THE GLOBAL GOALS: WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

"The equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security." [1]

IWDA welcomes the commitment to promoting peace, justice and strong institutions as one of the 17 Global Goals that make up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Global Goal 16 commits the international community to seek to *"promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."* This is an important recognition that we cannot achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development without tackling conflict and insecurity – and it was not inevitable; there was considerable debate about whether a peace goal should be included. Disappointingly, however, Goal 16 is missing a critical ingredient for success: reference to women, peace and security.

The importance of gender equality for sustainable peace has been recognised before. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and 7 subsequent resolutions[2] have reaffirmed the significance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Evidence, such as the recent Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325,[3] has also continued to demonstrate that women's participation and inclusion makes humanitarian assistance more effective, strengthens peacekeeping efforts, contributes to the conclusion and implementation of peace talks and sustainable peace and accelerates economic recovery. We also know that women's experiences of conflict and post-conflict situations frequently differ from men. Up to 80 percent of internally displaced persons and refugees worldwide are women and children.[4] Considering the interests, needs and priorities of women and enabling their equal contribution makes efforts towards peace and security more inclusive and more effective.

Despite this evidence and commitments under the Security Council resolutions (these are binding on UN member states), progress on women, peace and security has been limited and uneven. Women are still being excluded from peace talks, post-conflict recovery processes are still failing to reflect the priorities of women and girls, police and peacekeeping forces remain male dominated, and women and girls continue to face violence on an alarming scale, around the world. This makes the lack of explicit consideration of gender in Goal 16 all the more problematic.

IWDA, as a member of the Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security, calls on the Australian Government to adopt an approach to Goal 16 which recognises existing commitments and evidence and places women, peace and security at the centre of its efforts.

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Goal 16 contains twelve targets; none of these explicitly consider gender. This omission is particularly troubling in the current context of increasing violent extremism and cycle of militarisation and given the focus of Goal 16 on significantly reducing all forms of violence, ensuring inclusive and representative decision-making and effective national institutions.

The targets that have been agreed cannot be achieved without gender equality and women's empowerment. For example:

- In order to **reduce all forms of violence** (Target 16.1), States must focus on the most widespread abuse of rights and form of violence in any society: violence against women and girls. This violence cuts across every country, culture, class, religion and age group. It is estimated that 35 per cent of women experience violence in their lifetime and 30 per cent experience intimate partner violence.[5] Sexual and gender-based violence against women, including rape, forced impregnation, forced abortion, sexual trafficking and the spread of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, is a defining characteristic of modern warfare.
- Efforts to **end exploitation and trafficking and all forms of violence against children** (Target 16.2) must address the gendered nature of this violence. Women and girls make up 98 per cent of the estimated 4.5 million people forced into sexual exploitation worldwide.[6]
- Responsive and inclusive decision-making (Target 16.7), effective and accountable institutions (Target 16.6) and strengthening relevant national institutions to prevent violence (16.a) all necessitate women's full and effective participation in decision-making, at all levels. Evidence demonstrates that peace negotiations influenced by women are much more likely to end in agreement and to last - the chances of the agreement lasting 15 years goes up by as much as 35 per cent.[7]

Goal 16 Targets

16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.	**16.2** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.	**16.3** Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.
16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime.	**16.5** Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.	**16.6** Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.	**16.8** Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.	**16.9** By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.	**16.a** Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.	**16.b** Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

The indicators currently being developed to measure progress under Goal 16 may bring some focus on the women, peace and security agenda; it is proposed that some indicators be disaggregated by age and sex. However, there are no proposed indicators which directly focus on women's needs and experiences in relation to peace and security. For example, there is no proposed indicator under Target 16.1 in relation to sexual or gender-based violence.

Plan for action: putting women, peace and security at the centre of Goal 16

The Australian Government can be a leader in ensuring that the women, peace and security agenda is at the centre of efforts to support Goal 16. The UN Security Council has already affirmed that the full and effective involvement of women in participation, protection and prevention, and mainstreaming gender perspectives in peace operations, is central to sustainable peace and security. This should have been reflected in the targets under Goal 16. The fact that it wasn't does not change the existing obligations created by Security Council resolutions, or make the women, peace and security agenda less critical. What it does do is increase the importance for champions of the women, peace and security agenda, such as Australia, to integrate these obligations as they implement the global goals.

