Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Third Annual Report on
Ireland's third National Action Plan for
the implementation of UNSCR 1325
and related resolutions on

# Women, Peace and Security (2019-2024)

November 2023

Cover images:

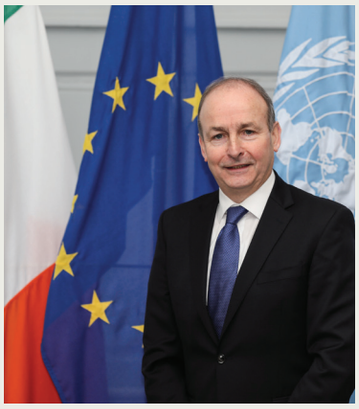
A woman from the Bentiu IDP camp in South Sudan © DFA

Garda members deployed with UNFICYP in Cyprus © DFA

# Contents

# Foreword

## Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin T.D.



© DFA

It is a pleasure to mark the publication of the third Annual Report on Ireland's National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and related resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). This is Ireland's third National Action Plan; the progress outlined in this report is encouraging, as is the cross government commitment to meeting objectives set out in the NAP.

However, 2022 was not an easy year for women worldwide. From the protests by young women in Iran, to the women climate activists in Latin America, the determination of those willing to defend the rights of women in 2022 stood in contrast with the rising threats faced by women and girls across the world. The challenges were many, and made more complicated by war in Ukraine, in Ethiopia, and the rollback of women's rights in Afghanistan, to name a few.

The 2022 UN Secretary General's Report on WPS noted that the number of women and girls living in conflict-affected countries reached 614 million in 2022, a 50 per cent increase on the number in 2017. This figure, and the proliferation of crises worldwide, underline the urgency of implementing the WPS Agenda as a pathway to building peace.

Ireland continued to advance and mainstream the WPS Agenda in 2022 during our final year as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. We used our position on the Council to draw attention to the suffering inflicted upon women due to conflict, and the need for women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in peacebuilding efforts. We continue to draw on our experience of the peace process in Northern Ireland and exchange lessons with a wide variety of partners to deepen our understanding.

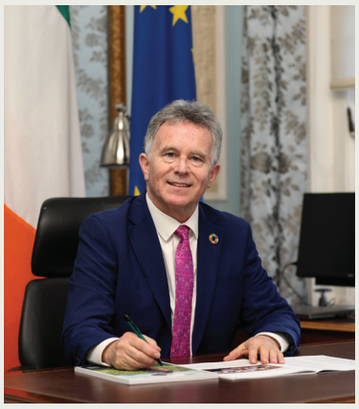
Ireland's NAP forms a central element of our broader commitment to gender equality. It encompasses a whole-of-government and intersectional approach to WPS. I welcome this report which reviews Ireland's implementation of the third NAP in 2022, and its focus on the significant work that is ongoing on WPS, both internationally and domestically.

As Ireland ends its term on the Security Council, we remain committed to the WPS Agenda and will continue to advocate, with our domestic and international partners, for the implementation of the Agenda's goals.

**Micheál Martin T.D.**
Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Minister for Defence

# Foreword

## Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, Seán Fleming T.D.



© DFA

I am pleased to welcome the publication of the latest Annual Report on Ireland's third National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). This report is a key monitoring element of the NAP, and outlines Ireland's progress in 2022 in advancing the WPS Agenda.

The NAP represents Ireland's response to UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and related resolutions which recognise the differential impact of war and conflict on women and girls, and the critical role that women can and already do play in peacebuilding efforts.

Ireland is committed to integrating gender equality across all of our humanitarian and development interventions, and in our wider foreign policy. Tackling gender inequality and empowering women and girls are priority areas in the work of Irish Aid, and are essential in implementing the WPS Agenda.

Worryingly, the world is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of gender equality by 2030, and the challenges we face are worsened by recurring crises worldwide. Nothing less than transformative change is required to help us achieve true gender equality and advance the WPS Agenda. The NAP is an important guide in our efforts to reach the goals of the WPS Agenda. We continue to strive for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes both internationally and domestically.

This Annual Report showcases the wide breadth of work which has been done in Ireland and abroad in 2022. It highlights the importance of the four WPS pillars of Prevention, Participation, Protection, and Promotion and also helps us to identify areas in which we can take stronger action going forward. We remain steadfast in our commitment to the vision of the WPS Agenda, and are proud to champion its principles of peace and equality.

**Seán Fleming T.D.**
Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora

# Chairperson's Foreword

## by Independent Chair of the Oversight Group

© DFA

The third Annual Report on Ireland's National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security stands as a testament to our commitment to deliver the agenda in Ireland and to do our part internationally. I am proud that this report outlines our considerable progress in delivering the NAP to date.

We recognise that these are difficult times; it is hard to see progress in a world where there has been such a sharp reversal in the trend of declining armed violence that had continued annually since 1984. Russia's invasion of Ukraine shattered perceptions of a peaceful Europe. Ethiopia saw one of the deadliest conflicts globally in 2022, and women suffered significant sexual-based violence.

In the face of deep challenges, we must not lose hope. Rather, we must redouble our efforts and reinforce the importance of Ireland's commitment to a peaceful society, and to support the fundamental role played by women and girls in achieving sustainable and inclusive peace.

The determination of all those involved in realising the NAP has been key to achieving the progress outlined in this Annual Report, and I am deeply grateful for their commitment. The Government and its agencies have been steadfast in their dedication to promoting and implementing the NAP across our society. The expertise and knowledge championed by civil society representatives participating in the Oversight Group has been invaluable as we strive to ensure that the NAP is implemented to its fullest potential.

The Oversight Group continued to convene quarterly in 2022, covering a diverse range of topics in discussions led by key actors within this space. These included human trafficking; the war in Ukraine; climate and gender; the work of the Irish Red Cross; and combatting domestic and sexual violence in Ireland. As part of the ongoing monitoring of the NAP's implementation, a mid-term review commenced in late 2022. This annual report is a product of the recommendations made in respect to the monitoring framework used to assess progress each year.

The Government of Ireland and a strong network of civil society organisations remain ever committed to advocating for women's rights, both at home and abroad. Through the implementation of this NAP, we remind women across the world that a better and more peaceful future for women and girls is possible and, indeed, must be realised.

**Mrs Nora Owen**
Independent Chair,
Oversight Group for the National Action Plan

# Select Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| **AGS** | An Garda Síochána |
| **CSDP** | Common Security and Defence Policy (EU) |
| **DCAD** | Development Cooperation and Africa Division (DFA) |
| **DECC** | Department of Environment, Climate and Communications |
| **DF** | Defence Forces |
| **DFA** | Department of Foreign Affairs |
| **DOD** | Department of Defence |
| **DOJ** | Department of Justice |
| **DRCD** | Department of Rural and Community Development |
| **DSGBV** | Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence |
| **GBV** | Gender-Based Violence |
| **HPP** | Humanitarian Programme Plan |
| **HRD** | Human Rights Defender |
| **HSE** | Health Service Executive |
| **ICGBV** | Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence |
| **IFIs** | International Financial Institutions |
| **IOM** | International Organisation for Migration |
| **IRC** | International Rescue Committee |
| **IRPP** | Irish Refugee Protection Programme |
| **LECP** | Local Economic and Community Plan |
| **NAP** | National Action Plan |
| **NRC** | National Referral Mechanism |
| **ODA** | Official Development Assistance |
| **PGII** | Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment |
| **PSEAH** | Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment |
| **SEA** | Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goals |
| **SICAP** | Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme |
| **SOGI** | Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity |
| **UNODA** | UN Office for Disarmament Affairs |
| **UPR** | Universal Periodic Review |
| **UNSC** | United Nations Security Council |
| **UNSCR** | United Nations Security Council Resolution |
| **WHRD** | Women Human Rights Defenders |
| **WPHF** | Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund |
| **WPS** | Women, Peace and Security |
| **YPS** | Youth, Peace and Security |

# 1. Executive Summary

Throughout 2022, Ireland remained focused on delivering the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS), both internationally and at home. The National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS was a core area of engagement in Ireland's foreign and domestic policy, with departments across government delivering on their respective NAP commitments.

Despite a challenging year globally, compounded by crises requiring emergency government response, a strong focus on the WPS Agenda prevailed. On the international stage, Ireland used its influence as a non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council in 2022, underlining the importance of the WPS Agenda, and mainstreaming WPS across Council discussions. Chairing the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS, and organising the IEG's first field visit to Lebanon were some highlights of Ireland's activity at the Council.

Ireland continued to prioritise WPS in its overseas development programme in 2022, ranking third among OECD member countries in terms of the shares of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for gender equality[1]. Funding supported numerous women's grassroots organisations, with a spotlight on WPS activities in Africa. Capacity-building for local women peacebuilders, engaging men in WPS principles, and improving access to lifesaving GBV services were some key areas covered.

Domestically, the government made strides in implementing the WPS Agenda in Ireland. The work on establishing a Domestic and Sexual Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) agency was an important step in combatting DSGBV, which is an epidemic in Ireland and worldwide. The influx of refugees fleeing war in Ukraine necessitated a gender-sensitive response from protection and integration services. Crucial efforts were made to provide medical, psychological, and educational services around FGM. Gender reform mechanisms were put in place in the Defence Forces.

The Oversight Group met regularly to monitor the NAP's implementation, ensuring that Ireland was active and accountable in this pursuit. Based on difficulties encountered in reporting, a decision was taken by the Group to adjust the monitoring and evaluation framework of the NAP, with a view to capturing progress and obstacles in a more streamlined manner.

Ireland remains committed to the WPS Agenda. Interdepartmental and agency cooperation will ensure that we deliver on this important foreign and domestic policy priority in the coming years.

[1] According to latest validated data by the OECD.

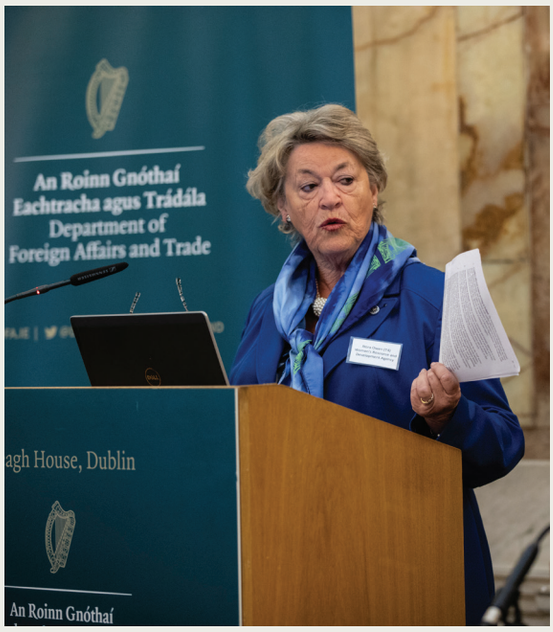
# 2. Background

## 2.1 Development of the National Action Plan

Ireland's third National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2024) was launched by the then-Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney T.D. in June 2019. This document builds on the previous NAPs launched in 2011 and 2015. It commits to deliver on a holistic and comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, the adoption of the EU Strategic Approach to WPS[2] and the conclusions of the 2015 UN Study on the implementation of the WPS Agenda.[3] It seeks to renew Ireland's commitment to implementing the WPS agenda domestically and internationally across all of Government, and ensuring the engagement of civil society throughout.

The development of the third NAP was led by a dedicated Working Group that included statutory agencies, civil society and academic experts. As with previous iterations, the NAP is based on four thematic pillars:

- Prevention
- Participation
- Protection
- Promotion




Nora Owen speaks at a Public Consultation Workshop on the Third National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security in Iveagh House.

