TALKING POINTS TO ACCOMPANY
AGIPP'S POLICY BRIEF #5

The ‘Localisation’ of Women, Peace and Security in Myanmar
1. OVERVIEW OF POLICY BRIEF:

This fifth policy brief of the Alliance discusses the necessity of building a WPS mechanism that is specific to the needs of women in communities in Myanmar, and offers recommendations for its development. Focusing on the nationally-led NSPAW framework, we suggest that this provides the most practical starting point for implementing WPS-related goals across a range of Myanmar’s existing policy commitments. Linking with a discussion of international norms and standards in the WPS policy-making space, and the international WPS architecture of National Action Plans, we look a look at the local needs of women in Myanmar to assess the best route forward for a Myanmar-specific women, peace and security mechanism. We draw on consultations with women at the local level, as well as other actors working to support the NSPAW to provide a roadmap for ways in which its women, peace and security priorities could best link with the needs of women in local communities.
2. KEY MESSAGES TO USE IN YOUR ADVOCACY AND DISCUSSIONS:

The preferred model for a national level policy on Women, Peace and Security (and women’s rights more broadly) should take the form of the NSPAW, rather than that of an externally-led, separate National Action Plan (NAP). Therefore, the Myanmar Government should continue progress with NSPAW implementation rather than changing focus to an externally-led NAP.

Localizing women, peace and security in Myanmar requires understanding the key international WPS commitments that Myanmar has made.

- These form a baseline from which to develop context-specific policy goals, initiatives and outcomes. They are a set of standards by which we can understand women’s experiences and better respond to their needs.

The National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) (2013-2022) is the national framework for implementing the Women, Peace and Security policy agenda in Myanmar.

- The NSPAW stems from Myanmar’s commitments to implementing international WPS norms and standards, particularly in regard to CEDAW, Beijing, SDG 5 and the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

- There are 12 priority areas identified in the NSPAW:
  1. Women and Livelihoods;
  2. Women, Education and Training;
  3. Women and Health;
  4. Violence Against Women;
  5. Women and Emergencies;
  6. Women and the Economy;
  7. Women and decision-making;
  8. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women;
  9. Women and Human Rights;
  10. Women and the Media;
  11. Women and the Environment; and

- Adopted in 2013 and slated for implementation through 2022, the NSPAW is in early stages of being operationalised. Currently there is a need for tangible commitments at the Ministerial level around both financing and implementation.
• While coordination remains a challenge to NSPAW implementation, there is already a great deal of activity-based progress being made toward achieving its policy aims.

• The NSPAW, if well coordinated and robustly resourced, could ensure that women’s rights are prioritized and alleviate the danger of Myanmar’s WPS space becoming uncoordinated and ad-hoc.

National Actions Plans (NAPs) are another type of policy document that sets forth a country’s plan for achieving specific national or global objectives.

• NAPs seek to enable states to meet their commitments to the WPS agenda under UNSCR 1325 (and its sister resolutions, most notably 1820), and turn these commitments into actionable foreign and domestic policies.

• NAPs seek to turn the four pillars of the WPS agenda-participation (of women in decision-making processes and structures), prevention (of conflict, by mainstreaming women’s views in all aspects of prevention and in the prosecution of conflict-related crimes), protection (from gender-based violence), and relief and recovery—into actionable policy.

• The first NAP was adopted by Denmark in 2005. Other European countries followed this trend, with their NAPs oriented toward foreign policy goals, rather than to specific peace building efforts.

• There are barriers to their effectiveness, often resulting from poor implementation strategies.

• NAPs are often superficially implemented, used to ‘check boxes’ rather than to substantively create change on the ground.

• Inattention to localization strategies and needs often accounts for the ineffectiveness of NAPs.
3. RECOMMENDATIONS:

To the Government of Myanmar:

1. The Myanmar Government should continue progress with NSPAW implementation rather than changing focus to an externally-led NAP.

2. Ensure that the NSPAW and/or any other National Action Plan that is implemented by the Government of Myanmar is fully inclusive of women’s participation at all levels, and ensure that the process of its development is consultative with women’s groups and civil society organizations.

3. Give priority to the WPS aspect of the NSPAW, ensuring that international WPS norms and standards and related recommendations, priorities and associated implementation strategies are realized across all 12 priority areas.

4. Ensure that the local policies already in place addressing women’s rights (for example, the Kachin Women’s Policy) and local voices (such as those documented in AGIPP’s Policy Brief 2) feed into national-level policy frameworks, by supporting communication streams between GOM, CSOs and relevant development partners.


To Technical Working Group members and development partners supporting the NSPAW:

1. Encourage the development of context-specific policies and programming according to the differing needs of women in conflict and non-conflict affected regions.

2. Advocate for prioritizing the WPS aspect of the NSPAW, ensuring that WPS-related recommendations, priorities and associated implementation strategies are realized across all 12 priority areas.

3. Facilitate communication between national level policy makers and women at the local level to ensure that the NSPAW is understood by local actors, by bringing local authorities into local-level policy-making targeting NSPAW implementation-related activities.

4. Advocate for the designing of policies and programming under the ‘Women and Emergencies’ pillar of the NSPAW that strategically identify and target the pervasive social norms that allow for GBV, while simultaneously pressing for legal reform to directly address GBV and providing survivor-centered support.
5. Advocate for integrating the stated concerns made by women that are not explicitly covered under the 12 priority areas into NSPAW policies and programming.

6. Lead in conducting bi-annual data collection on NSPAW implementation practices of GoM, in order to ensure accountability by the Government of Myanmar.

7. Advocate for the integration of the best practices of regional NAPs into the NSPAW implementation process.

8. Advocate for the full consideration of local policies addressing women’s rights across the 12 NSPAW priority areas by all NSPAW-implementers, as these local policies could lead to better practice around NSPAW implementation.

To Civil Society:

1. Avoid undertaking duplicative processes and other forms of Action Planning while NSPAW implementation is underway, in order to make the most effective use of Government, development partner, NGO and CSO resources.

2. Advocate for the implementation of context-specific policies and programming according to the differing needs of women in conflict and non-conflict affected regions.

3. Facilitate communication between national level policy makers and women at the local level to ensure that the NSPAW is understood by local actors, by bringing local authorities into local-level policy-making targeting NSPAW implementation-related activities.

4. Advocate for the prioritization of local policies addressing women’s rights across the 12 NSPAW priority areas when liaising with national-level policy-makers working to implement the NSPAW.
4. QUESTIONS TO ASK (GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, CSOS AND OTHER PEACE PROCESS ACTORS)

- How can your organisation actively hold peace actors accountable for ensuring that the NSPAW remains fully inclusive of a Women, Peace and Security policy agenda? What strategies can you use?

- How can your organisation work to help the GoM adhere to its international WPS commitments as a way of ensuring WPS is prioritized in NSPAW implementation activities?

- What can you do to ensure the 30% gender quota is met within Myanmar’s peacebuilding architecture?

- What can your organisation do to ensure that adequate funding, program support and human resources are benchmarked for analysing gender?

Thank you for being an ally of the Alliance, and for championing women’s rights in Myanmar!