025). It includes a chapter on Women, Peace and Security to strengthen the dedicated EU action plan.

The EU Council conclusions on Women, Peace and Security of December 10, 2018²⁶, reaffirm the EU's strategic approach to these issues, and **the conclusions of November 14, 2022²⁷** reaffirm the commitments of the EU's action plans and support for the UN Secretary-General's “new agenda for peace²⁸.”»

The HCE and the CNCDH recommend strengthening coordination (including between delegations and CSDP missions) and the exchange of best practices within the EU to ensure the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2024) and its renewal at the end of 2024, to ensure the concrete implementation of its commitments in Member States, as well as in missions/operations conducted under the CSDP and in the EU's regional programs and partnerships.

The aim is to strengthen, in particular, women's participation in all peace and security issues and to promote their access to justice and basic services. It is important to encourage member states to nominate female candidates for all positions within the European External Action Service (EEAS), including senior management and mission and operation heads for the CSDP.

1.3 Absence of Dedicated Resources and Uncertainties About Funding Sustainability

25 - EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024 : <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11031-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

26 - Conclusions of the Council of the EU “Women, Peace and Security” of December 10, 2018, doc. 15086/18 : www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37412/st15086-en18.pdf.

27 - See the November 14, 2022 press release on this subject: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/11/14/council-conclusions-on-women-peace-and-security/>.

28 - See also the recent statement, on behalf of the European Union, by Ambassador Stella Ronner-Grubacic at the Security Council debate on October 25, 2023 on “Women's participation in international peace and security: from theory to practice”, available at www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/eu-statement-%E2%80%93-un-security-council-open-debate-women-peace-and-security_en.

The HCE and the CNCDH note the **absence of dedicated resources** for the 3rd plan. As previously highlighted by the CNCDH²⁹ and the HCE³⁰, this insufficiency is all the more regrettable **as the lack of adequate, long-term, and predictable funding is one of the recurring gaps for the effective implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security**³¹. This weakness is also considered, at the international level, a barrier to achieving the objectives of action plans and it illustrates the contradiction between stated commitments and actual investment in this agenda, whose implementation relies on existing (or even decreasing) resources or financial commitments made in other frameworks. The UN Secretary-General notes that “while 86% of states’ NAPs have a monitoring framework and related indicators, only 26% are accompanied by a budget” and recommends that NAPs be budgeted or even codified in national legislation.

Human resources remain insufficient to implement projects that must be sustained over the long term, not just in times of emergency. There are questions about the capacity of institutions to support projects that require significant human resources and to strengthen expertise. The same applies to the evaluation and capitalization of these projects, which are crucial for identifying best practices and disseminating them.

The CNCDH and the HCE note progress that needs to be consolidated and sustained, stemming from commitments made under the National Action Plan (NAP) after its adoption or in other relevant frameworks that contribute to the implementation of the agenda:

- The mobilization of state resources through the French Development Agency (AFD), which funds larger operations in fragile areas through the **Minka Peace and Resilience Fund**, endowed with €200 million in annual grants (€230.9 million in 2022), with 61 CAD 1 or 2 projects financed for a total of €521 million over the 2021-2023 period, and achieving 100% gender-focused financing in 2022.
- The commitments announced at the last national humanitarian conference to increase **humanitarian aid funding to €1 billion per year by 2025**.
- The creation of the **Support Fund for Feminist Organisations** (FSOF), co-managed by the AFD and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), launched in 2020 and renewed in 2023 with a total envelope of €250 million for 5 years (2023-2027), funded through existing Official Development Assistance (ODA) channels around 7 themes, including the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda, which benefited from a dedicated call for projects of €10 million in 2022.

29 - CNCDH, Note on the mid-term evaluation of the 2nd NAP, March 2, 2017.

30 - HCE, Final Evaluation Report of the 2nd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 10 December 2018.

31 - Global Network of Women Peacebuilding, « No Money, no NAP. Manual for Costing and Budgeting National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 », 2017. <https://www.peacewomen.org/resource/no-money-no-nap-manual-costing-and-budgeting-national-action-plans-unscr-1325>

- France’s contributions to **international and multilateral funds** such as the Global Survivors Fund co-founded by Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad (€2 million per year), UN funds (UN Women, UNFPA), and the announcement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2023 in Ulaanbaatar³² of a €1 million envelope for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) dedicated to the “Women, Peace and Security” agenda.

However, decisions contradicting the stated priorities of certain public policies have also been observed, with the announcement in 2024 of a €10 billion budget cut affecting certain ministries identified as central to the plan. Decree No. 2024-124 of February 21, 2024, canceling credits, is likely to impact several expenditure items related to Women, Peace and Security projects, including ODA, a privileged tool for financing feminist foreign policy. The cancellation of nearly €742 million in commitment credits, representing a 15% reduction in credits, raises concerns about the potential repercussions on international solidarity organisations and feminist associations³³.

Budget variations between the 2023 law and the 2024 decree

Mission/Program	Budget announced in Law 2023 - Article State B' Breakdown by mission and programme of general budget appropriations		Budget changes in the 2024 decree		Adjusted budget			
	Commitment authorisations	Payment appropriations	Cancelled commitment authorisations	Cancelled payment appropriations	Commitment authorisations	Change in CAs	Payment appropriations	Changes in PAs
External action of the State	350833292	3306629303	174014021	174014021	3334821271	-5%	3332615484	-5%
France's action in Europe and the world	2265581393	2263775608	134476384	134476384	2131105011	-6%	2129299224	-6%
Cultural diplomacy and influence	805972195	805972195	28044586	28044586	777927609	-3%	777927609	-3%
Official development aid	6292614198	5928922015	742115795	742115795	5550498403	-12%	5550498403	-12%
Strengthening AFD's equity	150000000	150000000			150000000	0%	150000000	0%
Solidarity towards developing countries	3349385144	3434910974	492115795	542115795	2857269349	-15%	2892795179	-15%
Direction for Government Action	1021145510	1052836714	50889310	50889310	970256200	-5%	1001947404	-5%
Protection of rights and freedoms	139451701	135402866	6913675	6913675	132538026	-5%	128489191	-5%
Solidarity, Integration and Equal Opportunities	3100996360	31098886491	307000000	307000000	3069396360	-1%	30791886491	-1%
Equality between women and men	77408682	77408682	6913675	6913675	70495007	-9%	70495007	-9%
TOTAL	4861390477	48454745050	1942483241	1992483241	46668907236	-4%	46482261809	-4%

Given the **uncertainties** surrounding the resources that the State will allocate to intervene in crisis and conflict zones, particularly in the context of reduced resources in the Sahel following political changes (coups d'état and challenges to French presence in the region), questions arise about the impact of such a reduced budget on the implementation of the plan. Resources for ODA in crisis situations should be sustained and increased rather than reduced or called into question.

Faced with the multiplication of prolonged crises and the resulting generalized rollback of girls’ and women’s rights in many countries, this context justifies France increasing its financial commitments rather than reducing them, strengthening its involvement in implementing UN resolutions, and mobilizing all its financial instruments abroad, including humanitarian aid, cooperation, and development through the AFD as a donor, as well as Expertise France.

32 - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs “Ulaanbaatar Declaration” - Final document from the meeting of women foreign ministers, June 30, 2023 : www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/diplomatie-feministe/actualites-et-evenements/article/declaration-d-oulan-bator-document-final-issu-de-la-reunion-des-femmes. (in French) <https://mfa.gov.mn/en/outcome-document-of-the-female-foreign-ministers-meeting-ulaanbaatar-declaration/> (in English)

33 - Coordination Sud, “800 millions d’euros en moins pour l’aide publique au développement?”, press release dated February 20, 2024, available at : www.coordinationsud.org/actualite/800-millions-deuros-en-moins-pour-laide-publique-au-developpement/.

The CNCDH and the HCE once again recommend **providing dedicated funding and adequate human resources, implementing precise budget allocation** with the percentage of budgets from the various concerned ministries and a dedicated budget line, so that the amounts allocated to each measure, where possible, and an overall budget for the plan are included. The staff responsible for coordinating the plan should be strengthened, drawing inspiration from the practices of other Member States.

The HCE and the CNCDH also recommend:

- ▶ Reaffirming the commitments of bilateral ODA dedicated to gender equality and fully implementing the objectives of the law of August 4, 2021, to achieve, by 2025, 75% of projects marked 1 and 2, including 20% of DAC 2, as well as the objective of 85% of projects marked 1 and 2 in accordance with the EU Gender Action Plan commitments.
- ▶ Making permanent the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund in crisis zones, aiming for more ambitious targets to sustainably achieve nearly 100% of projects marked 1 or 2, including at least 20% of DAC 2.
- ▶ Strengthening the coordination and alignment between humanitarian instruments and longer-term instruments (Minka Fund, FSOE, etc.) of ODA, continuing to support in a coordinated manner and increasing funding for local feminist civil society organisations, particularly in conflict and post-conflict zones.

Recommendation 1: Reaffirm at the highest level of the State the strategic importance of the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda and ensure the coherence of France’s international commitments in all relevant intervention frameworks.

Recommendation 2: Effectively establish high-level governance of the “Women, Peace, and Security” plan, both interministerially and within each institution, and strengthen the mobilization and coordination of actions on the ground in conjunction with local actors.

Recommendation 3: Enhance the promotion and communication of actions related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda in all dialogue and bilateral exchange formats, particularly during important events, such as the **Summit for the Future in 2024 and the 25th anniversary of Resolution 1325 (2000) in October 2025**, and in all forums (security forums, CSW, OIF, COP climate...).

Recommendation 4: Promote a feminist conception of peace and security issues in all forums, particularly within the European Union, in coordination with involved partners, and ensure the implementation and renewal of the European Union’s “Women, Peace, and Security” action plan (2019-2024), the concrete implementation of commitments in missions and operations under the Common Security and Defense Policy, as well as in the EU’s regional policies, programs, and partnerships, and more active participation of women in peace and security.

Recommendation 5: Budget for the “Women, Peace, and Security” plan and secure dedicated resources:

- ▶ Establish a dedicated budget line for the “Women, Peace, and Security” plan and human resources guaranteeing the implementation of the set objectives and activities;
- ▶ Secure sustainable resources, particularly through existing financial tools, **by achieving the following bilateral ODA objectives by 2025:** 75% of projects dedicated to gender equality marked 1 and 2, including 20% of DAC 2, in accordance with the law of August 4, 2021, and by 2027, the objective of 85% of dedicated projects in accordance with the EU Gender Action Plan, **and by strengthening the objectives of the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund** to sustainably achieve nearly 100% of projects marked 1 and 2 (including at least 20% of DAC 2);
- ▶ Strengthen the coordination of short, medium, and long-term financing to sustainably support local feminist civil society organisations, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations.

2. Amplify Efforts to Concretize and Implement Commitments

The following observations relate to the analysis of France’s four commitment pillars (“4 Ps”) of the national action plan on prevention (objective 1), protection (objective 2), participation (objective 3); promotion (objective 4) is addressed in a cross-cutting approach in this report. A specific point is also dedicated to the “priority geographic areas,” a new feature of the 3rd NAP aimed at concretizing the agenda.