© DFA

Dr Salome Mbugua.

© DFA

[2] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37412/st15086-en18.pdf

[3] https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UNW-GLOBAL-STUDY-1325-2015%20(1).pdf

# 3. Oversight Group for Ireland's third National Action Plan on WPS

## 3.1 Background of the Oversight Group

The Minister for Foreign Affairs appointed an Oversight Group to oversee the implementation of actions across the four pillars within the NAP. The Group is independently chaired and is composed of 50% representation from civil society, academia and independent experts, and 50% representation from government departments and state agencies with shared responsibility for implementing the NAP.

## 3.2 Oversight Group Membership

The representatives from civil society, academia, and independent members are the following:

### Nora Owen – Independent Chair

Nora Owen is a former T.D. and served as Minister for Justice from 1994-1997. Mrs Owen chaired the Oversight Group for Ireland's second National Action Plan on WPS.

### Oliver Barbour – Independent Expert (former Defence Forces)

Oliver Barbour was the Defence Forces representative for the first NAP on UNSCR 1325. He travelled to Timor Leste and Liberia as part of the consultation group in developing the first NAP on UNSCR 1325 and was involved in the public consultations process in Ireland. He has presented in Ireland's UN Training School and other UN Schools in the area of Gender Equality, GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and has served on several UN Missions including Kosovo, Bosnia, Lebanon, Western Sahara, East Timor, Liberia, Chad, Ethiopia and Sudan.

### Noeline Blackwell – formerly Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

Noeline Blackwell is a human rights lawyer with recognised expertise and commitment to women's rights, migrant rights and refugee rights. She was CEO of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre until 2023, and was previously Director of FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centre). While Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights, Noeline had special responsibility for women's human rights and the rights of human rights defenders. She acted as liaison for women human rights defenders as board member at Front Line Defenders.

### Maria Butler – Nobel Women's Initiative

Maria Butler is Executive Director of the Nobel Women's Initiative. Maria previously held the positions of Director of Global Programmes at Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and the Director responsible for WILPF's Women, Peace and Security program. She co-authored the article 'WPS and Arms Trade Treaty' in the Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security.

## Egide Dhala – International Organisation for Migration

Egide Dhala works for International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Ireland as MHPSS Project Manager and has over 20 years of experience working with migrants in Ireland. While working with Spirasi, he set up an education programme in support of vulnerable women, and worked with AkiDwA in engaging men to address violence against women. He is the co-founder of Wezesha, which supports African women who are affected or likely to be affected by conflict and violence.

## Nura Hagi – Mind the GAP

Nura Hagi is a human rights defender from Somalia. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the Sexual Violence Centre in Cork and is the CEO of Karti, an organisation that supports women from conflict zones living in Ireland. She also works for Mind the GAP a development education arts project and an advisor at the Women's section in the Islamic Information Centre.

## Emma Johnston – Pieta

Emma Johnston is an Education and Training officer with Pieta, working on the area of self-harm and suicide. Previously, she worked as a Young Women's Development Worker for Youth Action Northern Ireland. In 2013, Emma was selected as the representative for Northern Ireland on the UK Joint Committee on Women, and in 2009, she was elected as a committee member of NIWEP (Northern Ireland Women's European Platform) to represent the voice of young women.

## Dr Walter Kilroy – Dublin City University (DCU)

Walt Kilroy is an Assistant Professor at DCU's School of Law and Government, teaching on issues of development, conflict, security, peacekeeping, protection of civilians, and post-war recovery. He is also Associate Director of the university's Institute for International Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction. Dr Kilroy served on the Oversight Group for the second National Action Plan from March 2018 until its term concluded in 2019.

## Abby Ryan – Immigrant Council of Ireland

Abby Ryan is an Advocacy and Policy Manager at the Immigrant Council of Ireland. Before this, she was a Coordinator at the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV). Abby's previous experience includes her role as a Junior Professional Intern for Gender Equality and Human Rights in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and as an Asylum Seeker Support Worker for the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group.

## Nominees from Government/Statutory Representatives on the Oversight Group

- Áine Hearns, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs
- Cyril Brennan, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs
- Tom Crowley, Development and Cooperation and Africa Division, Department of Foreign Affairs
- Noreen Woulfe, Department of Defence
- Lt. [NS] Aoife Campbell, Defence Forces
- Chief Superintendent Louise Synnott, An Garda Síochána
- Aoife Davey, National Social Inclusion Office, Health Service Executive
- Clare McCabe, Department of Justice
- Deirdre Ní Néill, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

## Secretariat to the Oversight Group

- Shane Rice, Conflict Resolution Unit, 2021- 2022
- Jason Robinson, Conflict Resolution Unit, 2021-2023
- Theodora Ispas, Conflict Resolution Unit, 2021-2023
- Caroline Lavelle, Conflict Resolution Unit, 2021-2023

Oversight Group of the third National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security.© DFA

## 3.3 Oversight Group Activity in 2022

The Oversight Group met in hybrid format in 2022 to discuss developments in relation to the implementation of the third NAP, as well as hearing from knowledgeable experts and professionals on issues such as climate and gender, human trafficking, the situation in Ukraine, and domestic and sexual violence.

The meeting of the Oversight Group in April featured a discussion on the war in Ukraine, with speakers from Irish Red Cross, Ukraine Crisis Centre Ireland, and Ireland's Embassy in Ukraine. As an elected member of the UN Security Council in 2000, Ukraine was a co-sponsor of UNSCR 1325 and had been actively trying to integrate the WPS Agenda into Ukrainian society. This timely discussion addressed the Irish Mission's links with women's organisations, the involvement of Ukrainian women in all aspects of the war, and the challenges faced by Ukrainian women both internally displaced or forced to flee abroad.

Deaglán Ó Briain, from the Department of Justice (DOJ), spoke to the Oversight Group about the development of Ireland's Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV), later published in June 2022. To incorporate wider expertise into the process, the strategy was co-designed by the Department of Justice, the National Women's Council and SAFE Ireland. Similar to the NAP on WPS, the objectives and goals of the strategy centred around four key pillars, namely prevention, protection, prosecution and policy coordination and monitoring.

The Oversight Group meeting in July included a thematic discussion on the intersection of climate and gender issues. Stacy Wrenn, from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), spoke of the differentiated impacts of climate change on women, LGBTQ+, and marginalised groups, reinforcing the importance of gender sensitivity in climate policy. Maeve McLynn from the Climate Unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs referenced the Department's crosscutting work on climate and gender, enhanced by the establishment of the Climate Unit in 2020, whose remit includes women's participation in climate action.

In the autumn, Oversight Group members welcomed Cmdr. Roberta O'Brien to discuss the integration of WPS into NATO. Cmdr. O'Brien was seconded to defence capacity-building within the operational division of NATO, through Ireland's participation in the Partnership for Peace programme. Cmdr. O'Brien outlined some of the efforts to implement the WPS Agenda, noting that there are gender focal points throughout all NATO divisions. Cmdr. O'Brien was working over Tunisia and Jordan at the time, whose armed forces requested training and capacity-building support.

The final Oversight Group meeting in December focused on the issue of human trafficking, including the development of a National Action Plan on anti-human trafficking. Deaglán O'Briain returned to brief the Oversight Group on this work, including the importance of centring the needs of victims and survivors, and adopting a holistic and cross-government approach to assist them in coming forward.

The group also heard updates on the procurement process for the mid-term review of the third NAP on WPS.

The Oversight Group meets in Iveagh House in April 2022. © DFA

# 4. Monitoring and Evaluation

## 4.1 Monitoring Framework

Based on the Terms of Reference agreed by the Oversight Group, an independent mid-term review of the National Action Plan (NAP) commenced in late 2022. This review aimed to produce analysis, advice and recommendations to inform the Oversight Group's approach in monitoring future progress on the implementation of the NAP. A key focus was to assess the effectiveness of the Monitoring Framework of the NAP, and to examine the indicators used to measure progress.

While the review acknowledged the comprehensive nature of the Monitoring Framework, it recommended a reduction in the number of indicators. It also proposed broadening the scope of indicators to enable implementers to report tangible progress and facilitate reporting.

Following consultations with Oversight Group members and NAP implementers, the revised indicators and Monitoring Framework set out in this Annual Report were agreed.

### Note on Funding

In relation to the funding figures provided by DFA, validation of data on Ireland's ODA programme is done in arrears. Prior to publication of the final ODA figures, draft statistical returns are shared with the relevant OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) experts for assurance that Ireland's reported spending meets the DAC's criteria to be counted as ODA and that application of codes and markers is consistent across donors. This assurance is important to maintaining Ireland's reputation as a quality donor. Validated figures for 2022 were not available at the time of publication of this Annual Report, and will be available in 2024.

Therefore, figures from 2021 have been included in this Annual Report. Several funding indicators were amended in the mid-term review. Figures from 2019 and 2020 have also been included, to provide a baseline to facilitate assessment of funding commitments.

Although overall expenditure on gender equality increased in 2021, the funding figures enclosed in this report are specific to expenditure on gender equality in fragile contexts only. Funding amounts were calculated for states listed in the OECD DAC code book of fragile contexts in 2021. For consistency, the same states are considered across the period 2019-2021. Variation in funding for gender equality, both significant and principal, is conditional on context-specific factors.

## 4.2 Pillar I: Prevention

### DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA)

1. Develop understanding of gender equality, GBV and gender-sensitive conflict analysis in disarmament and arms control, through the provision of support to, and participation in, relevant funding streams, research, trainings, capacity building, meetings and events.

The Disarmament and Non-proliferation Unit (DNP) within DFA endeavoured to ensure that gender issues were prominently included in all national statements, interventions, bilateral and multilateral settings in 2022.

Through the Department's Stability Fund mechanism, DNP funded a largescale research piece by UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) on the 'Development of gender sensitive guidance in the framework of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) and the UN SaferGuard Programme'.

DNP participated in a survey administered by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) across 40 different government and NGO participants, which examined practices to support women's participation and to promote gender diversity, equality, and inclusion in conventional arms control.

In addition, DNP informed UNODA's Gender Policy Strategy 2021 - 2025 and supported UNODA's gender policy project proposal. DNP also participated and led on several gender-related side events throughout multilateral fora, including the following:

- Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty 10th Review Conference
- UN General Assembly First Committee
- UN Programme of Action Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8)
- Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW and its Protocols APII, PV and GGE on LAWS)
- Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention 20th Meeting of States Parties
- Convention on Cluster Munitions 10th MSP
- Biological Weapons Convention 9th Review Conference
- Open-ended Working Group on Ammunition

2. Advocate for the inclusion of gender perspectives and women's effective participation in the prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation, with particular focus on the role of women as agents of change in society.

Ireland did not directly fund any initiatives related to counter-terrorism or the prevention of violent extremism in 2022, but continued to advocate for a gender-responsive approach to countering and preventing violent extremism and radicalisation. Throughout our membership of the UNSC, Ireland repeatedly called for a more gender-responsive approach to counter-terrorism

3. Encourage greater consideration of gender in the fields of cybersecurity and disinformation (hybrid threats) by continuing to amplify the voices and perspectives of women in Ireland's interventions and engagements on these issues.

Ireland continued to advocate for greater consideration of gender in the fields of cyber, hybrid and foreign information manipulation and interference, and to ensure that the voices and perspectives of women are reflected in Ireland's interventions in international fora and in our policies.

