



PROGRESS TOWARD INCLUSIVE SECURITY:

Recommendations for the New Administration

BY ALLISON PETERS, ANGELIC YOUNG, OLIVIA HOLT-IVRY

In the face of complex global threats, from terrorism to resource scarcity, the US must expand its foreign policy toolbox. A growing body of evidence demonstrates that inclusion of women improves peace and security outcomes. When women participate in negotiations to end war, agreements last longer. When they serve in police forces, countries are better able to prevent and respond to violent extremism. Women's inclusion in decision making helps close the trust deficit between government and citizens that often erupts in bloodshed. While not a one-size-fits-all solution, time and again, inclusive approaches to security have proven effective when properly implemented.

The 2017 presidential transition provides a window for cementing and expanding upon crucial US policy commitments to women's inclusion. The following recommendations outline specific, achievable steps that the incoming administration can take to strengthen the framework, leadership, and accountability of US efforts to propel more inclusive, more sustainable security at home and abroad.

Current US Policy

The 2010 and 2015 US National Security Strategies note that countries are more likely to be peaceful and prosperous when they draw on the potential of their full populations. Yet both documents focus more on advancing women's access to justice,

politics, education, and employment, than on their inclusion in preventing and resolving conflict—an issue most commonly referred to as women, peace, and security (WPS).

The US National Action Plan on WPS, launched in 2011 by Executive Order, is the most significant policy to institutionalize and expand upon US commitment to inclusive security. Importantly, it does so not only as a moral imperative, but as a central pillar of national and global stability. By adopting this Plan, the US joined the ranks of more than 60 countries with national-level strategies for increasing women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution. The US Plan directed the Departments of State (DoS) and Defense (DoD) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to submit measurable and resourced agency-specific implementation plans, and charged the National Security Council with interagency coordination. This year, the US government (USG) re-signalled its dedication by releasing an updated version of its National Action Plan.

Because it was launched by Executive Order, however, the US Plan risks being repealed or diminished by future presidents. To protect against this, the "Women, Peace, and Security Act" has been introduced with bipartisan support in both the US House of Representatives and the Senate (if it does not pass this session, it will need to be reintroduced in the 115th congress). The bill would codify a WPS national strategy into law, and strengthen the ability of Congress to exercise its oversight role.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.



Reaffirm our policy commitment through strong, visible leadership

WITHIN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

The President should reassert and expand, through Executive Order, government-wide policy commitments—particularly the US National Action Plan—that advance and institutionalize inclusive security.

LONGER-TERM

The administration should signal US leadership on WPS by integrating the topic of inclusion into high-level peace and security summits and other events attended by USG personnel, particularly through the US role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Key Milestones* in the Development of US Policy on Women, Peace, & Security

FEBRUARY 2003

DoS issues a Secretary of State Cable urging posts to involve women in conflict prevention and resolution

JUNE - AUGUST 2012

DoD, USAID, and DoS release agency-specific National Action Plan implementation guides

JULY 2016

The US releases its updated National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security

DECEMBER 2010

First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development (QDDR) review states that women are central to all aspects of US foreign policy and development, laying the foundation for a more expansive US commitment to WPS in the second QDDR of April 2015

FEBRUARY 2015

US National Security Strategy notes that “no society will succeed if it does not draw on the potential of all its people”

DECEMBER 2011

US National Action Plan launched by Executive Order

JULY 2014

DoS issues a Secretary of State Cable directing all embassies and bureaus to implement the US Plan

MAY 2010

US National Security Strategy notes that “countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women are accorded full and equal rights and opportunity”

APRIL 2012

DoD issues a Secretary of Defense Memorandum directing staff to incorporate WPS principles into programs and policies

2.

Translate our national objectives into action

While the US National Action Plan provides vision and goals, agency-level operational plans and leadership are vital to translating that vision into practice.

WITHIN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

DoS, DoD, USAID, and other relevant agencies should issue updated policy guidance, beginning with a new Secretary of Defense Memorandum and Secretary of State Cable.

LONGER-TERM

DoS, DoD, USAID, and other relevant agencies should create implementation plans for the updated National Action Plan, outlining the specific steps each will take to secure sufficient human, technical, and programmatic resources.

These should prioritize:

- Expanding experiential learning opportunities that demonstrate the practical application of key WPS concepts for all staff, including contractors;
- Integrating core principles of inclusion throughout existing training curricula and agency-specific standard operating procedures, including contracting procedures;
- Bolstering reserves of skilled, deployable gender experts; and
- Regularizing coordination across agencies and with Congress.

3.

Link career advancement to action

A strong WPS policy framework is only as effective as the people who implement it.

WITHIN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

The Secretaries of State and Defense and the USAID Administrator should direct agency supervisors to integrate “demonstrated commitment to inclusion” into employees’ annual qualitative reviews.

LONGER-TERM

The President should direct the Office of Personnel Management to integrate “demonstrated commitment to inclusion” into qualification standards for General Schedule employees, the Senior Executive Service, the Foreign Service, and other position classifications, as appropriate.

Classroom lectures rarely demonstrate the practical application of concepts like inclusive security. Consider scenario-based trainings, sectoral experience exchanges, ‘Open Days’ for USG personnel to hear from women’s organizations from around the country, and short-term temporary duty assignments.

For policies on inclusion to be most effective, they must be fully integrated throughout all aspects of national security and foreign assistance. For example, rather than establishing a separate coordinating body for the US National Action Plan, its principles should be woven throughout existing national security and foreign assistance coordination mechanisms. To avoid confusion, they should also be integrated into agency-specific gender strategies. US leadership must make clear that inclusion is a mission-critical imperative, not a programmatic option.

4.

Strengthen transparency and accountability

By measuring which interventions are most effective, agencies can evaluate whether changes are needed. Widespread dissemination of that data can also inspire greater global commitment. Yet the US National Action Plan lacks a formal USG-wide monitoring and evaluation plan and existing agency-specific indicators for gender-related programming were not designed to measure progress towards its specific objectives.

WITHIN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

To measure interagency progress, DoS, DoD, USAID, and other relevant agencies should strengthen the National Action Plan logical framework, including through creation of outcome-level indicators

LONGER-TERM

The President should establish a high-level interagency working group to create a USG-wide monitoring and evaluation plan for the updated US Plan. This should include mid-term and summative evaluations and public dissemination of reports.

5.

Improve collaboration with Capitol Hill

A collaborative relationship with members of Congress bolsters congressional knowledge of USG-supported WPS initiatives and allows Congress to provide strategic resources for these efforts. It also strengthens congressional oversight of administration policy commitments.

WITHIN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

The Secretaries of State and Defense and the USAID Administrator should task the heads of each agency's legislative affairs office to work with relevant congressional committees and lead sponsors of the "Women, Peace, and Security Act" on a way forward for the Act and any other relevant authorizing legislation.

LONGER-TERM

The administration should work with relevant congressional committees of jurisdiction to establish a regular series of briefings on its policy and funding priorities related to women's inclusion, particularly on key regional and thematic areas of interest.

INCLUSIVE SECURITY was founded on the belief that a more secure world is possible if policymakers and conflict-affected populations work together. Women's meaningful participation, in particular, can make the difference between failure and success. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has equipped decision makers with knowledge, tools, and connections that strengthen their ability to develop inclusive policies and approaches. We have also bolstered the skills and influence of women leaders around the world. We are a member of the US Civil Society Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security. Together with these allies, we're making inclusion the rule, not the exception.

For more information contact

Allison Peters | allison@inclusivesecurityaction.org
1615 M Street NW, Suite 850 | Washington, DC 20036 | 202.403.2000 | inclusivesecurity.org