2.1 Prevention: Develop a More Comprehensive Approach to the Pursued Objectives and Actions

2.1.1 Continue to Strengthen and Systematize Prevention and Training Actions

The auditions and data transmitted reflect a strengthening of prevention-related actions, an essential pillar of the agenda. Most of the actions mentioned under pillar 1 (“Prevention through awareness-raising on issues related to the fight against gender-based violence, women’s rights, and gender equality”) **focus on raising**

awareness and training personnel on gender equality and the fight against sexual and gender-based violence. The HCE and the CNCDH welcome France's willingness to intensify its efforts in this regard, as evidenced by the number of examples provided, although the link between some of the mentioned training programs and the "Women, Peace, and Security" agenda (or its integration therein) is not always clear due to the lack of explicit reference.

In addition to one-off awareness-raising actions, the training offer seems to have been expanded in some institutions, and some (new) educational tools are mentioned. Among these is the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on "Gender and Development" - developed by the MEAE, the AFD, and Expertise France, and operational since May 2022. This MOOC is an interesting tool as it is based on an integrated gender approach and includes, among its 9 modules, a specific module on "Women, Peace, and Security," contributing to the dissemination of knowledge on these issues³⁴. The transmitted data indicate 7,811 registrants, a steadily increasing figure. However, they do not mention the number of agents who have validated all or part of the training. It is therefore difficult to assess its impact. Moreover, it would be useful to make the training mandatory (which implies listing the personnel required to validate the MOOC). **The creation of a permanent and open MOOC specifically focused on "Women, Peace, and Security" issues** would allow for regular updates to the training content and better visibility for the agenda and the French NAP.

Furthermore, the OFPRA has continued its awareness-raising and training actions to consider gender-related motives in asylum applications and to welcome narratives of suffering, as illustrated by examples of mandatory training (initial curriculum and continuous training) for protection officers on issues such as violence against women (female genital mutilation, forced marriages, domestic violence, etc.), human trafficking, or violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity; similarly, the training of members of the judicial panels of the National Court of Asylum. Also mentioned are more targeted training sessions for different audiences - such as medical personnel of the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII), social workers of the national reception system - as well as exchanges with associative and institutional partners or medico-legal units. These training actions should be continued, diversified, expanded to other recipients, and continuously updated for better consideration of gender issues and motives of vulnerability in asylum applications.

Data has also been provided, notably on specific or crosscutting training programs within the national police and the national gendarmerie on discrimination, violence against women, the fight against sexual and gender-based violence, and gender

³⁴ - The "Gender and Development" MOOC is available to MEAE staff on the in-house Diplomatica platform, and to the general public on the Campus AFD platform. Other training modules available on the Diplomatica platform are mentioned in connection with general gender-related issues, in particular gender equality or "Taking advantage of female leadership".

mainstreaming³⁵, as well as more broadly, training for ministry agents on gender equality and the fight against discrimination. In total, 24,505 agents (of the national police) have been trained on these themes, which nevertheless represents a small proportion of the overall workforce.

Regarding **more specific awareness raising and training related to WPS issues**, efforts primarily focus on **personnel deployed in external operations of the Armed Forces and the Interior**. These include mandatory pre-deployment training, training on the law of armed conflict (legal advisors or “Legads”) and on conflict-related sexual violence for military and civilian personnel. The MIOM reports modules on the agenda’s issues during pre-expatriation training and HEAT (*hostile environment awareness training*) courses delivered by the national training center for gendarmerie forces, with 140 personnel trained in 2022. Noteworthy cooperation actions include those with francophone countries (through national vocational schools (ENVR) and international vocational schools (EIVR)), within the framework of the Francophone Police Training Network (FRANCOPOL), and through contributions to the UN Training of Trainers (ToT) program or online training for gender advisors in peacekeeping operations (PKO).

However, the transmitted data seem to reveal, on the one hand, that **WPS training is sometimes quite compartmentalized** and reserved for certain categories of personnel and, on the other hand, that the WPS agenda is not always (sufficiently) integrated into training related to women’s rights and gender equality or linked to an overall strategy.

Moreover, while the transmitted data sometimes indicate the number of trained agents, they do not allow for **the annual percentage (and its evolution) of trained and/or sensitized persons** to be determined for each institution, and the actions appear to be disparate overall. The **proportion of actually trained personnel, as well as the impact and quality of the training, is therefore difficult to assess**. Generally, for most of the concerned actors, the training or awareness-raising actions seem to target a small number of agents.

In general, it would be appropriate to **systematize training and make it mandatory**, both in **initial** and **continuous training throughout the career**, and **particularly to train high command/management**. Tools for monitoring and long-term support in implementing knowledge and practices should be developed.

Additionally, WPS issues should be **integrated** across the board into training plans while focusing on the qualitative aspects of these training programs, based on a census of available expertise, training, and methodological tools. All awareness-

³⁵ - Detailed figures provided by MIOM. In February 2020, following on from the Grenelle on domestic violence in 2019 and shortly before the adoption of the 3rd NAP in 2021, the national gendarmerie launched a training plan to combat violence against women, which includes three levels of training (elementary, intermediate and expert) focusing on domestic violence.

raising and training programs on women's rights, equality, and gender issues of the concerned institutions, as well as human rights training, should transversally include a "Women, Peace, and Security" component, which would strengthen ownership and reach a broader audience. The terms of reference for the training programs could include the WPS component. These training programs are indeed a crucial lever for contributing to the implementation of the WPS agenda.

Nevertheless, strengthening specialization is also fundamental. Knowledge of WPS issues among the concerned personnel and categories of involved personnel should be deepened, **particularly among correspondents and networks of focal points (gender/equality/diversity...), as well as their supervisors**, and should be based on a more comprehensive approach to prevention.

2.1.2 Develop a More Comprehensive Approach to Prevention

The auditions highlight the importance of improving the transversal and systematic consideration of gender and expertise on the integrated gender approach and power relations. In order to better contribute to effective prevention and sustainable peace efforts, it would be relevant to work more on masculinities³⁶ and the transformation of gender norms, by strengthening the engagement of men and boys on these issues, while respecting the "Do No Harm" approach³⁷, as emphasized during the auditions.

To strengthen expertise, an actor such as **the Ministry of Higher Education and Research** could play an increased role in driving dynamics within the academic community. This community could, in addition to the Ministry of National Education, contribute to better knowledge of the WPS agenda, its operationalization, forms of conflict, and their factors, and **develop specific training programs or components of programs (bachelor's, master's, doctoral degrees, university diplomas...)** on the subject, with a **multidisciplinary approach** (combining gender studies and sociology, legal sciences, international relations, etc.³⁸.) and multi-actor involvement. The transmitted data occasionally highlight synergies between administrations and the research and academic communities, such as the participation of MIOM personnel in the "Gender" training program at the University of Paris 8 or the funding of projects led by "action-research" institutes like the Francophone Institute for Justice and Democracy. However, **the consideration of the NAP and the WPS agenda by this ministry, as well as in higher education institutions, remains difficult to assess.**

36 - See, for example, the Swisspeace study commissioned as part of the review of the Strategy for Prevention, Resilience and Sustainable Peace, "Masculinities, Violence and Peace", 2021, <https://ch.ambafrance.org/Masculinities-violence-et-paix-etude-de-Swisspeace> or the study conducted in four countries by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), "Men, masculinities and armed conflict", 2023, available at https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/19_WILPF-Men-Masculinities-Armed-Conflict-AW_3.pdf

37 - The "Do No Harm" approach is a conflict-awareness approach adapted to projects in conflict situations. Any project (be it development, humanitarian aid and/or peace-building) can potentially support either conflict or peace. Consequently, projects must take steps to reinforce their positive effect (prevention of violent conflict) and minimize their negative effect.

38 - National Assembly, Report No. 2484 of the Information Mission on International Humanitarian Law in the Context of Conflicts, December 4, 2019: see Recommendation 8 'develop French research on sexual violence in armed conflicts: https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/rapports/cion_afetr/l15b2484_rapport-information#

Given that research on gender issues, particularly in international relations, is still underfunded, this sector should receive greater investment, for example, through the development of specialized university training programs, the awarding of dedicated scholarships, the creation of multidisciplinary research laboratories, or legal clinics.

The research sector, in general, should invest more in these issues to develop knowledge and tools, such as those of the *Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS)*, whose mandate is aligned with Resolution 1325 (2000) and which has developed a “*WPS Conflict Tracker*³⁹” monitoring tool. Cited as a reference in France’s NAP with a dedicated monitoring indicator (pillar 4, indicator 18), this tool is interesting because it is based on a holistic evaluation of more than 80 qualitative and quantitative data points related to the status of women across the four pillars (participation, prevention, protection, relief, and recovery) to highlight the role of women in promoting peace and security.

A census of experts on the theme in priority countries could also be conducted to mobilize them and contribute to the establishment of an exchange platform or communication channels for sharing experiences and expertise on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Furthermore, the NAP and the actions aimed at implementing it should **emphasize support for efforts to address the root causes of conflicts**, particularly those related to gender issues. These efforts should encompass not only conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence but also exclusion, discrimination, structural inequalities, weak governance, human rights violations, or socio-economic and environmental factors, as mentioned in the European Union’s action plan on Women, Peace and Security from 2019 (action 4.2.) or France’s strategy “Prevention, Resilience, and Sustainable Peace (2018-2022),” aimed at a **comprehensive approach to responding to the weakening of states and societies**.

A better consideration of the contemporary challenges mentioned in part 3 of this report, particularly in relation to global issues such as climate change or disarmament and arms control, would also contribute to basing the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda on a more comprehensive approach to prevention.

³⁹ - This tool targets 25 countries (including Afghanistan, Colombia, Haiti, Iran, Israel and Palestine, Kosovo and the wider Balkans, Mali, Myanmar, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen): <https://wpsconflicttracker.com/>

Recommendation 6: Systematize prevention actions through an ambitious training policy and develop expertise on Women, Peace and Security issues:

- ▶ **Implement more systematic and coherent training actions** on gender equality, women's rights, and the "Women, Peace, and Security" agenda by setting mandatory training objectives (initial, continuous, and throughout the career), integrating these issues transversally into training plans, and ensuring that all focal points and management/high command have received specific training on these topics.
- ▶ Identify and **mobilize expertise** on "Women, Peace, and Security" issues (including in priority countries) and **fund research** to develop a comprehensive approach to the prevention and resolution of conflicts integrating gender issues.

2.2 Protection and the Fight against Impunity: Raise the Level of Ambition by Building on Progress and Addressing Gaps

Objective n°2 of the NAP deals with protection actions for women and girls in conflicts, particularly against conflict-related sexual violence and violent extremism, with a focus on access to justice and the fight against impunity. It covers actions at the international level but also at the national level, particularly in combating violence, human trafficking, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced/early marriages.

2.2.1 Ensure Sufficient and Sustainable Commitment to Protection and the Fight against Violence

At the multilateral level, France has continued its diplomatic advocacy efforts related to the prevention and fight against conflict-related sexual violence and has mobilized within various initiatives. Among the many examples mentioned are the work on UN resolutions such as the resolution on the elimination of violence against women and girls, carried every two years with the Netherlands, including the 2022 resolution on combating gender stereotypes and negative social norms⁴⁰; support for the initiative on preventing sexual violence in conflicts (PSVI) launched by the United Kingdom in 2012; joining in June 2023 the International Alliance on the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict (bringing together 17 States and 6 non-state actors); support for the Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict (Pramila Patten), including by providing an expert from France; the campaign for the universal ratification of the Istanbul Convention on violence against women;

40 - United Nations General Assembly, Resolution of December 15, 2022, Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: gender stereotypes and negative social norms, A/RES/77/193.