In 2022, Ireland emphasised the importance of gender perspectives in our national statement at the UN Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021-2025. In partnership with UNODA, Ireland funded several female stakeholders from civil society organisations in 'Global South' countries to participate in the OEWG during the third substantive session in New York. As part of Ireland's domestic policy response to disinformation, we hosted a seminar on the topic of gendered disinformation against women in politics with a representative from #ShePersisted.

### 4. Support projects aimed at women who have been affected by conflict on the island of Ireland, or that work on WPS, gender equality and issues relating to GBV.

Through the Reconciliation Fund operated by DFA, over €480,000 in funding was allocated across 11 projects actively supporting and prioritising women's issues in 2022.

### 5. Support women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and civil society space through Ireland's foreign policy.

Support for WHRDs and civil society space continued to be a priority in Ireland's foreign policy for 2022. At Third Committee during the UNGA77, Ireland hosted a side event on HRDs. Ireland also delivered a national statement during the Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor.

During the three sessions of the Human Rights Council in 2022 (HRC49 – HRC51), Ireland mentioned HRDs 20 times and civil society space 24 times during our national statements. Along with EU27, we co-sponsored the HRDs resolution, which was adopted by vote, during HRC49. We also served as EU burden-sharer for this resolution.

In our Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations in 2022, Ireland continued to raise in civil society space and HRDs, which were referenced 10 times, and 16 times respectively.

### 6. Support sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) issues in multilateral fora, the EU, and through other relevant coalitions and organisations.

Ireland continued to show support for SOGI issues in multilateral fora and through our membership of the EU and other relevant coalitions and organisations. We remained an active member of the LGBTI Core Group at the UN in New York and joined their statement presented at the Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on SOGI during Third Committee at the UNGA. We also delivered a national statement during this dialogue.

Ireland continued to be an active member of the Equal Rights Coalition, an intergovernmental body providing a forum for states to work together with civil society, cooperation agencies, and international organisations. We regularly engaged with the group, including through signing up to joint statements.

We hosted a discussion on the 'Right to life, security and protection from violence: combating SOGIESC-based hate crime across Europe', on 27 October 2022, organised in the framework of our Presidency of the Council of Europe.

At the EU level, Ireland contributed to initiatives aimed at increasing EU engagement in the promotion and protection of LGBTI+ rights, including working closely with like-minded partners to ensure a robust EU approach to these issues at the UN. We continue to work against any attempts to undermine existing international commitments and standards on LGBTI+ rights, and to maintain the EU's traditionally strong positions in this regard.

During the three sessions of the Human Rights Council in 2022 (HRC49 – HRC51), Ireland mentioned SOGI and LGBTI+ rights 12 times during our national statements. In Ireland's UPR recommendations in 2022, we referred to SOGI and LGBTI+ rights nine times.

### 7. Strengthen capacity and training around gender equality, GBV and gender-sensitive conflict analysis to ensure a gender sensitive approach to conflict across the Department's work.

In May 2022, International Alert delivered three conflict sensitivity training sessions to DFA staff.

In June, the International Security Sector Advisory Team of the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance delivered a workshop on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration to DFA staff. These trainings were posted on the DFA intranet page, which is accessible to all colleagues. Self-learning trainings on the WPS Agenda were available on the Civil Service's OneLearning platform

## 8. Progress the implementation of A Better World commitments on gender equality, and other areas of Ireland's international development work which facilitates women's participation in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Ireland continued to prioritise gender equality in 2022, in line with our commitments under A Better World, our policy for international development.

All Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) and Humanitarian Programme Plan (HPP) partners significantly contributed to A Better World commitments on gender equality in 2022. Gender mainstreaming was a critical component of all programmes across the 13 partners funded through these schemes.

In September 2022, Ireland held a national launch of the OECD Guidance on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation, a practical handbook for development partners.

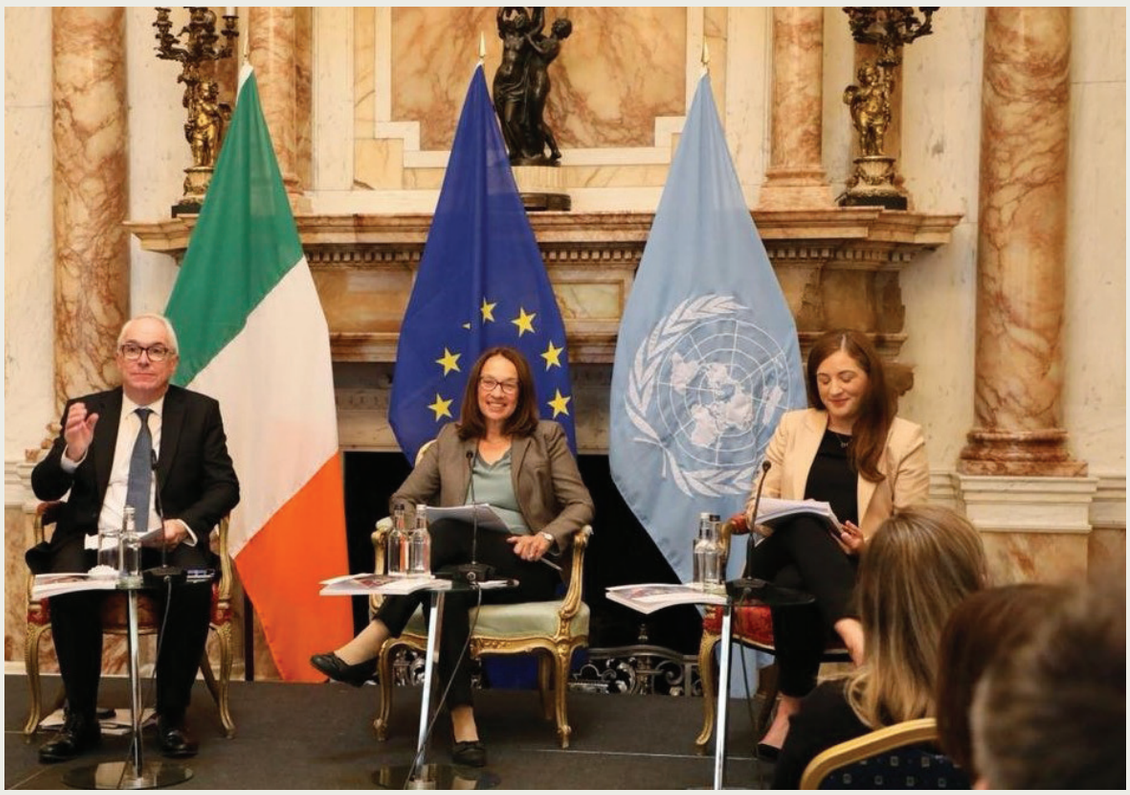
In November 2022, a joint Governance and Gender Advisers' Network meeting of staff from missions and relevant officials from headquarters was held to identify an agenda for advancing gender equality in development programmes. The objectives included were:

i. Strengthen the network of mission-based colleagues working on governance and gender

ii. Identify (shared) policy supports and existing resources to help with mission programming

iii. Build links with colleagues working with multilateral partners

iv. Share good practices on the specific focus areas selected by Advisors.



In September 2022, Ireland held a national launch of the OECD Guidance on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation © DFA

**Highlights of 'A Better World' implementation through DFA's targeted partnerships**

The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV) is an alliance of Irish Aid, the Irish Defence Forces and Irish human rights, humanitarian and development organisations. In 2022, ICGBV launched a new Strategic Plan on *Amplifying Women's Voices*. ICGBV worked to ensure that local women's voices informed discussions of the Informal Expert Group on Women Peace and Security (IEG) and the Commission on the Status of Women's deliberation on the intersection of GBV with climate change.

In February 2022, the Overseas Development Institute, in partnership with Irish Aid, held a high-level global conversation on 'Unlocking feminist activism: A global dialogue on how social movements are building gender justice'.

2022 also marked the 10-year anniversary of the Inter Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments, a milestone in their work to increase representation and leadership of women in political decision-making.

## 9. Update on work on gender equality and women's involvement in climate action, including with Small Island Developing States.

An independent 'Review of the Implementation of Ireland's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States 2019-2025' was published in December 2022 (available here). It found that Ireland had successfully implemented the majority of its commitments.

Ireland continued to provide funding to the Gender Team at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for its work in supporting countries to better integrate gender equality in climate action. This was complemented by funding provided to the Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO). In 2022, WEDO received a funding grant of €450,000, which enabled the participation of seven representatives from the African Feminist Task Force to attend and engage in COP27.

## 10. Implement safeguarding in grant management processes, as recommended by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review.

The safeguarding in grant management guidelines were developed along with DFA's Safeguarding Policy and are reviewed alongside the Standard Approach to Grant Management to ensure coherence and usability.

The Development Cooperation and Africa Division (DCAD) within DFA is also a member of the OECD DAC Reference Group on Preventing Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), the donor technical working group on PSEAH, and the sub-group on managing safeguarding investigation.

DCAD engages with civil society through the Dóchas Working Group on safeguarding. DCAD intends to updating the Standard Approach to Grant Management in 2023, which will further incorporate safeguarding.

## 11. Allocate gender principal and/or significant funding in fragile states.

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender Principal | 42,993,305 | 37,816,335 | 37,849,135 |
| Gender Significant | 173,768,879 | 173,404,024 | 173,291,172 |
| Total | 216,762,185 | 211,220,359 | 211,140,307 |

## 12. Allocate funding in fragile states that is gender principal and significant, and also climate principal and significant.

| | | Environment Significant | Environment Principal | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2019** | Gender Principal | 10,288,122 | 70,000 | 10,358,122 |
| | Gender Significant | 61,376,159 | 6,136,550 | 67,512,709 |
| | Total | 71,664,281 | 6,206,550 | 77,870,831 |
| **2020** | | Environment Significant | Environment Principal | Total |
| | Gender Principal | 4,889,481 | 177,480 | 5,066,962 |
| | Gender Significant | 30,255,587 | 15,478,758 | 45,734,345 |
| | Total | 35,145,068 | 15,656,239 | 50,801,307 |
| **2021** | | Environment Significant | Environment Principal | Total |
| | Gender Principal | 8,125,101 | 605,195 | 8,730,296 |
| | Gender Significant | 42,399,784 | 8,118,433 | 50,518,218 |
| | Total | 50,524,885 | 8,723,628 | 59,248,514 |

13. Allocate funding in fragile states that is gender principal and significant, and also nutrition principal and significant.

| | | Nutrition Significant | Nutrition Principal | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | Gender Principal | 15,516,871 | 2,394,510 | 17,911,381 |
| | Gender Significant | 75,667,396 | 17,216,030 | 92,883,426 |
| | Total | 91,184,267 | 19,610,540 | 110,794,808 |
| 2020 | | Nutrition Significant | Nutrition Principal | Total |
| | Gender Principal | 6,045,549 | 1,741,243 | 7,786,792 |
| | Gender Significant | 81,045,180 | 20,855,937 | 101,901,117 |
| | Total | 87,090,729 | 22,597,180 | 109,687,909 |
| 2021 | | Nutrition Significant | Nutrition Principal | Total |
| | Gender Principal | 10,903,457 | 2,648,665 | 13,552,122 |
| | Gender Significant | 83,538,848 | 22,277,100 | 105,815,948 |
| | Total | 94,442,305 | 24,925,765 | 119,368,070 |

14. Allocate funding in fragile states committed to Education programmes that is gender principal and significant.

| | Education 2019 | Education 2020 | Education 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender Principal | 2,811,451 | 5,108,078 | 2,644,705 |
| Gender Significant | 12,141,445 | 12,586,743 | 11,510,888 |
| Total | 14,952,897 | 17,694,821 | 14,155,593 |

## 4.3 Pillar II: Participation

### DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, EQUALITY, DISABILITY, INTEGRATION AND YOUTH (DCEDIY)

1. Develop opportunities for migrant women, including those from conflict-affected areas, to explore creative outlets, acquire proficiency in English language, and build capacity in regard to employment.