This approach simply make sense, given the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for peace, justice and inclusive governance. It also utilises Australia's existing thinking and work in this area, including the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018), to help achieve this.

IWDA urges the Australian Government to lead by example, by adopting three key approaches to inform action under Goal 16:

(a) Make connections between Goal 5 and Goal 16 in implementation;

(b) Draw on existing knowledge and frameworks such as UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, the Beijing Platform for Action, and UNSCR 1325 global indicators to implement and track progress against Goal 16.

(c) Utilise and resource existing commitments and mechanisms such as the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in implementing the Global Goals.

(a) Connecting the Goals

The omission of a women, peace and security focus from Goal 16 highlights the importance of making connections between the goals when governments are developing plans for implementation. For example, Target 16.7, on ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, must go hand-in-hand with the Goal 5 target to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. Similarly, Target 5.2 on eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, cannot be separated from Targets 16.1 and 16.2 under Goal 16.

As the Australian Government develops plans to implement the Global Goals, explicitly connecting targets across goals will provide the basis for effective action.

(b) Build on existing knowledge and international frameworks

Implementation of Goal 16 should reference and build on existing knowledge and commitments in international frameworks including: UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions; Critical Area of Concern E on Women and Armed Conflict in the Beijing Platform for Action; and CEDAW General Recommendation 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. These international frameworks reflect already agreed language and recommendations for action which can directly inform efforts to implement and track progress on Goal 16.

The United Nations has also developed a set of global indicators to monitor progress against women, peace and security commitments, which can be drawn on to track progress on Goal 16.

(c) Utilise and resource existing commitments and mechanisms such as the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security as part of implementing the Global Goals

As of late 2015, 54 countries had developed National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement UNSCR 1325. Australia introduced its national action plan on women, peace and security in 2012 and civil society has been annually tracking Government progress since then.

Efforts to achieve Goal 16 should be integrated with existing efforts to implement the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018) and future national action plans. Mechanisms to ensure a whole of government approach on women, peace and security, such as the Inter-Departmental Working Group on women, peace and security, can also be utilised to drive action on Goal 16. For example, Goal 16 could be a standing agenda item at these meetings. Civil society proposals to improve implementation of the National Action Plan can drive progress on both of these agendas,[8] but must be matched with specific commitments to resource women, peace and security actions under the National Action Plan and in the context of the SDGs.

Engaging with and resourcing women's rights organisations is key to the success of the women, peace and security agenda. Governments cannot realise their commitments alone. Working with civil society coalitions at national and international levels is particularly critical, as they provide a means for connecting and aggregating the work of many organisations. By encouraging other governments in the region to adopt national action plans on UNSCR 1325 as part of meeting commitments under Goal 16 and Goal 5 of the SDGs, the Australian Government can also support more effective progress on both key agendas.

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[1] UN Security Council, 'Peace Inextricably Linked with Equality between Women and Men says Security Council', in *International Women's Day Statement: Press Release of the UN Security Council,* 8 March 2000, SC/6816
[2] UNSCRs 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and, most recently, UNSCR 2242.
[3] UN Women (2015), *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace*: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, available at: http://wps.unwomen.org/~/media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf
[4] http://www.unicef.org/esaro/7310_Gender_and_emergencies.html
[5] London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (2013) *Violence against women: a global health problem of epidemic proportions*, available at: http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2013/gender_violence_report.html#sthash.DiS5epMy.dpuf
[6] International Labour Organization (2012) *ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour: Results and Methodology*. Geneva: International Labour Office, available at: http://apflnet.ilo.org/resources/ilo-global-estimate-of-forced-labour-2012-results-and-methodology/at_download/file1, p. 14
[7] UN Women (2015), *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace*: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, available at: http://wps.unwomen.org/~/media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf
[8] See for example the recommendations in the *2014 Second Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*: https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/Second-Annual-Civil-Society-Report-Card-on-Australias-National-Action-Plan.pdf, which the Inquiry Report from Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Human Rights Sub-Committee on Empowering women and girls: the human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean–Asia Pacific region (2015) recommended be implemented in full.