Resolution of 7/11/2022 "Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: gender stereotypes and negative social norms": adopted by 165 votes in favor, none against and 14 abstentions, the 2022 edition of this biennial text championed by France, co-author with the Netherlands, focuses on the fight against gender stereotypes and negative social norms, and considers it essential to tackle the root causes of the violence, which affects one in three women worldwide.

the adoption of a European vademecum on the role of law enforcement in combating domestic violence⁴¹; initiatives against online gender-based harassment and abuse⁴², etc.

The HCE and the CNCDH also recommend that France actively participate in the Call to Action for Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergency Situations – a multi-stakeholder initiative launched in 2013 – by submitting an annual progress report and taking new commitments within the framework of the new roadmap (2021-2025). Similarly, the action plan could usefully refer to the guidelines for integrating interventions targeting gender-based violence into humanitarian action published by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

The HCE and the CNCDH note an overall increase in the number of projects dedicated to combating gender-based violence and conflict-related violence, particularly within the framework of humanitarian aid and development aid.

However, there is a lack of a detailed list of actions implemented by all actors and the associated amounts. It is difficult to precisely evaluate the number and volume of dedicated projects and their effects. The evaluation and capitalization of these projects do not seem to be systematic, although they would be an important source of information and documentation. Moreover, the projects do not always appear to have objectives aligned with the crisis context and the WPS agenda.

The inclusion of the AFD in the plan is an advancement compared to the previous plan, with specific indicators⁴³ concerning the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund⁴⁴. This fund allows for the financing of larger-scale projects to reduce gender inequalities in conflict zones (approximately €200 million per year of DAC 1 or DAC 2 projects). Notably, several examples of projects dedicated to gender-based violence, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, or protection against sexual exploitation are mentioned, such as the Nengo project.

41 - This vademecum is available at www.aube.gouv.fr/contenu/telechargement/30904/196837/file/PFU+vad%C3%A9m%C3%A9cum+europ%C3%A9en+Mobiliser+les+forces+de+l%27ordre+contre+les+violences+conjugales.pdf

42 - Announcement in 2023 of the official launch of the laboratory for women's rights online, to be integrated into the next Summit in 2024 on the safety of artificial intelligence under the aegis of the President of the Republic : www.vie-publique.fr/discours/293333-stephane-sejourne-08032024-droits-des-femmes

43 - The NAP includes three specific indicators for AFD: 1° At least 50% of Minka projects are rated DAC 1 or 2, of which 20% are DAC 2; 2° Number and volume of projects dedicated to reducing violence against women and girls; 3/ Number and volume granted to CSOs dedicated to Women, Peace and Security actions (study the feasibility of a call for projects in support of women's organisations in crisis and conflict zones).

44 - Minka Peace and Resilience Fund 2022 Activity Report : <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/minka-peace-and-resilience-fund-activity-report-2022>

NENGO Project in support of survivors of sexual violence in the Central African Republic (CAR)

A flagship project of the AFD, in partnership with the Pierre Fabre Foundation, the Dr. Mukwege Foundation, the Panzi Foundation DRC, and the Institute of Francophonie for Sustainable Development (IFDD) since 2020, the Nengo project has enabled the establishment of a holistic care centre (medical care, legal assistance, psychosocial support, socio-economic support) in Bangui and mobile clinics in the Central African Republic. It is the first export of Dr. Mukwege's model from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to a foreign country. The center has welcomed more than 8,000 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and has enabled 213 surgical reconstructions. 779 cases have been brought to justice (civil or criminal). More than 1,300 direct and indirect victims have received support (schooling for children, economic reintegration, etc.). Five victims' cases were referred to the center by the Special Criminal Court of the CAR.

It is recommended to further strengthen the AFD's positioning on the WPS agenda in crisis and conflict zones, as well as that of the relevant services, such as the Crisis and Support Center (CDCS) of the MEAE, **to enhance the level of commitment to protection and violence prevention issues in crisis zones** (as well as across all pillars) and to strengthen the governance and objectives of **the Minka Fund, whose initial targets mentioned in the NAP are not ambitious enough and have already been exceeded** (see above). The Minka Fund, created in 2017 in connection with the Peace and Resilience Strategy, did not initially have the WPS plan as a reference framework and should now integrate it more.

Projects related to objective 2 of the NAP are also mentioned by security and defense actors. The data transmitted by the MIOM, for example, indicate the number of funded projects dedicated to the protection of women and children in crisis and conflict contexts and the reduction of gender-based violence, and detail the actions carried out by the International Security Cooperation Directorate (DCIS) in this regard, within the framework of the ministry's international scope of action (including in Madagascar, Cameroon, Algeria, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates). However, these actions are mainly focused on training (including investigation techniques related to gender-based violence) and capacity-building of partner countries.

2.2.2 Ensure that Women in Conflict Zones have Secure Access to Health and Support Services (Physical and Mental), including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

While sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are mentioned in the 3rd National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, this mention does not translate into concrete specific actions and commitments of the plan⁴⁵, even though France had a dedicated strategy for SRHR (2016-2020). This gap in the 3rd plan, which is a step back compared to the 2nd plan, is all the more surprising given that France is one of the States defending the inclusion of SRHR in Security Council resolutions⁴⁶ and is a champion State of the Coalition of Action for Bodily Autonomy and SRHR launched during the Generation Equality Forum in 2021⁴⁷.

The strategy on sexual and reproductive health and rights has since been revised for the period 2023-2027 and is presented as a *"cornerstone of French feminist foreign policy."*⁴⁸ SRHR is part of France's commitments to a gender-responsive humanitarian response within the framework of the new French Humanitarian Strategy (SHRF) (2023-2027). In this regard, France is committed to promoting the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for sexual and reproductive health, including *"access to emergency contraception and comprehensive abortion care, including medical abortion, as a vital humanitarian response"*.⁴⁹

The CNCDH and the HCE recommend that France - the first country to enshrine in its Constitution "the freedom guaranteed to women to have an abortion" - **include proactive language on access to abortion services and SRHR more broadly in the next National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, associated with concrete commitments and actions**, in line with its SRHR strategy and the SHRF. This inclusion is an essential condition for defending SRHR as a primary component of the FPS agenda and for ensuring coherence between France's various strategies. Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights must be guaranteed in all contexts, particularly but not exclusively when women are victims of sexual violence in armed conflict. The CNCDH and the HCE recommend that France **continue to promote and fund the Minimum Initial Service Package** to prevent morbidity and mortality related to sexual and reproductive health, particularly access to emergency contraception and safe abortion as essential and vital response modalities. The CNCDH and the HCE note with interest several projects mentioned

45 - The framework of commitments only refers to DSSRs with a view to their inclusion in the new French strategies and their operational implementation in crisis and conflict zones.

46 - See the statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations of April 23, 2019, who regrets the deletion of the reference to access to sexual and reproductive health in resolution 2467 (2019), available at <https://onu.delegfrance.org/Resolution-2467-the-text-is-not-the-end-of-our-journey>

47 - In this respect, France has announced the allocation of 400 million euros between 2021 and 2025 to promote SRHR worldwide, including via AFD or through funds (90 million) allocated to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA Partnership Supplies initiative) for the purchase and distribution of contraceptives and sexual and reproductive health products (see the 2023-2027 SRHR strategy available at https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/17x24_strate_gie-dssr_v2-2_cle48af48.pdf

48 - See the information available at www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/diplomatie-feministe/l-action-de-la-france-pour-les-droits-et-sante-sexuels-et-reproductifs/.

49 - SHRF 2023-2027, available at https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/strategie-humanitaire-ang-online12.08.2024_cle02bf63.pdf. According to the Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crisis (IAWG), the MISP for sexual and reproductive health is a set of vital sexual and reproductive health services and activities that must be implemented at the onset of every humanitarian emergency, to prevent excess mortality and excess deaths related to sexual and reproductive health. The MISP components are a minimum requirement and should be implemented in all circumstances <https://cdn.iawg.rgn.io/documents/MISP-Reference-English.pdf?v=1584883073>.

by the auditioned actors aimed at implementing SRHR, for example, within the framework of projects funded by the FSOF (of which SRHR is one of the 7 priorities) and actions supporting the non-governmental organisation IPAS (which launched in 2021 the “ODAS Center,” a new network for dialogue on abortion to improve access to safe abortion in francophone Africa). The CNCDDH and the HCE recommend that France continue to engage in **mobilizing donor support** for the full range of medical, legal, psychosocial, and material services, as well as livelihood support to help women and girls access, without discrimination, the full range of protection and sexual and reproductive health services and information⁵⁰. The practice of relying on local civil society organisations to best adapt SRHR programs to the local context should be encouraged.

It is also recommended that France immediately take specific commitments **to prevent the stigmatization of victims of sexual or gender-based violence** (women/girls or men/boys) **and children born of rape**⁵¹, and to ensure the cross-cutting integration of these issues into all actions and programs. These commitments should be linked to those related to **the prevention and fight against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases**, in line with Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019) and the EU’s WPS action plan⁵². They could also echo France’s commitments to health and continuity of care in emergency or humanitarian crisis contexts within the SHRF, as well as the French global health strategy 2023-2027⁵³.

2.2.3 Strengthen Commitment to the Fight against Impunity, both Internationally and Nationally

The CNCDDH and the HCE note the importance given to access to justice and the fight against impunity for perpetrators of violence in the 3rd NAP, in continuity with the commitments and actions undertaken in the previous plan.

Various forms of support for international criminal justice, particularly the International Criminal Court (ICC) and international investigation mechanisms (created by the Human Rights Council or the United Nations General Assembly), to specifically document sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations with the aim of bringing perpetrators to justice, are mentioned in the transmitted data. This is the case, for example, regarding Syria, acts committed by ISIS in Iraq, Myanmar, Sudan, and Libya.

France’s commitment in this regard in Ukraine is also evident and based on concrete actions, including additional financial contributions to the victims’ assistance fund

50 - See the recommendation by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report S/2019/800, §46.

51 - The HCE and CNCDDH note with interest a recent statement by France’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations on April 23, 2024, highlighting children born of conflict-related rape: <https://onu.delegfrance.org/the-council-must-continue-to-take-concrete-action-to-implement-the-women-peace>

52 - See actions 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 of the 2019 EU WPS action plan.

53 - This strategy is available at https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/a4_global_health_strategy_en_v2_cle477d3a.pdf

and the provision of a magistrate by the Ministry of Justice to support the ICC, as well as the deployment of ten investigators (including four MIOM personnel) and forensic technicians⁵⁴. However, this contrasts with other situations, such as the lack of support from the European Union and its Member States, including France, for the renewal of the mandate of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE), which ended in October 2023, despite its report highlighting serious and systematic violations of international law and crimes committed in Tigray⁵⁵. It is essential to avoid any selective approach in this regard to ensure justice for victims and to adopt a **coherent approach to supporting mechanisms to combat impunity for the most serious international crimes**.

France also acts to include **criteria for designating perpetrators of sexual violence** within the framework of UN or EU sanctions regimes, which is a lever for combating impunity. To avoid hindering respect for international humanitarian law and the continuity of humanitarian activities based on humanitarian principles aimed at meeting the essential needs of populations, **these sanctions regimes should systematically be accompanied by humanitarian exemptions**, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2664 (2022).