English language training for adult beneficiaries of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was delivered by the Education and Training Boards in each of the three Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres for migrants. All children are typically allocated places in local schools, pending resettlement in local authority-provided housing. English language supports were provided under these local authority resettlement programmes.

The roll out of an integration fund offered grants to civil society organisations for projects supporting the integration of International Protection Applicants. In 2022, over €1.6m in funding was awarded to 67 organisations through this new International Protection Integration Fund. The projects given priority included activities aimed at creating greater opportunities for language exchange in Irish society or bolstering the employability of International Protection applicants. 12 of the 67 funded initiatives focused on language, and six focused on employment supports.

A 10-year adult literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy strategy, 'Adult Literacy for Life', was launched in 2021 and outlines the supports available for developing English literacy in Ireland. The strategy commits to increasing English language supports provided to native speakers of other languages and the overall number of learners receiving this support from 12,000 to 20,000 within the first five years of the strategy's lifetime. €3 million was allocated to the implementation of the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy in 2022.

Several funding streams are provided by DCEDIY whose aims include improving the participation in society of migrant women living in Ireland. These are the National Integration Fund, the Communities Integration Fund, the International Protection Integration Fund, and funding streams under the European Social Fund and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE (DOD), AND THE DEFENCE FORCES (DF)

2. Continue to undertake measures to improve the recruitment, retention and advancement of women within the Defence Forces

A working group on increasing women in the Defence Force (DF), focusing on recruitment and selection, training and retention, has evolved into a standing committee to implement recommendations in the DF. The Organisational Culture Standing Committee also makes contributions in this area. A Defence White Paper Project was also completed, involving a survey to identify any impediments to the advancement of women in the DF.

### DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA)

3. Implement the Disarmament IGC Panel Parity Pledge to no longer support or participate in panel discussions or side events with single-sex panels. Raise awareness around the IGC 2023 Commitments Guide. Continue to promote a gender perspective in national statements to UN Disarmament fora.

The baseline commitment of the IGC is the Panel Parity Pledge. This calls upon individual Gender Champions to challenge the absence of female speakers on topics addressing gender equality, by discussing panel composition with event organisers, recommending female (or when appropriate, male) speakers on the topic, and fostering a positive mind-set for the inclusion of women in all discussions effecting our society. Through the Panel Parity Pledge, Champions commit to no longer taking part in any single-sex panels. This pledge has normalised the notion that single-sex panels are no longer acceptable in hubs where IGC operates. Champions have taken the lead in raising awareness of the need to ensure gender parity.

In accordance with the Panel Parity Pledge, the DNP Unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs ensured that its officials did not participate in any all-male panels in 2022.

4. Promote gender equality and support. Advocate for the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all civilian CSDP planning and actions, focusing also on the equal and meaningful participation of women in all functions, including in leadership positions. Strive to achieve a gender balance of 40% minimum female/male representation in DFA deployments to civilian CSDP Missions.

In 2022, Ireland consistently emphasised gender equality and the need for all CSDP missions to have gender action plans during discussions on the mandates of missions in Brussels, working with like-minded EU Member States who also place a strong emphasis on this issue. Ensuring the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective will be one of Ireland's priorities in the negotiations on a new Civilian CSDP Compact taking place in early 2023.

19% female representation in DFA deployments to civilian CSDP Missions was reached, with the goal remaining to achieve a gender balance of 40% minimum female/male representation by the end of 2023, as set out in Ireland's National Implementation Plan for the Civilian CSDP Compact. Female deployees have been encouraged to occupy leadership positions in different missions, currently including the Deputy Head of Mission of European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine, the Head of Operations of EUAM Ukraine, and the Head of Human Resources of European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

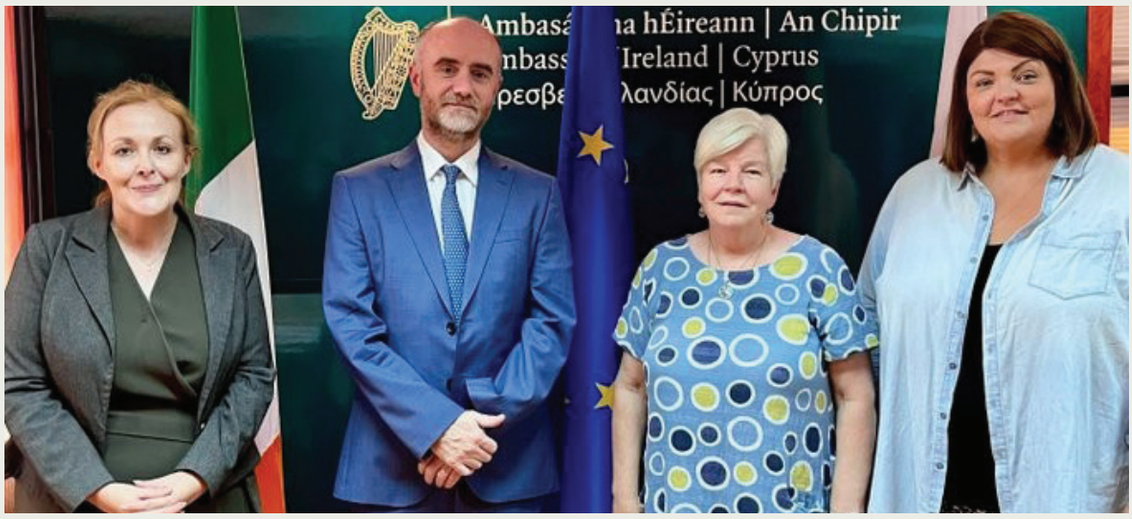
5. Support international, regional and national, mediation organisations to deliver the WPS agenda, particularly the meaningful inclusion of women mediators in peace-making efforts.

Through the Stability Fund mechanism operated by DFA, Ireland has long-standing relationships with organisations working to enhance both the capacity and opportunity for women's participation in mediation and dialogue efforts.

In 2022, Crisis Action coordinated a global media briefing on the conflict in Yemen, where an all-women panel advocated for greater UN monitoring to reduce civilian casualties. Crisis Action launched a campaign in Haiti which saw an all-women delegation caution UNSC members of the risks of rushed elections. Crisis Action also continued to support the People's Coalition for the Sahel, where women peacebuilders from Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger spoke out about the gendered aspects of crises in the region, including the vulnerability of displaced women.

Under the umbrella of 'Women in Peace-making', the CMI - Martti Ahtisaari Foundation (CMI) continued to work in conflict-affected countries to increase women's political influence in peace and security. CMI also contributed to enhanced dialogue and coordinated action among different women's groups in Libya, Palestine, Afghanistan, Yemen and Sudan.

Ireland is a core donor of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), which aims to address




The Embassy of Ireland in Cyprus hosted a workshop led by Mary Montague and Liza Wilkinson from mediation group TIDES. © DFA

the immediate logistical and technical barriers to women's participation in peace processes. In 2022, WPHF supported 14 projects implemented by 28 women-led and women's rights civil society organisations in Ukraine and Moldova.

At the mission–level, the Embassy of Ireland in Cyprus hosted a two-day workshop with Northern-Irish mediation group TIDES, with the participation of peacebuilders from around Cyprus. Led by Mary Montague and Liza Wilkinson, the workshop explored practical skills for trauma-involved peacebuilding.

At a WPS Focal Point Network meeting in South Africa, Ireland participated in a panel discussion on the role of women mediator networks and national action plans in peace processes. Our contribution centred on how our WPS approach is informed by our experience of conflict, and the essential role of women negotiators and mediators in the Good Friday Agreement.

### 6. Support organisations giving a greater voice to young people, recognising the intersections between the WPS and YPS Agendas, and the need for intergenerational dialogue

Ireland supported an intergenerational dialogue on peacebuilding between Southern African and Irish youth, hosted by ACCORD in partnership with the Embassy of Ireland in South Africa. This created a space for Southern African and Irish peacebuilders to meet, share experiences, and draw inspiration from one another.

During our term on the UN Security Council (2021-2022), Ireland organised an Arria-Formula Meeting to marking the anniversary of the YPS Agenda. The meeting underscored the need for implementation and the promotion of young people's meaningful participation in peace and security matters. Ireland shared its own experience of inclusive processes, and highlighted our work on YPS and youth engagement during our time on the Security Council.

Ireland also supported Interpeace, an organisation which prioritises the meaningful amplification of youth voices, and diversification of youth perspectives in the multilateral space. As part of their regional YouthLab initiative, Interpeace and local partners provided young people in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda with added skills and knowledge to take leadership roles in regional peace processes. Interpeace also provided a platform for the amplification of diverse youth voices through the publication of nine 'Outside the Box' policy briefs.

### 7. Allocate funding to Women's rights organisations and movements in fragile states

| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| 4,806,244 | 6,223,561 | 8,903,400 |

## DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (DRCD)

### 8. Develop values and principles and guidelines, protocols and benchmarks for good practice consultation, engagement and participation in decision-making processes.

DRCD continued to work closely with the community and voluntary sectors in 2022, in accordance with the five-year strategy on 'Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities 2019-2024', available here. One objective of this strategy involves developing and strengthening processes to secure meaningful consultation and participation of non-engaging and marginalised communities.

A key achievement of the strategy was consensus over a set of shared values and which guided the Strategy's development and continues to form the basis for collaboration and partnerships. This was achieved through the Dormant Accounts funded measure on the engagement and participation of marginalised groups.

The values and principles were formally adopted by Government in May 2022 and published on 19 October 2022. This document will be used by government departments and agencies, as well as local government, as a basis for all interaction with the community and voluntary sectors. The document was issued to all local authorities and government departments. In 2023, the Minister will seek an update on the application of these values and principles.

## 9. Develop guidelines and protocol for securing diverse representation and equality (including gendered balanced representation).

Under objective three of the strategy, and through the Dormant Accounts funded measure on the engagement and participation of marginalised groups in planning processes and decision-making, DRCD worked to identify best practice, robust engagement strategies and flexible, adaptable toolkits to support consultation, engagement and participation in decision-making processes. The Dormant Accounts funded project was initiated on the engagement and participation of marginalised groups using the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) process as a pilot.

Two national events were targeted at local community development committees, local authority staff and other relevant local stakeholders, aiming to build capacity and share information on principles of good consultation and meaningful engagement. Four pilot projects in Fingal, Galway City, Wicklow and Clare, were selected to develop and test engagement strategies as part of the LECP process, to inform the development of adaptable toolkits/resource packs that can be scaled up and used in a variety of consultation and engagement processes undertaken by local and central government.

The first national event was held in 4 May 2022, with speakers from Galway City Traveller Movement, Independent Living Movement Ireland, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, Pavee Point, LGBT Ireland, Community Work Ireland, the Irish Local Development Network and representatives from local authorities.

A resource guide is intended for publishing in early 2023.

In 2022, 15 in-person workshops were held across the country. The workshops were intended for the Chief Officer and members of the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), as well as local authority staff, public participation networks, education and training boards, and other stakeholders involved in local consultation processes. Associated training in the areas of public sector duty, intercultural awareness and engagement strategies also commenced in 2022.