The CNCDH and the HCE regret that the 3rd plan does not emphasize the fight against impunity at the national level. However, the data transmitted in the context of this report mention France's commitment to strengthening its national mechanisms for addressing sexual and gender-based violence, as well as support for prosecuting perpetrators of sexual violence as crimes against humanity and war crimes and offences. Several investigations have been opened by the "crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide" unit of the National Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor's Office (PNAT) regarding acts of sexual violence constituting crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes committed in Syria, Iraq, DRC, Liberia, Rwanda, and Ukraine. The first decision in France qualifying sexual violence as crimes against humanity is recent⁵⁶. **The investigative capacities of the Central Office for the Fight against Crimes Against Humanity and Hate Crimes (OCLCH) and the National Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor's Office should be strengthened** to facilitate investigations and prosecutions of these offenses. The CNCDH and the HCE also recommend that France **amend Article 689-11 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to remove the conditions hindering the exercise of genuine universal jurisdiction for crimes falling under the Rome Statute of the ICC** and to include the principle of imprescriptibility of war crimes. France should also avoid exporting

54 - On the missions financed by the MEAE and implemented by MIOM resources in support of the Ukrainian authorities and the ICC in the fight against impunity, see the information available at www.interieur.gouv.fr/actualites/communiqués-de-presse/situation-en-ukraine/ukraine-lutte-contre-limpunite.

55 - A/HRC/54/55 (September 14, 2023).

56 - Court of Assizes of Paris, ruling of November 2, 2022 (concerning a Liberian-Dutch national, former commander of the armed group United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) which operated in Liberia) (see for example www.dalloz-actualite.fr/flash/competence-universelle-premiere-condamnation-en-france-d-un-ancien-chef-rebelle-liberien). Another trial is underway against a former rebel leader in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for complicity in crimes against humanity and participation in a conspiracy to commit crimes against humanity (including rape) during the Second Congo War.

these obstacles in the context of international negotiations⁵⁷, in contradiction with its international commitments, but rather set an example⁵⁸.

It is also important to ensure coherence in the fight against sexual violence, including rape, in times of peace and in times of armed conflict. The CNCDH and the HCE recall in this regard the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) “to amend the penal code so that the definition of rape is based on the absence of consent, covers all non-consensual sexual acts, and takes into account all coercive circumstances, in accordance with international human rights standards.”⁵⁹

2.2.4 Strengthening the Protection of Migrant Women Fleeing Conflict-Related Violence

The care and protection of migrant women who are victims of gender-based violence and persecution are addressed rather succinctly in the plan. In the protection section, the current NAP refers to it, especially in the context of combating female genital mutilation (FGM), with an indicator on the international protection of minor girls at risk of FGM. According to the data provided, 12,056 girls were placed under the protection of OFPRA on this basis in 2021, a figure that rose to 15,652 in July 2022, in addition to the protection needs recognized by the National Court of Asylum (CNDA)⁶⁰. The actions of the Ministries of Education and Gender Equality to combat FGM in France are also mentioned, such as awareness campaigns before summer vacations, funding projects like the MSF-PREVAL study⁶¹, the launch of digital tools⁶², or training kits to train professionals in identifying, caring for, and referring women and girls who are victims of FGM⁶³.

A recent ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJUE) on January 16, 2024⁶⁴, could open new perspectives regarding the recognition of women as a “social group” under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees. Belonging to a certain social group has led in recent years to the development of case law for the protection of victims of gender-based persecution (women and

57 - Alongside the United Kingdom, France secured the introduction of a provision in the Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes, adopted on May 26, 2023 (and signed by France on February 14, 2024), allowing for the formulation of a reservation to restrict the obligation to prosecute or extradite perpetrators of these crimes on their territories. In the context of discussions on the drafting of a convention on crimes against humanity, France's recent observations also include the risk of exporting the obstacle linked to the criterion of habitual residence (Observations of the Government of the French Republic on the draft articles of the International Law Commission on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity available at https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/78/cah/france_f.pdf).

58 - See CNCDH, “Lutte contre l'impunité des auteurs de crimes de guerre, crime contre l'humanité et génocide: la France doit mettre en œuvre la compétence universelle”, Press release, July 3, 2023, available at www.cncdh.fr/actualite/une-occasion-pour-renforcer-la-lutte-contre-limpunite-en-france.

59 - CEDAW, Concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of France, November 14, 2023, CEDAW/C/FRA/CO/9, §22 c). A definition of rape based on consent has not been included in the EU directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, partly due to opposition from France. The French President recently spoke out in favor of including the notion of consent in the criminal definition of rape (Euractiv, “Rape: Emmanuel Macron does an about-face on the notion of consent”, March 14, 2024, available at www.euractiv.fr/section/droits-et-systemes-de-sante/news/viol-emmanuel-macron-fait-volte-face-sur-la-notion-de-consentement/).

60 - CNDA, Rapport d'activité 2023, available at <https://www.cnda.fr/publications/rapports-d-activite/rapport-annuel-2023>

61 - This project aims to measure the prevalence of FSM in France: www.egelite-femmes-hommes.gouv.fr/mise-en-ligne-doutils-digitaux-inedits-sur-le-corps-sexue-feminin-et-les-mutilations-sexuelles.

62 - These tools are available at www.egalite-femmes-hommes.gouv.fr/mise-en-ligne-doutils-digitaux-inedits-sur-le-corps-sexue-feminin-et-les-mutilations-sexuelles.

63 - See the training tools available at www.arretonslesviolences.gouv.fr/.

64 - CJEU, press release on the Court's judgment in Case C-621/21, January 16, 2024: <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2024-01/cp240007en.pdf> See UNHCR's position of May 25, 2023 communicated in the context of this case, dealing in particular with the current situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, available at www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/amicus/unhcr/2023/en/124259.

girls fearing FGM or fleeing forced marriage, individuals fleeing persecution due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation). The HCE and the CNCDH recommend taking this jurisprudential evolution into account to fully recognize that the sole criterion of gender, if the circumstances are met, can lead to the recognition of the existence of a persecuted social group and the right to asylum for this reason.

On the international front, France has made several commitments (pledges) at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum⁶⁵. It notably initiated a multi-stakeholder commitment, with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in favor of the protection and inclusion of refugee women and girls fleeing conflicts and persecution throughout their journey (the “Avec Elles” initiative)⁶⁶—a commitment that the CNCDH and the HCE call to fully implement. The same applies to commitments aimed at better economic and social integration of refugees in France, with particular attention to the needs of women and girls, especially regarding access to housing or employment.

More broadly, it is important to strengthen the coherence between WPS commitments and the treatment, at the national level, of migrant persons. As a host country for migrant persons, including women fleeing conflict-related violence, France must guarantee dignified and appropriate reception conditions, particularly as they constitute protection factors against the risk of new exposure to gender-based violence, including sexual violence. It is essential to ensure secure accommodation, access to appropriate physical and psychological health services, and to promote the empowerment, including financial, of migrant women who are victims of gender-based violence and persecution.

65 - These are available at

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrjoiOTk0ZjVhM2UzZTQzNC00MzA3LThiYjMtYmNkZjVlN2VkYzhjiiwidCI6ImU1YzM3OTgxLTY2NjQzNDZlY2Y2NDkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOiJh9>.

66 - The commitment is available at <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/multistakeholder-pledge-avec-elles-strengthening-protection-and-inclusion-refugee-women-and-girls>

Recommendation 7: Strengthen the level of commitment in protection and the fight against impunity:

- ▶ Reaffirm the importance of respecting international law applicable to the rights and **protection of women and girls by parties to an armed conflict, condemn violations, and contribute to measures against their perpetrators.**
- ▶ Amplify efforts in protection and the fight against conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence in crisis zones, including **support measures for survivors**, such as preventing the **stigmatization** of victims and children born of rape.
- ▶ Reaffirm a political will of **zero tolerance** towards perpetrators of sexual violence and strengthen policies to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), both internally and in external operations and missions.
- ▶ Develop more concrete and coherent actions to strengthen the **fight against impunity**: strengthening alert and investigation capacities for **conflict-related sexual violence**; strengthening the means of national authorities in charge of investigations related to crimes under the Rome Statute and lifting conditions that hinder the exercise of universal jurisdiction; strengthening training on testimony collection; supporting civil society organisations that work on monitoring and supporting victims.
- ▶ Ensure that women and girls in conflict zones **have secure access to health and mental health services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.**
- ▶ Strengthen measures in favor of the protection and inclusion of **migrant women and girls fleeing conflict-related violence.**

2.3 Participation: Promoting Effective and Equal Participation of Women

The HCE and the CNCDH note that the implementation of this pillar remains generally weak. Yet, the participation of women in decision-making bodies and processes is a central point and a necessary condition for achieving the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda. At the international level, the consensus is that there has been a general lack of progress on this pillar, despite commitments reaffirmed for over twenty years⁶⁷. France’s NAP emphasizes the participation of women in all decisions related to peace and security. The approach adopted, not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of the level of responsibility, is welcome to go beyond a purely quantitative vision. The NAP could specify that this participation contributes not only to the sustainability and stability of peace processes and the identification of priorities to address violence suffered by women during conflicts but also to respecting their right to equal participation in decision-making processes. Strengthening this aspect should also indirectly enhance the expertise and legitimacy of local associations and representatives.

⁶⁷ - Over the past 25 years, only 2% of mediators and 8% of negotiators have been women; there are only 16% of women negotiators and representatives in peace processes led or co-led by the UN, a proportion that appears to be even lower than in 2021 (19%) and 2020 (23%), when UN Women estimated that involving women in peace talks “increased the chances of reaching a lasting peace agreement by 35%”.

2.3.1 Internal Component: Raising Quantitative Goals and Developing a More Qualitative Approach

Efforts have been made by ministries, in connection with the interministerial plan, and progress has been noted internally compared to the previous plan in terms of gender equality (adoption of a diversity plan for military personnel in the armed forces in 2019, gender equality plans for civilian personnel, Afnor certification) and appointments to leadership positions (achievement of the Sauvadet law's targets requiring 40% of first-time appointments of women to senior positions). However, **the results remain overall uneven and heterogeneous** in terms of access to leadership and management positions in the MINARM (10% of General Officers), the MIOM (23% of women prefects or senior executives in 2022, 14.3% of General Officers in the police, and 3.8% of General Officers in the gendarmerie), or in the diplomatic service, despite some progress (one-third of women ambassadors). Progress is noted regarding the proportion of women in officer schools (22%), but the numbers stagnate regarding the graduates of the War School, with still modest targets (10% of female graduates by 2025).

The proportion of women deployed in external operations has not significantly increased over time. The Armed Forces Ministry counts less than 10% of women among the military personnel deployed in PKOs (68 women out of 696 military personnel deployed in PKOs): according to the data, the rate of feminization of French blue helmets in 2023 is 9.5% for individual personnel (the UN target being 10% for 2023) and 12% for contingents (while the UN target is 20% in 2023). The rates are higher in some missions like MONUSCO (33%)⁶⁸ and UNIFIL (21%)⁶⁹, but the overall rate falls short of the UN targets. The MIOM personnel deployed in international missions appear to be few in number, and the proportion of female personnel is not significant (5 women out of 45 police and gendarmerie personnel deployed in CSDP and UN PKO civilian missions in 2023, 7 women out of 32 personnel for national experts seconded to UN and EU institutions in 2023). The proportion of female personnel in the network of internal security attachés abroad also remains limited: 8.51% of DCIS personnel abroad in 2022 (6.59% including diplomatic security guards) are women, rising to 12.24% in 2023 and 3.2% for senior gendarmerie officers on international assignments.