## 10. Develop participatory structures and processes by Government departments and state agencies.

Action 3.4 of the strategy on 'Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities 2019-2024' available here, places a long-term focus on developing participatory mechanisms and processes to improve engagement on the design and delivery of services. It was intended for the implementation of all actions to begin during the strategy period, but many long-term actions will continue to be progressed and built upon beyond the lifespan of the current strategy (2019-2024).

The procurement procedure for this action will be finalised by 2023. All actions will be implemented in line with annual work plans, developed with input from the Cross-Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development.

## 11. Number of female asylum seekers and refugees receiving interventions under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).

SICAP is Ireland's primary intervention for promoting social inclusion. It aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality by supporting communities and individuals through community development approaches, engagement and collaboration. 'New Communities' is a target group under SICAP and includes the three sub-categories of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. In 2022, SICAP supported 725 female asylum seekers and 3,598 female refugees. The forms of support available included English language classes, health and wellbeing programmes, employment supports and intercultural events.

## 4.4 Pillar III: Protection

### DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, EQUALITY, DISABILITY, INTEGRATION AND YOUTH (DCEDIY)

1. Communicate Ireland's societal norms with regard to gender equality in cultural orientation to IRPP beneficiaries.

Information on societal norms, including gender equality, the rights of women, and other issues pertinent to life in Ireland continued to be presented to prospective beneficiaries of the IRPP during selection missions. Pre-departure orientation sessions were conducted with those selected for resettlement prior to their arrival in Ireland. This training was delivered by the IOM.

2. Develop the Community Sponsorship programme to further facilitate strong integration of women into the community and to grow local relationships.

Under the Community Sponsorship programme, 134 persons were placed with Community Sponsorship Groups around Ireland in 2022. Engagement with the Regional Support Organisations continued throughout the year.

3. Monitor and evaluate resettlement processes and provide gender sensitive interpretation where applicable, to ensure better integration in Ireland of women affected by conflict.

Gender sensitivity remained a requirement of IRPP staff when booking interpretation services. All IRPP staff are informed of the importance of this matter.

In collaboration with local authorities, work continued to design the appropriate supports at a local level, including the establishment of a permanent model of Integration Support Workers. In each local authority, these workers will provide guidance and support to applicants, connecting them with appropriate services and facilitating their successful integration into the communities that they are living in. DCEDIY intends to fund each local authority to employ two Integration Support Workers in 2023.

The rollout of the new International Protection Integration Fund, as mentioned under the Participation Pillar, was also relevant in this context.

### DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ)

4. Update on the implementation of the third National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland, and the revised National Referral Mechanism Framework.

**New National Referral Mechanism Framework on Human Trafficking**

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the framework through which Ireland fulfils its obligations to protect and promote the human rights of trafficking victims, working in partnership with civil society.

In 2021, the Irish Government approved the creation of a revised NRM to make it easier for victims of trafficking to come forward, be identified and access support. The revised NRM will include the range of government departments and agencies that meet potential victims. In addition, an important feature of the new model is that NGOs designated as 'trusted partners' will become authorised referral partners. They will provide an alternative and trusted pathway to recognition by the NRM, the advantages being that victims will find it easier to approach an NGO.

On 27 July 2022, the Government approved the publication of the General Scheme of the Criminal Justice (Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking) Bill 2022 which will put a revised NRM on a statutory footing. It is expected that this bill will be enacted in 2023.

**National Action Plan on Human Trafficking**

Work on the drafting of a new National Action Plan on Human Trafficking was undertaken in 2022. Drafting of the plan involved consultations with representatives from civil society organisations, and government. The plan will be published in Autumn 2023.

The third National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking will build on the work of the first and second Action Plans, with an aim to further strengthen the whole-of-government approach to combatting human trafficking in the State. It is hoped that this

in turn will facilitate more victims to come forward. The specific goals of this plan are to work towards the abolishment of human trafficking and its demand, to identify and support victims of trafficking, to enforce the rights of victims and bring the perpetrator to justice, and to have whole-of-government co-ordination in supporting victims and decreasing incidents of trafficking.

5. Advance the implementation of the third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV), including the establishment of a statutory DSGBV agency.

The Programme for Government recognised that there is an epidemic of DSGBV in Ireland, consistent with global trends. The third National Strategy on DSGBV was launched in June 2022 and sets out the framework to achieve zero tolerance in Irish society for any form of DSGBV.

The Strategy sets out the roadmap for establishment of a new statutory DSGBV agency by 2024, to ensure this priority area continues to receive the expertise and focus needed to drive it forward. The agency will have a specific mandate to drive the implementation of the strategy across Government, bringing the expertise and focus required to tackle this complex social issue.

All DSGBV services currently provided by the Child and Family Agency/Tusla will transfer to the new agency, ensuring a permanent and dedicated focus on implementation and supports for Government and the sector. The new agency will work collaboratively with the NGO and DSGBV services sector to ensure that the best possible services are in place to meet the needs of victims and survivors. A key feature in the establishment of the new Agency is to work with specialist and community-based support organisations in the spirit of co-design.

The Inter-Departmental Group on the Provision of DSGBV Accommodation final report, which was noted by Government in July 2022, recommended the formation of a Steering Committee to manage and oversee progress of the actions outlined in the report. A committee was established and held its first meeting in October 2022. The committee is chaired by the Department of Justice, with representation from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, DCEDIY, and Tusla. The Inter-Departmental Group recommended the delivery of additional domestic violence refuge spaces nationally to address the current shortfall, doubling the number of refuge spaces in the medium term, and to meet the targets set out in the Istanbul Convention in the long-term.

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE (DOD), AND THE DEFENCE FORCES (DF)

### Defence Forces

6. Continue the implementation of effective training policies on the prevention of SEA, human rights, gender equality, code of conduct and international humanitarian law for all relevant Irish staff deployed overseas (including on CSDP and UN Peacekeeping Missions, including through supporting the United National Training School Ireland as a centre of excellence, as well as training of civilian deployees.

Gender-trained personnel continued to be deployed with all Defence Forces (DF) troop rotations overseas in 2022. In an overseas context, the DF Action Plan contains sample plans and orders layouts for the integration of a gender perspective in IRISHBATT operations for completion where KPIs and relevant stakeholders are captured.

International online training courses were conducted throughout 2022. Through both the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, DF personnel successfully qualified as Military Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points. In addition, one individual successfully completed the United Nations Military Observers course held at the Bundeswehr training facility in Hammelburg, Germany, a female- specific military observers course.

7. Increase and improve training for DF personnel who may be investigating cases of sexual assault, to ensure the victim receives the required support whilst an unbiased investigation is carried out.

Nine Military Police (MP) Corps personnel completed the Level 3 Interviewing Course conducted by Forensic Investigative and Training Solutions. This course was conducted over one week in the MP School by retired members of An Garda Síochána. This niche interviewing model focuses on further enhancing MP skillsets when interviewing victims and suspects of sexual and gender based violence. 23 MP personnel completed the third Sexual and Gender-based Violence Investigation Course, conducted by the Institute for International Criminal Investigations.

The DF Victim Information booklet was published in 2022. This initiative was designed to support military personnel who, within the military justice system, report being victim of crime. In addition, the Office of the Provost Marshal has distributed guidelines to the Irish MP Section deployed in UNIFIL in the event of a sexual assault occurring to Irish personnel in the mission area.

DF also attended the annual NATO Conference on Gender Perspectives in October 2022.

## HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE (HSE)

8. Roll out a training programme for HSE staff in supporting appropriate, effective responses to women from areas of conflict who have experienced DSGBV.

The roll out a training programme for HSE staff in supporting appropriate, effective responses to women from areas of conflict who have experienced DSGBV is a key area of work for the HSE National Social Inclusion Office (NSIO). This action corresponds to action 2.1.7 in the third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and the HSE is developing a HSE National DSGBV Training Strategy.

A HSE multi-disciplinary training working group was established to commence development of a four module e-learning programme for HSE Staff. In 2022, a training/resource needs analysis survey was opened to staff, including staff of funded services. There were 576 responses and the results will be used to inform the development of training and resources in 2023.

'Recognise, Respond, Refer: A review of the approaches used by frontline HSE staff to ask about domestic, sexual and gender based violence' was completed and is available here.

The HSE NSIO funded the update of the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) Quick Reference Guide to Domestic Violence and an evaluation with GPs. In addition, funding was provided to Survivors Informing Services and Institutions (SiSi) for the rollout of their Freedom training programme to support survivors of intimate partner abuse.

9. Continue to support the range of NGOs providing health related services to women refugees, those seeking international protection and other migrant women who have experienced violence/conflict including mental health programmes, a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Clinic, sexual and reproductive health outreach in Direct Provision.

In 2022, the HSE NSIO funded two NGO partners. As part of the commitment to implement actions under the Third NAP on WPS, as well as the second National Intercultural Health Strategy 2018-2023, the HSE NSIO also continued to provide funding to the Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA), FGM Treatment Service, AkiDwA and Spirasi annually.

### AkiDwA

The HSE supported a project by AkiDwA that sought to deliver reproductive health information and training to female protection applicants living in accommodation centres. The project linked female protection applicants with available services and support provided locally. The project also reached out to male protection applicants, engaging them in discussions and dialogue around reproductive health, providing information and raising awareness. In 2022, 93 out of 324 presentations to the service were specific to FGM.

**Key actions of the project included:**

- National conference held on 6 February to mark the Zero-tolerance Day for FGM, with speakers from Ireland, UK and Kenya. Over 60 people attended.
- AkiDwA appeared before to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality on recommendations 37- 41 of the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality, which focuses on SGBV. A key area of focus for AkiDwA was on FGM Recommendation 41: Recognising female genital mutilation (FGM) as a ground for seeking asylum and provide culturally appropriate support.
- AkiDwA undertook a comprehensive review on FGM in Education, which informed the update of the FGM Handbook for Educational Professionals, to be launched in 2023.
- 21 Community Health Ambassadors were supported with training. 14 of these were recruited during the year.
- 25 women were referred for counselling and seven to a FGM clinic. AkiDwA collaborated with Black Therapists Ireland to avail of culturally appropriate counselling services to women and girls affected by FGM as well as their families.
- To mark 16 days of activism against GBV, AkiDwA, in collaboration with the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit at the Rotunda Hospital, held a national conference at which the third edition handbook on FGM for healthcare professional was launched.

**Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA)**

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Treatment Service:**

IFPA provides free specialised medical care and counselling to women who have experienced FGM. The service model involves four key components: i) clinical service provision, including referral pathways to secondary care; ii) training and capacity-building with service providers; iii) sexual and reproductive health outreach with affected communities; and iv) building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders. All clients who attend the FGM treatment service are offered free specialised counselling and can avail of a full sexual and reproductive health check-up.

In 2022, the FGM Treatment Service provided 203 medical and counselling appointments, an increase of 269% on service provision in 2021 (55 appointments). Higher demand was accompanied by an increase in the complexity of the cases presenting, as the majority of these clients were newly arrived asylum seekers.

In addition to clinical services, staff of the FGM service engaged in significant inter-agency collaboration and capacity-building work to enhance understanding of FGM across the health, social care, social protection and justice sectors. This included high-level meetings to develop national FGM policy and protocols, and the delivery of educational workshops and presentations on FGM to frontline service providers such as GPs, social workers and others working with marginalised groups, including unaccompanied minors and homeless people.