If the Sauvadet law has had an incentive effect on administrations, **the targets still need to be revised upwards and strengthened for the effective participation of women** in the armed forces and security forces, as well as in all missions and decision-making processes related to peace and security, which is an essential element of the agenda for both States that have adopted NAPs and States affected by conflicts.

⁶⁸ - United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
⁶⁹ - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

It is recommended to strengthen internal measures on the rate of feminization of talent pools, career support, and incentive measures to **change perceptions**, including measures **to combat sexism and stereotypes** that persist and hinder feminization: **the role of management, the development of tools, training, strengthening the means and independence of listening and support units for combating harassment and sexual and gender-based violence, and the effectiveness of sanctions.**

It is advisable to adopt a **more qualitative approach** to encourage increased participation of female personnel in PKOs and all missions in crisis zones, across all categories.

2.3.2 International Component: Accelerating Efforts to achieve the Goal of Women's Participation in Peace Processes

The HCE and the CNCDH note with interest certain actions undertaken on the multilateral front, such as France's call for the appointment of a high-level envoy at the United Nations to accelerate progress in the participation of women and girls in decision-making processes. They also note efforts made, particularly within the Francophonie, to strengthen the capacities of women negotiators (contribution of the MEAE to an IFDD initiative that benefited 300 women negotiators in 2022), the announcement of the creation of a "Francophone Feminist Alliance"⁷⁰ in partnership with the OIF to strengthen the participation of women and feminist organisations in multilateral negotiations, and efforts in training female francophone officers in PKOs and capacity building⁷¹.

The increasing involvement of the AFD constitutes progress compared to the previous NAP, with the possibility of financing larger-scale operations, including support for local CSOs⁷². Projects have been funded under development aid for the empowerment and participation in economic and political life, such as the "Women Lead in Emergencies" project led by the NGO Care (7 million euros)⁷³, which supports the participation of women in decision-making in emergency contexts in Ethiopia, Ukraine, Colombia, and Bangladesh, and appears to be a good practice.

The launch in 2022 of a **call for projects for the Support Fund for Feminist Organisations (FSOF), managed by the AFD and the MEAE, specifically dedicated**

70 - Speech (in French) by the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, March 8, 2023: www.vie-publique.fr/discours/288549-catherine-colonna-08032023-droits-des-femmes; Speech (in French) by the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, March 8, 2024: www.vie-publique.fr/discours/293333-stephane-sejourne-08032024-droits-des-femmes.

71 - Women, Peace and Security, actions by the Directorate for Security and Defense Cooperation (DCSD) in implementing the Women, Peace and Security (2024) agenda: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/mise_en_page_livret_fps_cle8ed724.pdf

72 - 16 projects financed for 14 French and international CSOs for DAC 1 or 2 projects in conflict zones in 2021, and 17 CSOs having benefited from 47% of Minka funds in 2022 for projects exceeding 100 million euros each year.

73 - Women Lead in Emergencies model, enabling women's groups and collectives to take the lead in crisis situations affecting their communities (natural disasters, conflicts and other emergencies): https://www.careemergencytoolkit.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/WLiE-Guidance-Note-1_Overview-ENG.pdf

to the WPS agenda in response to one of the commitments under pillar 3 of the NAP (indicator 9), offers new perspectives. With a budget of 10 million euros, the project includes 3 geographical lots: Sahel, Central Africa, and the Middle East, carried by three consortia of associations⁷⁴. The objective was to allocate at least 50% of the overall envelope to feminist CSOs in the countries concerned, particularly associations having difficulty accessing usual funding (some projects, such as the one led by Equipop, have experienced delays due to the political situation).

Euromed Feminist Initiative and Women, Peace and Security Projects in the Middle East

The Euromed Feminist Initiative (IFE) is one of the 3 consortia that responded to the FSOF call for projects funded by the AFD and the MEAE to carry out WPS actions in the Middle East with 21 local associations. Created in 2003, this network of European feminist associations, which has expanded to include Southern countries, has developed expertise on WPS issues and has several ongoing projects in **Iraq** (the first Middle East country to adopt an WPS NAP), **Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine** on several fronts: support for women's organisations and associations to carry out specific WPS actions; conflict resolution, coordination of actions to promote the WPS agenda; capitalization on these themes to develop common advocacy strategies. The IFE has developed a Regional Index on "Women, Peace, Security"⁷⁵ that provides information on the measures and public policies developed in this regard.

Although it is still early to evaluate the impact of the projects launched via the FSOF in 2022, **the HCE and the CNCDH invite the institutions to present an initial assessment as part of the final evaluation** and to build on the practices and results of these projects to enrich training.

It would also be interesting to present the results of the **Elsie initiative**, launched by Canada and supported by France, which aims to increase the percentage of women deployed in PKOs.

The present interim evaluation highlights **a difficulty for the stakeholders concerned in implementing the agenda regarding the participation of women in peace and stabilization processes**. Some indicators of the NAP are formulated imprecisely or are difficult to quantify. The data provided do not allow for the evaluation of results, for example, regarding indicators related to the participation of women in electoral processes, peace and stabilization processes, or those related to parity in international events. The AFD's mandate, which does not cover security and defense, also limits the scope of some projects. The issues of participation of women in decision-making and crisis management processes still

74 - In the Sahel: the Equipop project. In the Middle East: EuroMed Feminist Initiative. In Central Africa: the Congolese Women's Fund.

75 - www.efi-ife.org/fr/extra/hub/publications-reports-studies-and-fact-sheets?modal_page=pdf-detail&modal_detail_id=103229-study-2021-regional-index-on-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda

appear insufficiently taken into account by stakeholders in the security and defense sector.

The CNCDH and the HCE recommend amplifying efforts to **support the systematic and equal participation of women in peace processes and political, economic, and social stabilization and conflict resolution processes**. It is recommended to set ambitious and measurable goals regarding the promotion of the direct participation of women in delegations and negotiation teams, to develop concrete actions in favor of participation in prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding, whether through support for leadership projects in local conflict resolution (including local ceasefires), strengthening the capacities of women negotiators⁷⁶, supporting networks of women mediators, humanitarian access, and rapid alert mechanisms, **supporting CSOs** and women's organisations in crisis situations⁷⁷, **survivors** and **Human rights defenders, who are regularly victims of reprisals due to their actions**, and by all measures likely to remove obstacles to the participation of women in decisions related to peace and security, post-conflict issues, and recovery.

Recommendation 8: Promote Effective and Equal Participation of Women:

- ▶ Strengthen advocacy for the inclusion of a gender perspective in all peace agreements.
- ▶ Support the systematic and equal participation of women in decision-making processes on peace and security issues.
- ▶ Increase funding for actions and programs to strengthen the capacities and support of women negotiators or mediators, feminist associations, and defenders of rights.
- ▶ Raise the targets and intensify actions to enable women's access to leadership positions, particularly in military functions in the French armed forces, and strengthen the participation of women in external operations and all missions (civilian and military) related to peace and security.

⁷⁶ - Since 2015, according to the UN Secretary-General's report S/2023/725, a number of member states and regional organisations have supported the establishment of regional networks of women mediators, of which 8 have come into being: The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa), Nordic Women Mediators, Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, The Arab Women Mediators Network, The Southeast Asian Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators, Women Mediators across the Commonwealth, Ibero-American Network of Women Mediators, Pacific Women Mediators Network.

⁷⁷ - The Secretary-General of the United Nations recommends increasing support for organisations such as the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Forum: <https://wphfund.org/partners-around-world/>.

2.4 Priority Geographic Areas: Strengthening the Plan's Reach in Conflict Zones

The designation of priority geographic areas is a novelty of the 3rd plan, responding to previously formulated recommendations. Defining such an area aims to give the plan a geographic scope in targeted countries and to strengthen the localization of commitments. The plan, published in 2021, provides for 12 priority regions or countries, to which Ukraine was added later after the outbreak of the conflict.

Priority Geographic Areas of the 3rd National Action Plan

- ▶ **In Africa:** the Sahel; the Lake Chad Basin; the Central African Republic; the Great Lakes region of Africa (particularly areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi);
- ▶ **In the Americas:** Haiti;
- ▶ **In Asia:** Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan;
- ▶ **In the Middle East:** Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan
- ▶ **Note:** **Ukraine** has also been included in the national action plan since 2022.

It emerges from the hearings and data received as part of the preparation of this report that the designation of priority geographic areas is perceived as a positive step in concretizing the agenda in conflict and post-conflict zones. This contribution has been welcomed by the services as a means of mobilizing resources more operationally and targeting efforts. Inherent limitations related to the scope of action and competencies of certain actors have been highlighted (see above), for example by the AFD, which does not intervene in certain areas such as Syria, Afghanistan, or Niger (particularly since the summer 2023 coup d'état that led to the suspension of development aid to this region). For the same reason, the MIOM has adopted a flexible approach depending on the deployment of its personnel abroad, with MIOM actions covering a geographic scope that does not necessarily overlap with the priority countries designated by the NAP.

The countries were chosen from those already receiving targeted attention from France, in line with the orientations of ODA. However, the links between the WPS agenda and ODA should be more apparent in the plan. The CNCDH and the HCE draw attention to the difficulties of coordination that may arise with other frameworks, such as the LOP-DSLIM law of 2021, which envisaged a list of 19 priority countries for France's bilateral aid, a list whose abolition was decided in 2023 by the latest orientations of the Presidential Council for Development and the CICID of July 18, 2023, in favor of a target set at 50% of the State's bilateral financial effort towards the least developed countries.

The two institutions also regret the lack of information regarding consultation mechanisms with actors in priority zones and networks of NAP focal points at the local level, as well as civil society organisations on the ground, which should help identify needs on the ground and evaluate the impact of actions, particularly in priority countries.

It would also be useful to have a clearer vision of the actions and amounts allocated each year to target countries, particularly in countries like Haiti, for example, where the question arises as to what resources are allocated in light of the current issues and context, or the DRC and conflict-affected areas like North Kivu.

The HCE and the CNCDH note with interest that the designation of target countries has evolved over time, in a flexible manner, without restricting the actions of NAP actors to their respective competencies. The two institutions insist that the definition of a priority geographic area of action should not be at the expense of the plan's global dimension, which should propose a universal conceptual framework taking account of the crosscutting nature of the issues raised by the WPS agenda and a systemic program covering all partnerships.

Finally, the concrete consequences of defining the priority area deserve to be substantiated, as the plan itself contains few specific commitments regarding the cited countries. The definition of a priority action area should offer the opportunity to detail more concrete and broader actions by making commitments and **defining specific objectives, country by country**⁷⁸, to measure the plan's concrete impact on the ground and, where appropriate, its coordination with the NAPs of the countries concerned. Such objectives could be set in the next national action plan, in line with the lessons learned from the designation of priority areas in the current plan.

Recommendation 9: Strengthen the Plan's Impact in Conflict Zones by Setting More Specific Objectives for Target Countries, While Maintaining a Flexible and Global Approach.

⁷⁸ - For the definition of specific actions for target countries, adapted to contexts and needs, for which monitoring and evaluation must be planned, it is possible to draw inspiration from the examples provided in the study by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, *From Best Practice to Standard Practice. A toolkit on the Localization of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security*, 2018.

3. Engage, as of 2024, in a Broad Consultation on the Fourth Plan and Address Contemporary Challenges

The commitment table (accountability framework), annexed to the 3rd national action plan, has clearly constituted a useful follow-up framework for internal mobilization of services but has only been partially implemented. This framework also needs to be improved through qualitative approach, based on broad consultation to draw lessons from its implementation and develop future axes.

3.1 “Internal” Accountability of the Plan: An Imperfect Follow-Up Framework but a Useful Interministerial Tool

The action plan covers all themes of the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda, with a national component, an institutional component, and an international and cooperation component. The accountability framework includes 22 specific objectives, 9 actions, and 77 indicators, a higher number of indicators than the previous plan (which included 48).

However, this framework remains imperfect. The indicators are numerous, sometimes redundant or difficult to follow, and they do not all seem to have been developed according to the SMART criteria⁷⁹. This framework would gain in clarity by being more precise and concise. The commitment table includes many quantitative indicators (“number of ...”) and few qualitative indicators, which, however, allow for understanding the reasons behind a situation or difficulty. Some indicators are not very relevant and do not allow for evaluating the impact of the actions carried out, the evolution of practices over time, or measuring the level of knowledge of the plan. Others are imprecise in their formulation, have little connection with the proposed actions, or seem difficult to achieve (pillar 4: *“number of contacts facilitated by France between relevant actors in the field in*

⁷⁹ SMART indicators: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound.

priority countries"). Some actions also do not have an associated indicator, such as objective 1-c of pillar 1 on "education policies."⁸⁰

The structuring of actions is not always very clear between the institutional/internal component, measures at the national level, and actions at the international level and in the field of cooperation. They appear quite fragmented between the different levels of intervention, from which it is difficult to derive an overall vision.

It emerges from the hearings that this framework has constituted a useful tool for "interministerial mobilization," although the actors recognize the limits of the current framework. The focal points indicate that they have not limited themselves to the plan's indicators but have used the accountability framework as an interministerial tool, which can be seen in the written data transmitted.

In the perspective of the drafting of the next plan, it is recommended to adopt a **qualitative overall approach** and to provide more **indicators related to the achievement of concrete results**, while removing others perceived as less relevant. These indicators could usefully be based on the indicators of the United Nations Secretary-General on Women, Peace, and Security⁸¹ and those of the EU, ensuring that they are ambitious, realistic, specific, measurable, and time-bound, to allow for comparisons over time and space, as previously recommended by the CNCDH and the HCE. This alignment would allow for better-shared evaluation at the international level. It would also be useful to involve French civil society actors, as well as those from the countries concerned and the women directly affected, in the development of these indicators.

Finally, internal follow-up and evaluation exercises within each institution are to be encouraged. The study conducted within the AFD group on the evaluation of the capitalization exercise on "gender and conflicts," transmitted to the HCE and the CNCDH, which proposes avenues for better integrating the cross-analysis of gender and conflicts and the WPS agenda from the projects design stage onwards, is an interesting example in this regard.

80 - Objective 1-c: "Pursue educational policies to prevent and combat gender inequality and sexual and gender-based violence, which contribute to the training of future citizens, as well as the renewal of popular education and youth programs, and the development of actions in the fields of informal and non-formal education, the renewal of popular education and youth programs".

81 - Annex to the Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Women, Peace and Security, S/2010/498.

3.2 “External” Accountability of the Plan: Partial Implementation of the Monitoring Framework and Nearly Non-Existent Involvement of Civil Society and Parliamentarians

The CNCDH and the HCE wish to highlight the quality of the hearings and the mobilization of the actors consulted, as well as the follow-up and coordination work carried out for the transmission of data during the interim evaluation. Both institutions noted the interest of several annexed notes, reports, and studies. However, they note that the launch of exchanges for the evaluation work was delayed (delays in response and transmission of written data). Establishing more regular dialogue, which the HCE and the CNCDH hope to engage in as part of the current work, would facilitate the fluidity and quality of exchanges.

The HCE and the CNCDH regret, however, that the monitoring framework for accountability has only been partially implemented. The absence of annual high-level follow-up meetings and annual meetings to monitor the implementation of the plan in priority countries (see above) is a missed opportunity to foster broader momentum around the agenda, particularly with civil society and parliamentarians. The stated intention in the 3rd NAP to closely associate civil society with monitoring through regular institutionalized dialogue with French civil society and that of priority countries on WPS issues had been welcomed by both institutions, as had the plan to present a report to the relevant commissions of the National Assembly and the Senate. **The HCE and the CNCDH recommend that the monitoring framework set by the national action plan be fully implemented and that the annual high-level follow-up meetings and those with civil society that it provides for be organized as soon as possible.**

The association of CSOs in monitoring the implementation of the plan still appears very insufficient, even non-existent, although **it is essential not only in terms of accountability but also to promote the dissemination of the plan and the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda.** Many CSOs work on the ground without necessarily being aware of the Security Council resolutions in this regard and/or without linking their actions to this agenda. Exchanges with CSOs make it possible to mobilize them to integrate their actions into this framework with a view to establishing an active and structured network on the subject. They also make it possible to support, including through financial efforts, and promote the action of civil society associations on the ground, which, through their role within local communities, are in the best position to identify needs and how to address them in a given context. The rights-based approach promoted by the United Nations implies that people and communities are not only informed of their rights but also **participate in decision-making processes that concern them.** Their consultation and association in the framework of the elaboration of national action plans are decisive in this regard.

The CNCDH and the HCE note with interest the creation of a working group on “gender equality and the rights of women and girls in crisis and conflict contexts” as part of the elaboration work, under the leadership of the MEAE, for the next feminist foreign policy strategy in 2024. This exercise could constitute good practice in view of the elaboration of the next “Women, Peace, and Security” action plan.

Both institutions reiterate their recommendation to facilitate the establishment of a focus group of CSOs on the theme of “Women, Peace, and Security” to facilitate their involvement and consultation, both in the elaboration and during the implementation of the national action plan.

They also encourage France to further encourage other States to promote the WPS agenda with CSOs, to consult them in the elaboration of their national action plans, and to establish times for consultation during the implementation phase.

Finally, it also emerges from the elements brought to the attention of the CNCDH and the HCE that there has not yet been a specific hearing on these issues with the relevant parliamentary commissions, although the NAP provides for the presentation of a report to Parliament. The CNCDH and the HCE have already had the opportunity to emphasize the importance of closely associating Parliament with the monitoring and evaluation of the NAP, as well as with its elaboration. The United Nations Secretary-General also highlights the essential role of parliamentary and legislative officials in promoting follow-up and communication processes at the governmental level and in facilitating the provision of adequate funding for national action plans, as highlighted in the latest communiqué⁸² of the international network for women, peace, and security.

The CNCDH and the HCE recommend **promoting political accountability and the association of parliamentarians with the implementation of the WPS agenda** by preparing, as of now, the presentation of the NAP report to the relevant commissions of the National Assembly and the Senate in an appropriate format that encourages debate, as well as by organizing regular exchanges on this subject. Some parliamentarians could also be associated with the annual high-level follow-up meetings on the implementation of the plan.

The HCE and the CNCDH recommend **strengthening consultation** at all levels to draw lessons from the 3rd NAP and to set as soon as possible the modalities for consulting civil society and parliamentarians for the elaboration of the future plan,

82 - Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, 5th capital-level meeting - joint communiqué, June 2023: <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/2023/11/01/5th-capital-level-meeting-joint-communiqué/>. It is recommended “that parliamentarians and policymakers advocate for and support the full implementation of the WPS agenda to promote inclusive and comprehensive approaches to peace and security, nationally and internationally, and to promote monitoring and reporting across government, WPS capacity strengthening, and adequate financing for WPS NAPs, policies, and initiatives”.

in order to engage in a reflection on the next steps and priority issues sufficiently in advance.

3.3 New Challenges: Addressing Contemporary Issues and Incorporating Them into the Future Plan

Some issues are omitted or insufficiently addressed in the 3rd plan, although they impact the implementation of the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda. The HCE and the CNCDDH wish to highlight some examples to illustrate the questions that deserve to be developed in the next national action plan in light of the evolution of the global context in terms of peace and security. It emerges from the hearings and data transmitted that some institutions and services have begun, at the technical level, to engage in such reflection. This should be deepened in the perspective of the next NAP to better include contemporary challenges and strengthen the synergies and overall coherence of France’s commitments.

3.3.1 Issues Related to the Climate Crisis and Food Crisis

Climate change and, more broadly, what is commonly referred to as the ecological “triple planetary crisis”⁸³ (environmental pollution, climate, biodiversity) have impacts on peace and security that have differentiated effects on women and men⁸⁴: conflicts related to natural resources (water and land resources) and extractive mining, population displacements following climate disasters particularly affecting women and girls, etc. The future plan could explicitly mention the links between the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda and climate change and provide for specific actions and indicators in this regard, by strengthening synergies and coherence with France’s other commitments. These links⁸⁵ have been recognized on numerous occasions within the United Nations Security Council⁸⁶, NATO⁸⁷, the EU⁸⁸, or in France’s international strategy for gender equality. Some EU indicators could be useful in this regard⁸⁹. In this respect, the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion could be one of the actors involved in the next plan. France could also usefully rely on the knowledge of human rights defenders working in the field of the environment as well as on local populations and communities.

83 - On Earth Day 2022, the Secretary-General of the United Nations reminded us that the “triple planetary crisis” (climate disruption, loss of nature and biodiversity, and pollution and waste) is threatening the well-being and survival of millions of people around the world. The building blocks of a happy and healthy life - clean water, clean air, a stable and predictable climate - “are in disarray, jeopardizing the Sustainable Development Goals”.

84 - See the report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, S/2023/725, §§72 et seq.

85 - See in particular ICRC, “When rain turns to dust. Understanding and mitigating the combined effects of armed conflict and climate and environmental crisis on the daily lives of affected people”, September 2020, available at https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/topic/file_plus_list/rain_turns_to_dust_climate_change_conflict.pdf

86 - In addition to the thematic debates organized by the Security Council on the links between climate and peace and security, recognized notably in resolution 2242 (2015), the latter has, for the first time, mandated the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to provide gender-sensitive risk assessments of the adverse effects of climate change, to help create the conditions necessary for humanitarian delivery (resolution 2625 (2022)).

87 - NATO, “Environment, climate change and security”, updated April 18, 2024: https://www.nato.int/cps/fr/natohq/topics_91048.htm?selectedLocale=en

88 - See, for example, the EU Council conclusions on the “women, peace and security” agenda of December 2018.

89 - Indicators 15 of the EU WPS action plan and 20.1 EU GAP.

Food insecurity caused, in particular, by conflicts and the use of famine as a method of warfare constitutes a major issue⁹⁰. More than one in four women were in a situation of moderate or severe food insecurity worldwide in 2022. According to forecasts by 2030, the gender gap in food security is expected to persist⁹¹, which invites us to make the link with the gender dimension and the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda.