**Key Stakeholder Engagement:**

- FGM educational workshops were delivered to participants on the STI Foundation Course (St James's Hospital), the ICGP Community Gynaecology Course and the Peter McVerry Trust team of social care workers working with unaccompanied minors and separated children.
- The FGM Treatment Service staff established a relationship with the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) resident welfare team to ensure the dissemination of FGM service information to asylum seekers and access to care for asylum seekers without GMS/PPSNs.
- The IFPA continued to participate in the National NGO Steering Committee on FGM.

## DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA)

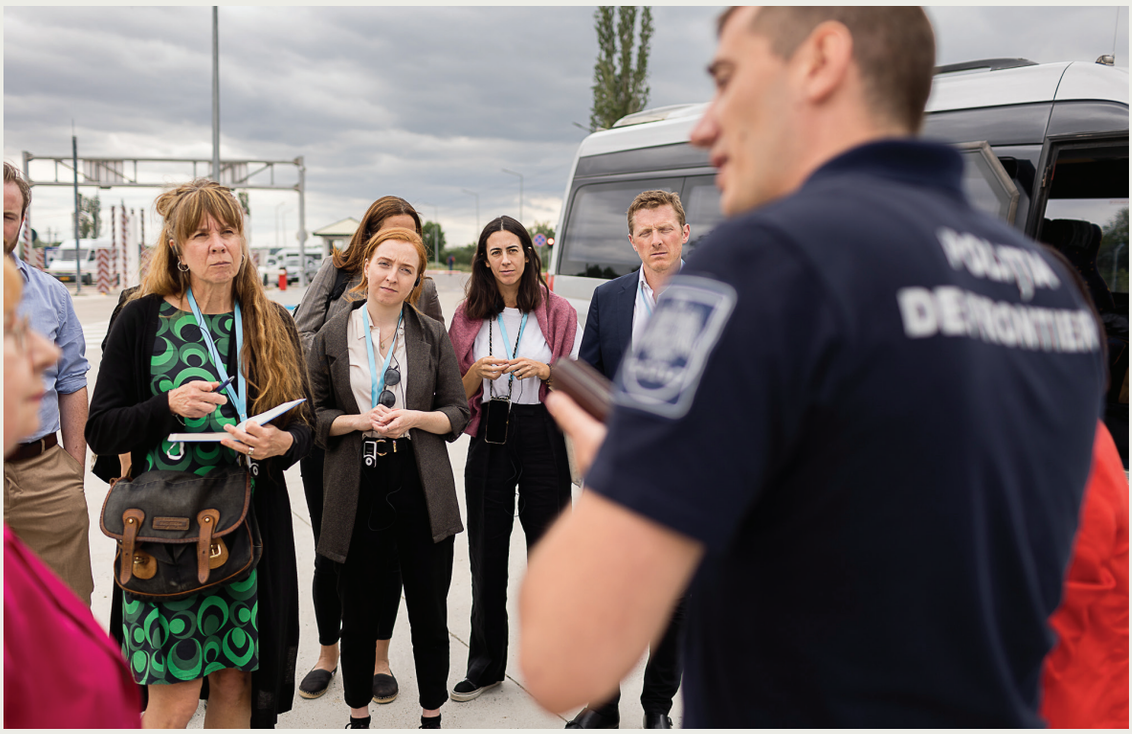
### 10. Advocate for greater reference to conflict-related SGBV as a criterion for UN sanctions. Advocate against impunity for perpetrators of conflict-related SGBV.

Ireland continued to advocate for greater inclusion of conflict-related SGBV in the UN throughout 2022. At the UN Security Council Open Debate in April on 'Conflict-Related Sexual Violence – Ending Cycles of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Accountability as Prevention', Ireland expressed deep concern for the increasing levels of conflict-related SGBV, noting the cases of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ethiopia and Syria in particular. The Ambassador called on domestic, regional and international actors to strengthen the implementation of the prevention pillar, including through the use of targeted sanctions on grounds of conflict-related sexual violence, an important - but underutilised - tool at the Council's disposal.

Ireland was also vocal about the risk of the risk of SGBV in Ukraine, where we work with partner organisations such as WPHF to respond to the needs of women affected by conflict (including victims and survivors of CRSV). During June's UN Security Council briefing on Ukraine - Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Trafficking, Ireland condemned reports of sexual violence perpetrated by Russian soldiers, as well as a reported increase in domestic violence in Ukraine.

### 11. Allocate funding to end violence against women and girls in fragile states.

| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| 4,806,244 | 6,223,561 | 8,903,400 |




DFA representatives took part in a field visit to Moldova, where WPHF support women-led and women's rights civil society organisations. © DFA

## 12. Humanitarian Unit (DFA) direct funding for gender and protection/specialised programmes.

In 2022, the Humanitarian Unit within DFA provided €5.3 million for life-saving gender and protection specialised activities in the Horn of Africa, in Ukraine, and also through the Strategic Partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

In drought-affected Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, Ireland was among the first countries to provide funding to the UNFPA. Part of the €2 million allocated was used to create the first mobile sexual and reproductive health clinics in Somalia.

To support women and girls impacted by the war in Ukraine, Ireland provided €1.5 million to the UNFPA, again focusing on sexual and reproductive health including maternal and new-born health and protection from GBV.

The €1.8 million awarded to the IRC Strategic Partnership operating in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Burundi. The IRC funds GBV services in those countries, including empowerment programmes for survivors.

## 13. Continue Ireland's work to support the implementation of specialised protection and GBV services in humanitarian contexts, including through protection and gender expertise in humanitarian contexts.

Ireland has a Strategic Partnership with the IRC to ensure life-saving GBV response services, empowerment programming with women and girls, community-level advocacy and capacity-building for local organisations in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. In 2022, through this partnership €1.8 million was channelled to women and girls in some of the most challenging contexts in the world, where many women and girls are survivors of conflict related GBV and where conflict accentuates social power dynamics, displacement, poverty and other risks which increase rates of GBV. This Strategic Partnership has fostered the innovation of 'one stop centres' where women and girls can access all the GBV-related services they may need in one location, as well as a focus on capacity-building for local NGOs.

GBV survivors have shared the very real impacts that this partnership has had on their lives. Particularly positive feedback was received from women in Hagadera Refugee Camp, in Kenya in relation to the IRC's Engaging Men in Accountable Practice Programme. The programme encourages men to stop committing GBV within their families, but also to act as advocates among their peers to promote GBV reduction.

## 4.5 Pillar IV: Promotion

### DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, EQUALITY, DISABILITY, INTEGRATION AND YOUTH (DCEDIY)

1. Communicate and promote Ireland's commitment to the WPS Agenda among domestic stakeholders, through training of staff and provision of relevant information to IRPP beneficiaries and international protection applicants.

The wellbeing of women and children is a focus of IRPP from the time of selection mission, up to the time that families are resettled in local authority housing. In 2022, IRPP staff remained aware of the importance of the WPS agenda in relation to IRPP beneficiaries.

There were no new developments regarding the preparation of Ireland's 8th periodic report to the CEDAW Committee. It is anticipated that a list of issues will be received from the Committee in late 2023.

In 2022, DCEDIY commissioned the Centre for Effective Services to evaluate processes for implementing three equality strategies, namely the Migrant Integration Strategy, the National Strategy for Women and Girls, and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. This study was underway in 2022, with a view to publication in 2023.

### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE (DOD), AND THE DEFENCE FORCES (DF)

2. Continue to act and engage on WPS, through the Department of Defence, on an international level. This includes through participation in the Partnership for Peace (including the implementation of NATO/EAPC WPS Policy and Action Plan), and through Ireland's gender-related training pledges to the UN's Peacekeeping Readiness Capability System.

DOD continued to advocate for the promotion of the WPS Agenda in the course of Ireland's ongoing participation in key working groups on International Security and Defence. The training pledges made by Ireland at the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting in 2021, which encouraged greater female participation and engagement in peacekeeping, remained active during 2022, despite no active take-up from other UN member states.

3. Implement the Defence Forces specific Action Plan feeding into the NAP on WPS on a strategic level, which includes consideration of the effects and drivers of violent masculinity.

DF launched the Defence Forces Third Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions in December 2020, setting out the organisation's priorities for the implementation of the WPS Agenda.

The Organisational Culture Standing Committee (OCSC) continued its work in 2022 to drive and coordinate the process of cultural change within the DF. One of its main efforts was the Workshop Development subgroup, which established, in consultation with a number of external agencies and organisations, the Sexual Ethics and Respectful Relationships workshop. A pilot workshop was held in in Q4 of 2022. This training will become mandatory for all members of the DF.

The Commission on the Defence Forces report was published in February 2022 and recommended the introduction of gender, diversity and unconscious bias training for all ranks of the DF. Work commenced in 2022 in developing the specifications for this mandatory training.

The Independent Review Group (IRG) was established by the Minister in 2022 to advise on whether the current legislative frameworks, policies, procedures and practices for addressing incidents of unacceptable in the Defence Forces are effective. It carried out a robust examination of the systems, policies, procedures and workplace culture with a view to ensuring a safe workplace underpinned by dignity and equality for all members of the DF. Extensive consultations took place with stakeholders, including both serving and former members of the DF, based on the draft Terms of Reference for the review undertaken by external and independent experts in the field. The Minister also introduced a set of interim support measures for people affected by these issues, including the appointment of a Confidential Contact Person external to the DF Chain of Command.

The Defence Women's Network was established in 2022, based on internal research piece entitled '*In the Context of Hegemonic Masculinity, Can Women Affect a Transformative Agenda within the Irish Defence Forces?*'. The role and remit of this network continues to grow, and its membership is representative of all grades and ranks across DF and DOD, with the ongoing contribution and support of DOD Secretary General Jacqui McCrum and Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Seán Clancy.

## DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA)

### 4. Update on the number of recommendations dealing with GBV and SEA and the implementation of the WPS Agenda in UPR processes.

GBV and SEA were mentioned 18 times and 6 times, respectively, in Ireland's UPR recommendations for 2022. The implementation of the WPS Agenda was not mentioned.

### 5. Promote women's experience and expertise in peace-building in Northern Ireland/ Ireland, and promote WPS principles in engagements, including through events, conferences, research commissioned, public statements, and meetings with stakeholders including civil society organisations.

DFA continued to engage with civil society organisations to promote women's experiences and expertise in peace-building in Northern Ireland. In 2022, this included inviting several high profile women peace-builders to address the annual Reconciliation Fund Conference held in October. DFA met regularly with civil society organisations, including a number of women's groups funded by the Department's Reconciliation Fund.

### 6. Update on the establishment and operation of a Northern Ireland consultative group.

The Belfast Secretariat is committed to re-establishing the WPS consultative group and networking events post Covid-19 pandemic. Discussions were underway with strategic partners and stakeholders in order to re-establish the consultative group. It is intended that a meeting will take place in 2023. The Belfast Secretariat regularly met with groups individually to discuss the WPS agenda.

### 7. Advocate for the WPS Agenda internationally, and promote lesson-sharing on the development of National Action Plans and the Northern Ireland peace process.

**Advocacy for WPS at the UN**

Ireland continued to prioritise the WPS Agenda at the UN Security Council in 2022. Ireland co-chaired (with Mexico) the Security Council's Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS, which brings together experts to facilitate a more systematic approach to WPS. On 28-30 June, members of the IEG visited Lebanon on the group's first ever field visit. This included meetings with the UNIFIL leadership and gender unit, United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) leadership, UN Women, the Lebanese Armed Forces Gender Department, the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, municipal authorities in Tyre, civil society organisations, women peacebuilders and women Members of Parliament.