3.3.2 Disarmament, Arms Control, and Cybersecurity Issues

The 3rd NAP does not include references or specific actions on disarmament and arms control issues, while the previous plan (2015-2018) included a gender-sensitive objective on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs⁹². The United Nations Secretary-General notes in his report S/2023/725 of 2023 that only 33 WPS national action plans (out of 107) currently refer to arms control, ammunition management, or disarmament in their monitoring frameworks and insists on the importance of better anchoring disarmament issues in national policies related to women and peace and security, and vice versa. As global military spending continues to rise and the proliferation of weapons remains an existential threat, it is essential that States’ WPS national action plans include **specific objectives on disarmament and arms control**. France, as the world’s second-largest arms exporter⁹³ and a nuclear power, has a particular responsibility in this regard.

The links between disarmament, arms control, and the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda have recently been reiterated by the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council—including France⁹⁴—during the public debate of April 2024, emphasizing, in particular, **the links between the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW)⁹⁵ and sexual violence in conflicts.⁹⁶**

Although these issues are absent from France’s 3rd NAP, the HCE and the CNCDH note with interest that written data has been transmitted regarding France’s commitment to better take into account gender, particularly in the context of the work of the Conference of States Parties to the **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**. Both institutions recommend that the next national action plan include concrete

90 - See Security Council resolution 2417 (2018), which recalls that the use of famine as a method of warfare is prohibited and condemns arbitrary denials of access to humanitarian aid.

91 - Report of the Secretary-General S/2023/725, citing the UN Women report, “Progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals: a blueprint for gender equality 2023”, available at <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2023-en.pdf>

92 - Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs (or disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement (DDRRR)) are totally absent from the 3rd NAP. The CNCDH and the HCE recommended that the objectives set in the 2nd NAP be strengthened in this respect.

93 - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) press release, March 11, 2024, available at <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2024/european-arms-imports-nearly-double-us-and-french-exports-rise-and-russian-exports-fall-sharply>.

94 - See France’s statement at <https://onu.delegfrance.org/the-council-must-continue-to-take-concrete-action-to-implement-the-women-peace>.

95 - The EU’s WPS action plan also encourages member states to strengthen their understanding of the gender-specific impacts of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, by improving relevant national policies and programs (action 5.4).

96 - At this open debate on “Preventing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence through Demilitarization, Gender-Responsive Arms Control”, the Secretary-General presented his report S/2024/292 on conflict-related sexual violence. The background note prepared by the Maltese Presidency stresses that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research “estimates that between 70% and 90% of cases of conflict-related sexual violence involve weapons and firearms, used to intimidate, threaten, coerce, injure and kill civilians, as well as to commit sexual violence (...)” (S/2024/311). It states that “the proliferation of weapons (...) also makes possible attacks on human rights defenders and peacemakers, and undermines the security, mobility, education and economic prospects of women and girls in post-conflict contexts” (*ibid.*).

commitments, accompanied by indicators, related to its obligations under the ATT, particularly Article 7 §4, which requires States Parties, when evaluating export license applications for conventional arms or goods covered by the ATT, to take into account the risk that such arms or goods may be used to commit serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children, or to facilitate such acts⁹⁷.

Issues related to **cybersecurity and new technologies** (digital security and its use, artificial intelligence) should also be better addressed in the next NAP to integrate the gender dimension.⁹⁸

3.3.3 Role of the Private Sector

The role of the private sector is absent from the 3rd NAP, although the activities of companies (for example, in the mining and extractive sector, the land sector, water, or the activities of private military and security companies⁹⁹) have repercussions in conflict zones and can contribute to the implementation of the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda.

The next NAP of France should recall France’s obligation to **regulate the activities of companies** under its jurisdiction that have a negative impact on human rights, particularly women’s rights, especially in situations of conflict and post-conflict (obligation to protect) and its obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, as well as recall the responsibilities of companies in this regard. It should also encourage, through concrete proposals, the private sector to support the implementation of the WPS agenda, including through financing. The media, culture, and communication sector also has a role to play in combating gender-based stereotypes. Finally, the plan could highlight the role of all non-state actors, for example, by promoting the diplomacy of local authorities or associations such as the global organisation United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

3.3.4 Multiple Discriminations and Intersectional Approach

Multiple discriminations and the intersectional approach could be better reflected in the “Women, Peace, and Security” national action plan, given the particular vulnerabilities of certain categories of women in relation to armed conflicts, the

97 - As the Secretary-General reminds us, by 2023, States have also committed to taking into account, in their national systems for controlling the transfer of conventional ammunition, the risk of diverted ammunition being used to commit gender-based violence, by adopting the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management (see General Assembly resolution 78/47 and the final report of the open-ended working group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management, A/78/111).

98 - See, for example, the developments on gender equality in the digital age in the NATO report Women, Peace and Security Transformation of October 31, 2020, available at https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/10/pdf/201110-wps-essay-transforming-security-e.pdf.

99 - The Montreux Document (2008) reaffirms States’ existing obligations under international law, in particular international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law, regarding the activities of private military and security companies (PMSCs) in situations of armed conflict (<https://www.montreuxdocument.org/pdf/document/en.pdf>).

increased risk of violence against them, and the need to encompass women in all their diversity. It is essential to better take into account the intersectionality of inequalities based, in particular, on sex, gender, social class, religion, migratory status, health (such as HIV serological status), disability, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

The report of the UN Independent Expert on the protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity highlights, in particular, the dynamics related to gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity in the context of armed conflicts, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping¹⁰⁰. Links with France's national action plan for equality of rights, against anti-LGBT hatred and discrimination, could be made to give more visibility to the issues faced by women from sexual and gender minorities in conflicts.

Similarly, the next national action plan could provide for special attention to girls, teenage girls and young women, for example, in the commitments made for target countries, in accordance with the Security Council's "**Youth, Peace, and Security**" agenda¹⁰¹ and the "life-cycle approach" advocated in France's international strategy for gender equality. Largely underrepresented in decision-making processes, their specific needs and risks are often neglected, while conflicts exacerbate existing inequalities. In this regard, the link could usefully be made with commitments related to **the protection of children in armed conflicts**, with "gender norms determining children's exposure to serious violations."¹⁰²

Addressing **disability-related** issues in prevention and protection strategies is also essential, as the United Nations Secretary-General points out, for example, the additional difficulties faced by disabled women in particular in the face of emergency response systems and structures that do not take accessibility issues into account¹⁰³. The next NAP should make commitments to respect the rights and address the specific needs of persons with disabilities in times of conflict and to associate them with humanitarian action, prevention, and conflict resolution, as well as peacebuilding, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2475 (2019)¹⁰⁴.

In conclusion, the HCE and the CNCDH recommend that France **engage sufficiently in advance, as of 2024, in the work on the priority issues of the 4th action plan and its main challenges** so that there is no break between the different plans nor any delay between the completion of the current plan and the adoption of the next one.

100 - Report of the Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, July 27, 2022, A/77/235

101 - Resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018), 2535 (2020), 2553 (2020).

102 - Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Children and Armed Conflict, June 5, 2023, A/77/895-S/2023/363, §11. In this respect, see France's commitment, in its Humanitarian Strategy 2023-2027, to adopt an approach based on the rights of the child and to integrate the protection of children and children's rights, including the right to education, at the heart of the cross-cutting and systematic priorities of humanitarian response.

103 - Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, S/2023/725, §38.

104 - UN Info, "UN Security Council adopted its first-ever resolution on protection of persons with disabilities in conflict," June 20, 2019: <https://press.un.org/en/2019/sc13851.doc.htm> .

The focus should be on **a logic of continuous improvement** between successive NAPs, ensuring the articulation between the essential acquis of previous plans, which should be preserved and strengthened, and the new measures envisaged, which aim to enrich and **strengthen the conceptual approach of the new plan**— while drawing lessons from the application of the 3rd plan, including on priority geographic areas.

This approach also implies a more holistic and transversal vision of the WPS agenda, developed through broad consultation and including new institutional actors (Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion, Ministry of Higher Education and Research, operators such as Expertise France and relevant state agencies, etc.). It should also be based on a more transformative vision, developing **a feminist and intersectional approach to international peace and security**. Nearly 25 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), it is also a question of renewing the objective not only of protecting women and making them full actors in international peace and security but also of challenging militaristic logics and creating the conditions for sustainable peace for all.

Recommendation 10: Fully implement the monitoring framework provided for by the national action plan by organizing the annual high-level meetings in 2024 and 2025, associating the HCE and the CNCDH and civil society, as well as the meetings with local civil society, in accordance with the action plan.

Recommendation 11: Develop a more transversal approach to the plan by **involving other relevant institutional actors** and include, as of now, the operator Expertise France among the actors implementing the 3rd national action plan by setting objectives related to its missions.

Recommendation 12: Promote the **association of parliamentarians with the implementation of the “Women, Peace, and Security” agenda** by preparing, as of now, the presentation of the national action plan report to the relevant commissions of the National Assembly and the Senate, as well as by organizing regular exchanges.

Recommendation 13: Improve the monitoring framework and develop, in the perspective of the 4th national action plan, a new accountability framework focused on **precise and measurable indicators**, results and impact indicators, by associating the relevant actors.

Recommendation 14: Set the modalities for consulting civil society organisations, parliamentarians, and researchers to **inscribe the elaboration process of the 4th national action plan within the framework of a broad consultation**, in connection with the relevant institutions, in order to engage in a reflection on the next steps and priority issues, ensuring the inclusion of contemporary challenges (climate change, food insecurity, disarmament and arms control, role of the private sector, intersectionality, etc.).

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Specific Objectives of the Four Pillars of the National Action Plan (2021-2025)

PILLAR 1: Prevention through Awareness-Raising on Gender-Based Violence, Women's Rights, and Gender Equality

5 specific objectives:

- a.** Strengthen and develop training on the systematic and cross-cutting integration of gender and the protection of women and girls against sexual and gender-based violence and violent extremism in conflict and post-conflict situations, for all actors involved in implementing the agenda as well as local partners, including women and girls.
- b.** Continue developing educational tools on gender integration and the protection of women and girls against violence in conflict and post-conflict situations (practical guides, models, regular seminars on agenda implementation).
- c.** Continue educational policies for the prevention and fight against gender inequalities and sexual and gender-based violence, contributing to the education of future citizens, as well as the renewal of popular education and youth initiatives, and the development of actions in informal and non-formal education.
- d.** Strengthen France's dedicated programs on gender issues in humanitarian, conflict, and post-conflict contexts.
- e.** Strengthen support for documentation, collection, and analysis of gender-specific data and surveys on sexual violence.

PILLAR 2: Protection of Women and Girls and the Fight Against Impunity

5 specific objectives:

- a.** Continue and strengthen the integration of gender and the protection of women against sexual violence and violent extremism in all of France's international peace and security actions.
- b.** Strengthen the fight against impunity at the international level.
- c.** Strengthen national mechanisms for addressing sexual and gender-based violence.
- d.** Strengthen the fight against human trafficking by implementing the 2nd National Action Plan against Human Trafficking 2019-2021, particularly for women and girls who are victims and survivors of trafficking.
- e.** Strengthen the fight against female genital mutilation, both in France and internationally.

PILLAR 3: Women's Participation

8 specific objectives:

- a.** Continue strengthening the direct participation of women in peacekeeping missions and reconstruction operations by promoting their access to positions within civilian and military components, as well as to high-level positions in the chain of command. Increase the number of French women and their level of responsibility within peace negotiation processes involving France.
- b.** Contribute to strengthening the capacities of women from partner defense and security forces.
- c.** Promote the participation of women in the leadership and implementation of cooperation, development, and humanitarian projects and programs in crisis and conflict zones, and encourage them to occupy positions of responsibility.
- d.** Strengthen the contribution of cooperation, development, and humanitarian projects and programs funded or promoted by French authorities to the empowerment of women.
- e.** Systematically support the participation of women in peace negotiation processes and their equal participation in political, economic, and social stabilization and conflict resolution processes.

- f.** Seek parity in events within international organisations or other international forums in which France participates, including on issues other than women's rights.
- g.** Significantly increase the number of women and facilitate their effective participation at all levels of administration, particularly in positions of responsibility and leadership.
- h.** Promote the participation of girls and women in decision-making processes from a young age by encouraging middle and high school students to represent their peers within school representative bodies.

PILLAR 4: Promotion of the Agenda and the National Action Plan

6 specific objectives:

- a.** Improve knowledge, ownership of the agenda, and monitoring of the plan's implementation by various national bodies.
- b.** Include relevant elements of the "Women, Peace, and Security" agenda in cooperation related to peace, security, and women's rights.
- c.** Develop internal communication actions to raise awareness of the agenda, gender equality issues, and the fight against harassment, discrimination, and sexual and gender-based violence.
- d.** Raise public awareness of the national plan's agenda issues.
- e.** Continue international efforts in favor of the "Women, Peace, and Security" agenda.
- f.** Include relevant elements of the "Women, Peace, and Security" agenda in cooperation related to peace, security, and women's rights, particularly in the priority geographic areas of the National Action Plan: Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, Central African Republic, Great Lakes region (especially DRC, Rwanda, Burundi), Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Haiti.

APPENDIX 2 - List of Documents Received

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE):

Cover Note

Document on Pillar 1 - Prevention (Indicator Monitoring Table)

Document on Pillar 2 - Protection (Indicator Monitoring Table)

Document on Pillar 3 - Participation (Indicator Monitoring Table)

Document on Pillar 4 - Promotion (Indicator Monitoring Table)

Annex – Training and Awareness-Raising of MEAE Staff on Gender Equality

Annex – Women, Peace and Security agenda and the Arms Trade Treaty

Annex – Crisis and Support Center (CDCS), Use of the OECD Gender Marker and Fight Against Sexual Violence

Annex – CDCS, Presentation of the Gender Marker

Annex – Directorate of Security and Defense Cooperation (DCSD), Women, Peace and Security agenda: DCSD Actions, Note of August 18, 2023

Annex – DCSD Booklet: DCSD Actions in Implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, published March 8, 2024

Annex – Open Debate at the UN Security Council – Women, Peace, and Security, Intervention by Marlène Schiappa, Secretary of State for the Social and Solidarity Economy and Associative Life, March 7, 2023

Annex – Speech by the Minister – Meeting of Women Foreign Ministers organized by Mongolia – June 2023

Annex – Speech by Clarisse Paolini, Deputy Political Coordinator of the French Permanent Representation on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, UN Security Council, Arria format, October 18, 2023

Annex – Speech by Emmanuel Leclerc, Human Rights Advisor of France to the United Nations – Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, October 4, 2023

Annex – Speech by Nathalie Broadhurst, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, UN Security Council, October 25, 2023

Annex – Response by Bérangère Couillard, Minister Delegate for Gender Equality and the Fight Against Discrimination, to a parliamentary question, National Assembly, November 28, 2023

French Development Agency (AFD):

Annex – Technopolis Group, Study on “Gender and Conflicts” aimed at improving and systematizing gender mainstreaming in operations in crisis and conflict zones, July 2023

Annex – Study on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, AFD/CSO, Collection of Best Practices, “Awareness and Training of Teams” (Mercy Corps), 2021

Annex – Study on Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse within the AFD/CSO Partnership, Final Report, March 2022

Annex – Study on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, AFD/CSO, Collection of Best Practices, “Transparency and Communication” (SOS Children’s Villages), 2021

Annex – Example of Country Profile (Gender Profile for Jordan)

Annex – Minka Fund, Flagship of the “Women, Peace, and Security” Agenda

Annex – Gender Action Plan (Tripoli Governmental Hospital Gender Action Plan, Libya)

Annex – Gender Equality Plan 2019 – 2022

Annex – Capacity Building (International Catholic Child Bureau)

Armed Forces Ministry:

Annex – MINARM and the Women, Peace and Security agenda, August 30, 2023

Ministry of Justice:

Agreement on Professional Equality between Men and Women at MINJUST, January 20, 2020

Annex – Guide “Let’s Talk About Gender Equality,” published March 8, 2022

Annex – Objective 1a), National School for the Judiciary (ENM), Judicial Treatment in France of Crimes Against Humanity

Annex – Objective 3 g), Gender Parity in Court Clerks as of January 1, 2022

Annex – Objective 3 g), Gender Parity in Court Clerks as of January 1, 2023

Annex – Objective 3 g), Feminization Rate within the Judiciary – Corps of Magistrates from 2011 to 2023

Ministry of the Interior and Overseas (MIOM):

MIOM Report, The National Action Plan “Women, Peace, and Security” at the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, Execution Report 2022, March 2023

Annex 1 to the Execution Report, Meetings on the “Women, Peace, and Security” Plan, Paris, November 3, 2022

Annex 2 to the Execution Report, The Place of Women in Senior Management within the National Police, December 16, 2021

Annex 3 to the Execution Report, Infographics on the Staff of the National Police and Gendarmerie in International Organisations, annex 4 to the Execution Report, Table on MIOM Staff Training

Annex – Objective 3, Table on Capacity Building by Country - DCIS

Annex – Objective 3 a), Table of Female Staff at MIOM, 2021-2022

Annex – Objective 1 e), Table on Domestic, Sexist, and Sexual Violence

Annex – Objective 3, Involvement of the International Security Cooperation Directorate (DCIS) in the Implementation of the National Action Plan “Women, Peace, and Security” for 2023

Annex – Objective 3 – Table on MIOM Staff Deployment in EU and UN Missions as of September 15, 2023

Annex – Objective 3 – Infographic on the Staff of the National Police and Gendarmerie in International Organisations as of September 15, 2023

Annex – Objective 3 a) and 3 g), Tables of Female Staff at MIOM in 2022, MIOM Actions

Annex – Objective 3 – Detailed Tables of Female Staff at MIOM in 2022, Detailed MIOM Actions

MIOM, European Handbook, Mobilizing Law Enforcement Against Domestic Violence

MIOM - CSW 66 - Generation Equality, Building Commitment on Gender-Responsive Policing through Generation Equality: Establishing a High-Level Inter-Ministerial Network to Drive Change

2 Emails from Nathalie Pilhes, MIOM Delegate for the National Action Plan “Women, Peace, and Security,” (Additional Responses to Questions), December 11, 2023

Directorate General of the National Police (DGPN), Judicial Unit, Addressing Prostitution and Victim Support During the Olympic and Paralympic Games, December 4, 2023

Directorate General of the National Gendarmerie (DGGN), Actions of the National Gendarmerie on Combating Violence Against Women During the 2024 Olympic Games

Ministry of Gender Equality and the Fight Against Discrimination:

Infographic, The MSF-PREVAL Project (Measurement of the Prevalence of “Female Genital Mutilation” in France) in Alpes-Maritimes, October 2022 (in partnership with Universities Côte d’Azur and Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Infographic, The MSF-PREVAL Project in Rhône, October 2022

Infographic, The MSF-PREVAL Project in Seine-Saint-Denis, October 2022

Interministerial Mission for the Protection of Women Against Violence and the Fight Against Human Trafficking (Miprof):

National Action Plan against Exploitation and Human Trafficking 2024-2027

Training Guide for Professionals “Identification and Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking” - October 2022

Letter from the National Observatory of Violence Against Women, Violence Within Couples and Sexual Violence in France in 2022, Issue 19 – March 2024

Thematic Letter from the Observatory of Violence Against Women, Prostitution in France, Issue 20 – May 2, 2024

Acknowledgements

Audited Individuals

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October 5, 2023: Meeting at MEAE with the “Women, Peace, and Security” focal points responsible for monitoring the implementation of the national action plan.

November 14, 2023: Audition of the Armed Forces Ministry

- ▶ Catherine BOURDES, High Commissioner for Equality and Director of the Diversity Project at the Armed Forces Ministry
- ▶ Commandant Pascale de BOSSOREILLE, “Women, Peace, and Security” Focal Point at the Armed Forces Ministry, Special Advisor on the UN, Department of UN and Transversal Affairs, Directorate General of International Relations and Strategy (DGRIS) (International Security Affairs Service).

November 23, 2023: Audition of the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas

SECRETARY-GENERAL/CABINET OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND OVERSEAS:

- ▶ Nathalie PILHES, Ministerial Delegate for the National Action Plan “Women, Peace, and Security”
- ▶ Fadela BENRABIA, Prefect, High Commissioner for Equality

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL POLICE (DGPN):

- ▶ Charlotte HUNTZ, Police Commissioner, National Referent for Domestic Violence for the National Police
- ▶ France DUPOIRIER-LACOUR, Police Commander, Judicial Unit

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL GENDARMERIE (DGN):

- ▶ Colonel Dorothée CLOITRE (DGPN/Cabinet)
- ▶ General Laurent HAAS (Provost, Judicial Police Officer of the Armed Forces)
- ▶ General Jean-Philippe REILAND, Central Office for the Fight Against Crimes Against Humanity and Hate Crimes (OCLCH)

DIRECTORATE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION (DCIS):

- ▶ Divisional Commissioner Olivier MORTET, Deputy Director, Europe Directorate
- ▶ Lieutenant-Colonel Jean MONTAL-VILLETTE, Head of the International Missions and Organisations Division
- ▶ Cléa POIRAUDEAU, Special Advisor

CIVIPOL (INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION OPERATOR OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR):

- ▶ Lisa RAFFY, Project Manager
- ▶ Directorate General of Civil Security and Crisis Management (DGSCGC):
- ▶ Pascale LEGENDRE, Gender Equality Officer in the Director General's Office

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS (DGOM):

- ▶ Karine DELAMARCHE, Deputy Director General

DIRECTORATE OF EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (DAEI):

- ▶ General Christophe PERRET, Director of International Action (DAEI/SG)
- ▶ Louise-Anne BAUDRIER, Special Advisor (DAEI/SG).

December 13, 2023: Auditions of Civil Society Representatives

- ▶ Camille BAYET, Scientific Partnerships Officer, Women in International Security (WIIS) France
- ▶ Lucie DECHIFRE, Director of the EuroMed Feminist Initiative (IFE) Program
- ▶ Patricia GRILLO, Advocacy Officer, EuroMed Feminist Initiative (IFE).

WRITTEN CONTRIBUTION:

- ▶ Coordination Sud, Recommendations for the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

January 9, 2024: Audition of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

- ▶ Florence CORMON, Deputy Director, Directorate of the United Nations, International Organisations, Human Rights, and Francophonie
- ▶ Marie MERCY, Officer, Sub-Directorate of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, “Women, Peace, and Security” Focal Point.

February 6, 2024: Audition of the French Development Agency (AFD)

- ▶ Mar MERITA BLAT, Special Advisor, Social Link Unit of the AFD, Gender Expert
- ▶ Martin GERHARDS, Special Advisor, Crises and Conflicts Division of the AFD, in charge of gender and conflict issues, “Women, Peace, and Security” Focal Point
- ▶ Roxane ZIGHED, Special Advisor, Crises and Conflicts Division of the AFD, in charge of gender and conflict issues.



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