In April, Ireland convened an Arria-Formula Meeting on conflict and hunger, where Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason highlighted the gendered impact of food insecurity on women. Ireland hosted another Arria-Formula Meeting in July, on transitional justice in Colombia, joined by co-sponsors Colombia and Norway.

Ireland was an active contributor during WPS month at the UN and co-hosted a WPS side event on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) in humanitarian settings: delivering life-saving care during emergencies hosted in conjunction with the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

On 28 November, the Permanent Representatives of Ireland, Mexico and Kenya, of the Presidency Trio initiative met with UN Secretary-General António Guterres to discuss the implementation of the WPS Agenda.

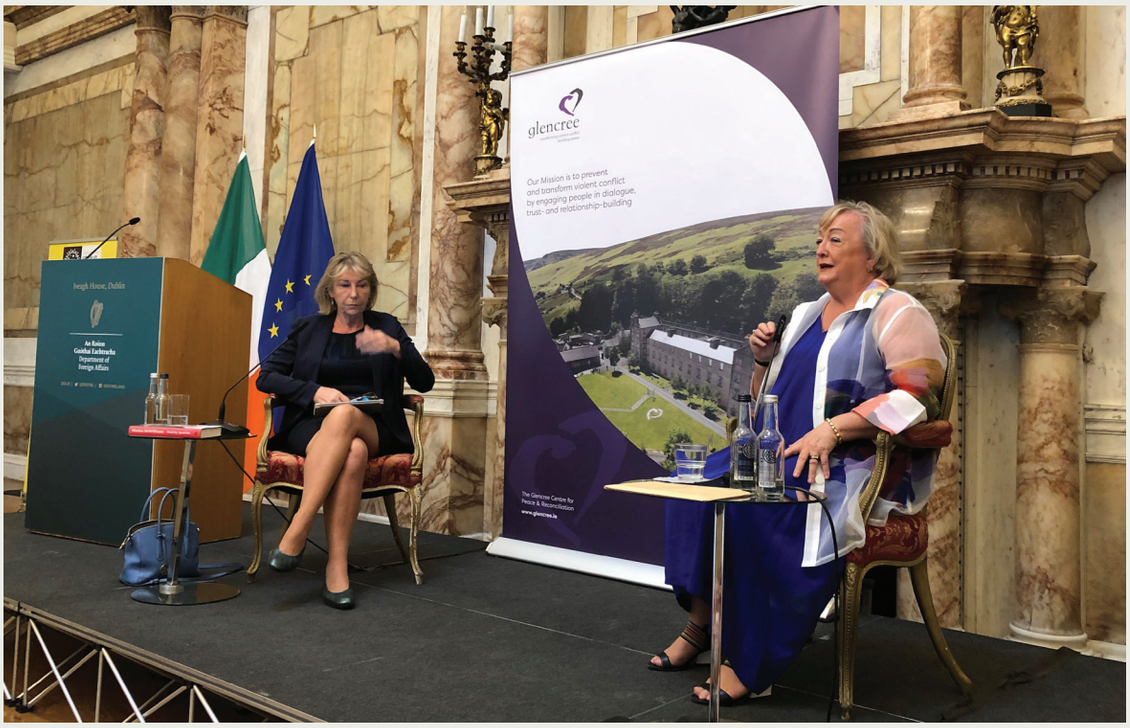
### Lesson sharing on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

On 14 July 2022, the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (Glencree) organised a dialogue between Good Friday Agreement negotiator and signatory Monica McWilliams and Áine Lawlor of RTÉ. The conversation revealed insights into the Northern Ireland Peace Process, the signing and implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, the coming together of women across the sectarian divide to form the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, and ongoing barriers to women's participation in politics.

In August, the Embassy of Ireland in Tel Aviv hosted a workshop and training session on UNSCR 1325 and negotiation skills, which gathered Arab and Jewish Israeli women from government and civil society. Founding member of the Northern Ireland Women's coalition Avila Kilmurray shared a number of insights from the Coalition's experience of the Northern Irish peace process.

## 8. Promote the WPS Agenda in both Irish media and online, and through outreach events in Ireland.

DFA outreach on the WPS agenda in Ireland included consistent posting on social media and updates via a newsletter. On X (formerly Twitter), over 35 original posts to the Department's @DFAPeaceSupport account on WPS-related topics gained approximately 3,050 engagements. A WPS newsletter was issued on a quarterly basis, circulated to Department staff members and made available to the public via the DFA website. It covered Ireland's lively agenda of WPS initiatives and events, both in Ireland and abroad




Professor Monica McWilliams in conversation with RTE's Áine Lawlor at an event hosted by Glencree in Iveagh House on 14 July. © DFA

9. Advocate for the integration of a gender perspective in policies, resolutions, decisions and instruments in multilateral development contexts and International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

**EU Engagement**

Ireland places a strong focus on WPS in our engagement on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI – GE). One of the cross-cutting priorities of the instrument is a target of at least 85% of actions having gender equality as a principle or significant objective which Ireland continued to support in 2022. Similarly, Ireland continued to support the Team Europe Initiatives and the EU's Gender Action Plan III (GAP III), which both work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Ireland also integrated gender perspectives in EU development finance through the EU Financial Architecture for Development formats including the European Investment Bank Global Advisory Group, the European Fund for Sustainable Development + and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

**UN and IFIs Engagement**

Ireland continued to advocate for the integration of a gender perspective in relevant international fora, such as the Executive Boards of New York-based UN agencies (UNFPA/UNDP/UNOPS, UNICEF, and UN Women) and at the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS, Peacebuilding Fund discussions in the General Assembly, Peace Building Commission, World Bank, IMF, and regional development banks. Ireland reaffirmed its commitment in 2022 to preventing and responding to GBV by doubling its support to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (from €250,000 to €500,000). Other key UN partners include UN Women's Making Every Woman and Girl Count Programme, Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), and UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Throughout 2022, Ireland contributed to thematic trust funds in Multilateral Development Banks, to ensure support to gender mainstreaming and advancing gender equality, such as through the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality, an instrument of the World Bank Group that aims to close gender gaps through research.

10. Promote the WPS Agenda in development and emergency settings, including through building capacity of local actors to provide women-led response to emergencies, support to civil society organisation to combat human trafficking, and support for SRHR in emergency settings.

Several Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) and Humanitarian Programme Plan (HPP) partners promoted the WPS Agenda in development and humanitarian contexts. For example, support for SRHR in emergency settings is a key component of all of Concern Worldwide's humanitarian and emergency programming across nine countries.

Under the 2022 Civil Society Fund, Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT) International was awarded a three-year grant for a project aimed at increasing the protection of children against the changing nature of threats related to sexual exploitation. The project focuses on Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Guinea, and seeks to create a strong civil society–led movement aimed at addressing sexual exploitation of children.

Supporting the localisation agenda, and specifically women-led organisations, is central to Ireland's Strategic Partnership with the IRC which requires that a minimum of 20% of funds be transferred to local and community-based NGOs by 2024. As part of this, the Partnership supports learning and capacity building activities with the aim that these local organisations will be able to take on GBV-related services.

11. Promote understanding of effects and drivers of harmful social norms, including masculinities and discriminatory gender norms, through commissioning research and conducting trainings and capacity building that includes gender equality, gender sensitive conflict analysis and a GBV response.

Through DFA's Humanitarian Programme Plan, Concern Worldwide engaged Syrian refugee and host communities in North Lebanon in gender-focused trainings, particularly aimed at male community members with a view to changing attitudes and behaviours towards GBV. Further trainings and capacity buildings on healthcare, and psychosocial wellbeing (with a gender lens) were completed in Iraq and Syria. Oxfam improved knowledge of gender rights and successfully reduced the prevalence of violence against women in pastoralist communities in Tanzania.

IRC's Engaging Men in Accountable Practice Programme supported men - many of whom have previously committed GBV - to examine their own behaviour, learn new behaviours, and to become advocates for norm change in their refugee communities. Programme participants in South Sudan indicated a shift in their traditional masculine attitudes and beliefs, and showed a greater willingness to accept responsibility for GBV and actions based on harmful norms.

## DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (DRCD)

12. Develop a programme to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for local decision-making structures, local authorities, government departments and agencies, community and voluntary organisations, and local development bodies.

Building upon a training event that took place in 2019 and guidelines on Local Economic and Community Plans published in late 2021, DRCD delivered training on the SDGs to Local Community Development Committee members and local authority support staff in early 2022 to support the development of new Local Economic and Community Plans.

DRCD, in collaboration with the Cross-Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development, engaged Pobal to undertake a needs analysis of the community and voluntary sector and their supporting structures, including specific reference to training around the SDGs.

Progress around these actions was overseen by the Training Needs Subgroup of the Cross-Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development. It was agreed that a three-step modular approach would be undertaken, consisting of assessments of the training needs of LCDCs, voluntary boards of mid-sized non-profits, and smaller community and voluntary groups. It is expected that this project will be completed and all reports published in 2023. An implementation plan will follow thereafter.

13. Develop a toolkit for the design and proofing of programmes and plans towards the SDGs.

Although progress was delayed in 2022, DRCD remain committed to engaging with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) to advance this objective.

14. Support the capacity of local government and community and voluntary sectors in relation to the SDGs.

DRCD continued to work closely with the community and voluntary sector in 2022. As previously mentioned, a set of values and principles for working with community and voluntary organisations was formally adopted by the Government and published in 2022.

Looking forward, DRCD will identify robust engagement strategies and toolkits to support consultation, engagement and participation in decision-making processes. A Dormant Accounts funded project on the engagement and participation of marginalised groups took place using the LECP process as a pilot.

# 5. WPS in Action: Promoting WPS at the UN Security Council


Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason during Ireland's term on the UNSC (2021-2022) © DFA

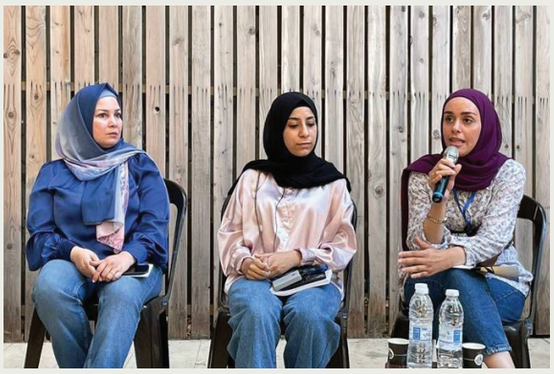
Ireland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York was at the forefront of Ireland's efforts to promote and mainstream the WPS agenda during Ireland's term on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) 2021-2022. Building upon the work carried out in 2021, the Mission led on several WPS events and initiatives in 2022, from a field visit to Lebanon as part of the Informal Expert Group on WPS, to advancing the WPS 'Shared Commitments'.

## INFORMAL EXPERT GROUP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

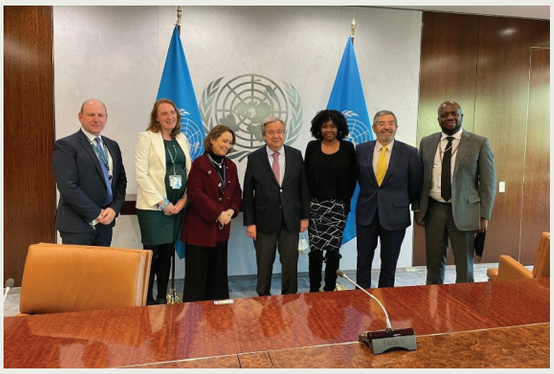
Together with Mexico, Ireland co-chaired the UNSC's Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security, facilitating a record number of briefings on the situation of women and girls during our two-year term. In 2022, these meetings addressed country situations such as Afghanistan and Myanmar, the first IEG meeting on the situation in the Middle East to include Palestine, as well as a thematic meeting on conflict-related sexual violence.

In June 2022, Ireland and Mexico led the first ever field visit of the IEG. The group travelled to Lebanon, where women's political participation levels ranked amongst the lowest globally at the time[4]. IEG members met with a diverse range of groups and organisations, including UNIFIL, UNSCOL, UN Women, the Lebanese Armed Forces Gender Department, the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, municipal authorities in Tyre, civil society organisations, women peacebuilders and women Members of Parliament.

[4] According to the World Economic Forum Gender Gap index, Lebanon ranked 183 out of 187 countries in terms of women's participation in parliament.



IEG members met with civil society representatives to discuss how to advance WPS in Lebanon © DFA



Ireland, along with Presidency Trio countries Mexico and Kenya, met with UN Secretary General António Guterres to discuss the WPS Shared Commitments in November 2022. © DFA

The IEG compiled recommendations made by various stakeholders to advance the WPS agenda in Lebanon, from including more specific language in the UNIFIL mandate on gender and women civil society organisations, to developing a national strategy to empower women in politics.

## ADVANCING THE WPS PRESIDENCY TRIO

Ireland, Kenya and Mexico joined together in 2021 to develop the 'WPS Shared Commitments' Trio Initiative. The trio committed to a set of tangible actions around the implementation of the WPS agenda, prompting more concerted efforts towards gender parity at the UNSC and efforts to highlight WPS challenges in situations including Afghanistan, Colombia, Haiti and Yemen.

In November 2022, Ireland, along with Presidency Trio countries Mexico and Kenya, met with UN Secretary General António Guterres to discuss the WPS Shared Commitments, as well as the political leadership needed to achieve the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes. By that point, 11 other countries had adopted the WPS Shared Commitments during their UNSC presidencies, and other incoming members showed an interest in doing so.

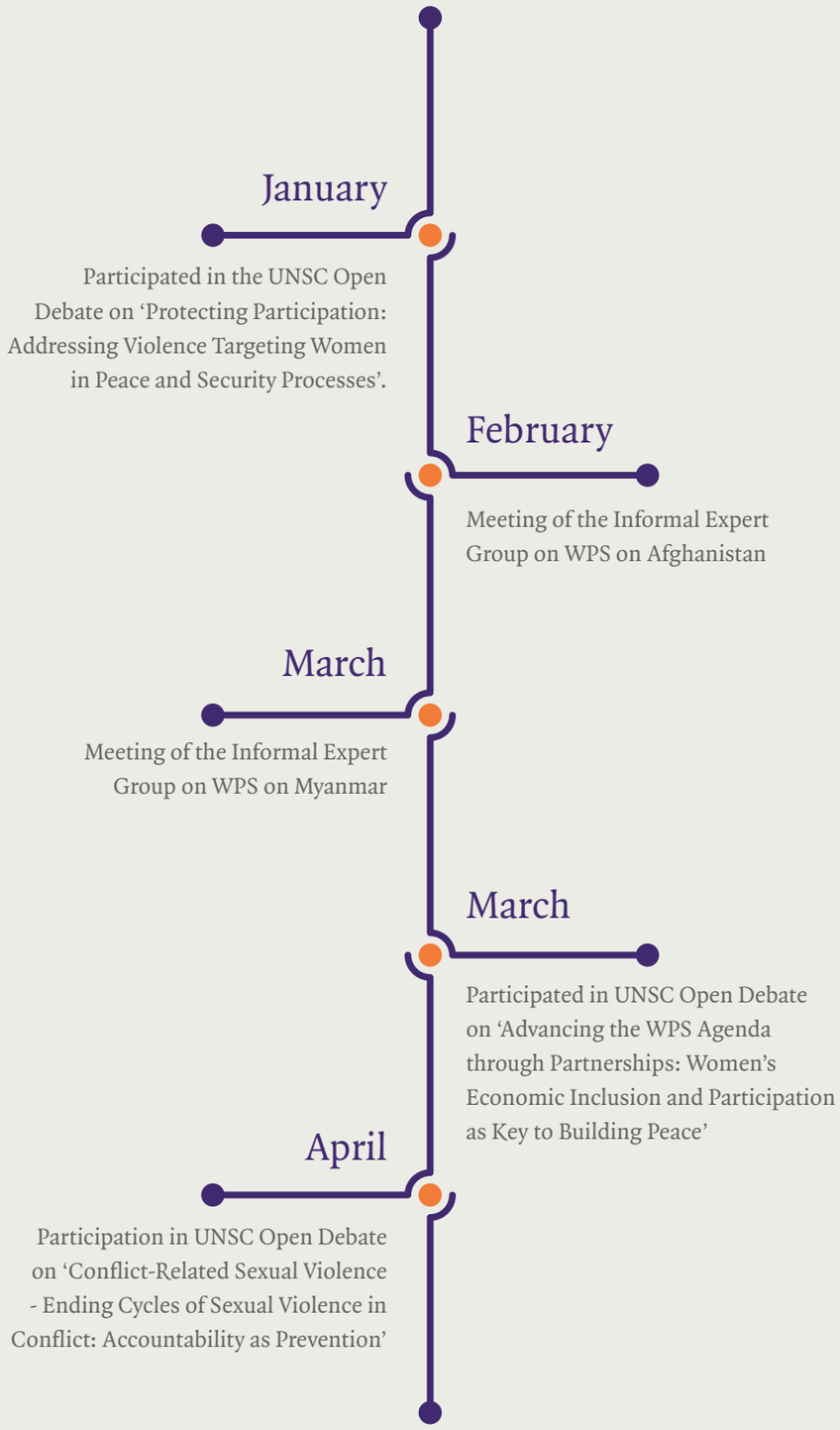
## ADVOCATING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPS AGENDA

At the UNSC Open Debate in January on 'Protecting Participation: Addressing Violence Targeting Women in Peace and Security Processes', Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason stressed the importance of upholding women's political participation and ensuring the protection of women human rights defenders and peacebuilders, referencing steps taken by Ireland to advance those policies.

Ireland was amongst the first countries to address the UNSC on the differential impact of the war in Ukraine on women and girls, speaking at two UNSC briefings and an Arria-Formula Meeting on accountability in Ukraine in April 2022. In Ireland's statements, the Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason underscored the risks of sexual exploitation and trafficking faced by women and girls fleeing the conflict and the importance of gender-responsive and rights-based supports in host countries.

The Mission also played a leading role in efforts to mainstream WPS across other interventions made by Ireland at the UNSC. At an Arria-Formula Meeting convened by Ireland on conflict and hunger, for example, Ambassador Byrne Nason emphasised the disproportionate impact of food insecurity on women, who often eat last and least.

# WPS in Action: Timeline of Engagement



Ireland, along with Mexico, travelled to Lebanon as part of the first ever field visit by the IEG © DFA

## May

Hosted a briefing and informal discussion with the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

## June

Co-led a visit to Lebanon, the first ever field visit by the IEG

## October

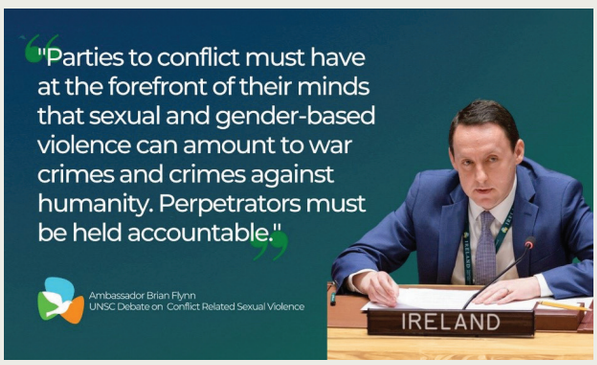
Intervened at the annual WPS Open Debate

## October

Co-hosted a WPS side event on sexual and reproductive health rights in humanitarian settings with the International Planned Parenthood Federation

## November

As part of the Presidency Trio, met with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to discuss the WPS Agenda




Ireland at the UNSC Open Debate on conflict-related sexual violence. © DFA

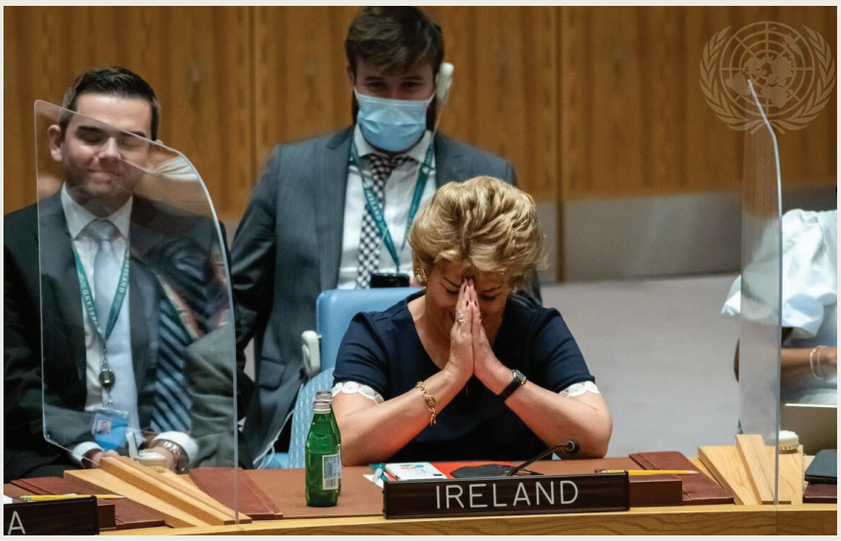
# Conclusion

In 2022, Ireland's sustained commitment to promote and implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda was apparent as we actively sought opportunities to work closely with likeminded states, regional organisations, civil society and grassroots women's groups.

Internationally, Ireland prioritised mainstreaming WPS during our membership of the Security Council (2021-2022). As our term comes to an end, we leave behind a number of important legacies for other WPS champions, from the 'Shared Commitments' of the WPS Presidency Trio, to more concerted efforts to hear from women civil society briefers. We have drawn upon our strong partnerships, such as with International Rescue Committee and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, to ensure that support reaches organisations working on the ground with women and girls impacted by conflict in Ukraine, Ethiopia, and Somalia, to name a few.

At home in Ireland, we are encouraged by the publication of Ireland's third National Action Plan on DSGBV in June 2022, in addition to the work underway in preparation for our third National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking. NGO partners AkiDwA and IFPA continued their vital work in preventing and responding to FGM, and local authorities and decision-making bodies across Ireland received training around Ireland's commitment to the SDGs, of which gender equality and empowering women and girls are a core focus.

Through our National Action Plan (2019-2024), Ireland's commitment to the WPS Agenda is gradually being realised. And yet, 2022 was a formidably difficult year for women's rights in many places across the globe. More than ever, it is vital that we remain steadfast in our aspirations for gender equality. Women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peacebuilding and political processes is fundamental for achieving inclusive and sustainable peace. In 2023, we will continue to monitor the actions being taken, both at home and abroad, to make the WPS Agenda a reality.




Ambassador Byrne Nason bids farewell at her final meeting as Ireland's representative at the UN Security Council 2021-2022.

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland