MONITORING CANADA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: BEST PRACTICES

AUGUST 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence?

In Canada, 6.3 million women and girls will experience sexual violence or intimate partner violence in their lifetime.[1] A woman or girl is killed every 2.5 days in Canada, and Indigenous women are 6 times more likely to be killed than non-Indigenous women.[2] The Canadian government has recognized that gender-based violence (GBV) is a pressing issue and has taken steps to address it. In January 2021, the Joint Declaration for a Canada Free of Gender-Based Violence was endorsed by the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers responsible for the status of women.[3] This created a foundation for a ten-year National Action Plan (NAP) to End GBV, which encompasses over 1000 recommendations.[4]

The recommendations have been put together through years of engagement with Indigenous partners, a range of stakeholders including victims/survivors, front-line service providers, community leaders, experts, academics, and civil society.[5] The NAP is a "strategic framework for action within and across jurisdictions with the goal of supporting victims, survivors, and their families" while also addressing strategies to prevent GBV.[6] The Federal Budget 2021 committed $601.3 million over five years to advancing a new NAP to end GBV and Budget 2022 proposed a $539 million investment over five years (starting from 2022-23) to support provinces and territories in their efforts to implement the NAP.[7]

Women and Gender Equality in Canada – a department of the Government of Canada – will work to establish agreements with provinces and territories that will support the NAPs implementation in a way that aligns with regional realities. All agreements will aim to support five pillars that are intended to guide cross-country efforts to end GBV. The five pillars are: (1) support for victims, survivors, and their families, (2) prevention of GBV, (3) responsive justice system to improve experiences of victims and survivors, (4) implementing Indigenous-led

---

[1] Women's Shelters Canada, "Roadmap for the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence" (2021), online: <https://nationalactionplan.ca/>.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Government of Canada, "National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence Backgrounder" (2022), online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/news/2022/11/national-action-plan-to-end-gender-based-violence-backgrounder.htm>.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

approaches, and (5) examining social infrastructure/enabling environments and recognizing that populations with socioeconomic inequities are at a greater risk of GBV.[8]

In addition to the Canadian government overseeing the NAP, there are other groups that aim to play a part in the progression of the plan and also provide further suggestions. The *Roadmap for the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence* is a pan-Canadian voice on GBV and is run by a group of advocates and experts led by Women's Shelters Canada (WSC).[9] This group delivered a *Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence* to the Canadian federal government on April 30, 2021.[10] The report provides a roadmap for the NAP and was created to act as a starting point of a longer process. This report suggests that the NAP will need billions, not millions, in strategic investment in order to have the best chance at long-term success. This group aims to work with the federal government to ensure the NAP progresses with community-based anti-violence expertise.[11] With the NAP established and an implementation guide in place, it is crucial that there be monitoring mechanisms formed to ensure that the plan stays on track and continues to advance.

Why is monitoring the NAP important?

It is essential that Canada's ten-year NAP has a "monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL)" strategy put in place. Such a MEAL strategy must take an intersectional, feminist lens. People with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) experience violence differently, and a feminist MEAL strategy can assist in monitoring the "effectiveness of the response for these populations... with the aim of contributing to progressive and sustainable change."[12] MEAL is critical to advancing prevention methods, response tactics,

---

[8] Government of Canada, "National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence Backgrounder" (2022) https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/news/2022/11/national-action-plan-to-end-gender-based-violence-backgrounder.htm.

[9] Women's Shelters Canada, "Roadmap for the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence*" (2021), online: <https://nationalactionplan.ca/>.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Amanda Dale et al., "A Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence" (April 2021), online: *National Action Plan - Roadmap for the NAP on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence* <https://nationalactionplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAP-Final-Report.pdf > at 204.

and other remedies to GBV. It a key way to track the range of actions that the government will implement to address this social harm.[13]

Monitoring is an ongoing activity that involves the systematic collecting and analyzing of data to assess progress made towards outcomes. It should be conducted on a frequent and systematic basis to track whether the work is progressing as planned and, if not, what adjustments need to be made to proceed towards the intended goals or objectives.[14] Evaluation involves assessing the impact of social interventions against an explicit set of goals . A critical part of this process is ensuring that there is transparency and accountability in achieving objectives. It is important that the government holds itself accountable to the goals of the NAP, and one way this can be achieved is by making data or other information publicly available and easily trackable.[15]

A strong MEAL strategy is crucial to effectively implementing a NAP as it can inform policy making and support strategic planning by improving the links between policy interventions and their outcomes and impacts. It also enhances accountability and provides "legitimacy for the use of public funds and resources".[16] Additionally, monitoring and evaluating is an important way to build a strong global evidence base of what methods do and do not work in responding to gender-based violence.[17] It is also important in terms of tracking progress and effectiveness and can be used to help identify and manage risks that could affect the program.[18]

The Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in Monitoring

CSO participation in NAP monitoring is also critical, as CSOs are typically well-positioned to support effective implementation.[19] CSOs can offer "direct input on topics related to the security needs and concerns of the community and the existing status of and challenges related to gender

[13] Amanda Dale et al., "A Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence" (April 2021), online: *National Action Plan - Roadmap for the NAP on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence* <https://nationalactionplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAP-Final-Report.pdf > at 204.

[14] Ibid., at 205.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., at 207.

[17] "RESPECT Framework Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Guidance" (June 2020), online: *UN Women* <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/RESPECT-implementation-guide-Monitoring-and-evaluation-guidance-en.pdf > at 2.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Gorana Odanović, "The Role of CSOs in Monitoring and Evaluating National Action Plan (NAP) for Implementation of UNSCR 1325" (July 2013), online: *Belgrade Centre for Security Policy* <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/168045/the_role_of_csos_in_monitoring.pdf> at 2.

equality as well as support the inclusive and representative development of strategies to prevent, manage and resolve violence, conflict and crime."[20]

It is important to Include CSOs in the monitoring process because they represent an efficient and effective means of obtaining valuable input from citizens related to their priorities and needs. CSO and citizen involvement in this way allows for greater "democratic accountability and transparency between government actors and civil society."[21] CSOs not only work to hold the government accountable to implementing the NAP but they are also important sources of information and can transmit messaging to the general public.

Challenges with Monitoring

This section provides a summary of some of the factors that contribute to the challenges civil society organizations may encounter when monitoring countries' progress towards implementing the commitments outlined in their respective national action plans ("NAP").

A briefing paper by the United Nations Development Programme ("UNDP") states that few NAPs have a publicly available monitoring framework and the necessary resources, knowledge, and political commitment dedicated towards effective and evidence-based evaluation processes.[22] With regards to civil society organizations specifically, this may entail limited capacity, technical skills and training, and funding opportunities to design and implement effective monitoring frameworks.[23] Furthermore, UNDP states that state actors are at various stages of development and implementation of their NAPs and offer varying degrees of transparency, engagement, and consultation with other actors, including civil society organizations, to ensure greater accountability and oversight.[24] Moreover, limited political commitment by state actors to prioritize these complex issues may impact timely implementation and evaluation of various initiatives targeted towards ending violence against women.[25]

---

[20] Gorana Odanović, "The Role of CSOs in Monitoring and Evaluating National Action Plan (NAP) for Implementation of UNSCR 1325" (July 2013), online: *Belgrade Centre for Security Policy* <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/168045/the_role_of_csos_in_monitoring.pdf> at 2.
[21] Ibid., at 4.
[22] Simpson Ruth, "Briefing Paper: Monitoring National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism" (May 2020), online: *United Nations Development Programme* <www.international-alert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Preventing-Violent-Extremism-Monitoring-National-Action-Plans-EN-2020.pdf> at 2.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Gender Associations International Consulting, "Final Evaluation of the United Kingdom's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022" (June 2022), online: *UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office*

In "Violence Against Women: A Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators," Shelah Bloom further highlights that limited access to relevant data, especially in conflict-prone regions, hinders the ability to measure the effectiveness and impact of service delivery and programming initiatives and objectives.[26] Notably, some monitoring frameworks may rely on assessments such as survey data and consultation to measure the effectiveness of NAP implementation initiatives. However, Bloom states that a potential consequence of these approaches is that it relies on women's self-reporting, which may inadvertently lead to significant underreporting due to stigma and the lack of adequate safety and confidentiality measures to avoid further harm amongst other factors.[27] The issue of underreporting is especially prevalent in countries experiencing armed conflict and militarization, which further limits the geographical reach for data collection efforts and engagement with impacted communities.[28]

The absence of best practices and evaluation standards may further contribute to fostering inconsistencies and duplication in monitoring efforts as well as the failure to apply a gender-sensitive lens given the victims' vulnerability and diverse experiences.[29] For example, this may include a lack of representation of a particular segment of the population and double counting, which may reduce the integrity and accuracy of some findings.[30] War Child Canada and the Women's Refugee Commission also stated that the lack of established relationships with neighbouring communities may limit access to information, thus further exacerbating the knowledge gaps in women's experiences with gender-based violence.[31] As such, when combined with "implementing, reporting and reviewing timeframes, as well as rigidity of monitoring and reporting frames," the responsiveness rates may be insufficient for accurate monitoring purposes.[32] To conclude, in 2013, Gorana Odanovic of the Belgrade Center for Security Policy

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1153012/final-evaluation_of-uk-national-action-plan-women-peace-security-2018-2022.pdf> at 11.

[26] Shelah S. Bloom, "Violence Against Women and Girls: A Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators*"* (October 2008), online: <www.igwg.org/wp-content/uploads/igwg/files/VAW%20and%20G_Compendium%20of%20ME%20Indicators.pdf> at 9.

[27] Ibid, 19.

[28] Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, "Security Council Resolution 1325: Civil Society Monitoring Report 2014" (2014), online: <https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014_Women-Count-2014.pdf> at 12.

[29] Simpson Ruth, "*Briefing Paper: Monitoring National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism,* (May 2020), online: *United Nations Development Programme"* <www.international-alert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Preventing-Violent-Extremism-Monitoring-National-Action-Plans-EN-2020.pdf> at 2.

[30] Shelah S. Bloom, *Violence Against Women and Girls: A Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators,* (October 2008), online: <www.igwg.org/wp-content/uploads/igwg/files/VAW%20and%20G_Compendium%20of%20ME%20Indicators.pdf> at 25.

[31] Women's Refugee Commission, *A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluation of Gender-Based Violence: Programming in Restricted Environments,* (2020), online: <https://warchild.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Warchild_Digital_Toolkit_Sept13-ENGLISH.pdf> at 14.

[32] Simpson Ruth, "Briefing Paper: Monitoring National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism" (May 2020), online: *United Nations Development Programme* <www.international-alert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Preventing-Violent-Extremism-Monitoring-National-Action-Plans-EN-2020.pdf> at 3.

wrote that the participation of civil society in monitoring and evaluation is necessary; however, engagement is "often reduced to a single CSO consultation and only in a formal and limited context. As a consequence, meaningful dialogue and cooperation between state institutions and CSOs in NAP implementation, monitoring and evaluation is either missing altogether or limited to the point of ineffectiveness."[33]

Gaps in the Research

a) Absence of Monitoring Reports by CSOs

Despite research efforts into several (primarily) commonwealth countries to determine which effective monitoring mechanisms can be adopted by Canadian CSO's to oversee the Canadian government's enforcement and support of the NAP to end GBV, there exists one overarching gap: CSO's are either generally unable to monitor government NAP compliance or are unable to share this information publicly. While it is unclear which of the foregoing a CSO from a reviewed country falls into, it is worthwhile to look at specific examples to demonstrate the obscurity found through the research:

United Kingdom

Covering the period of 2014-2017, the UK adopted a NAP on Women, Peace and Security which, in part, stood for the protection of women and girls.[34] In it, they recognized that continuous monitoring of the NAP's implementation is a task better suited for "diverse actors" such as CSOs as opposed to governments. That said, when looking through CSO's in the UK that work in the same space as the NAP topic, it was found that there were no grassroots monitoring efforts, or at least none that were being made available to the public. Instead, what was found were steps taken by Gender Associations International Consulting, a firm working with the UK government, to monitor the NAPs success.

---

[33] Gorana Odanović, "The Role of CSOs in Monitoring and Evaluating National Action Plan (NAP) for Implementation of UNSCR 1325" (July 2013), online: *Belgrade Centre for Security Policy* <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/168045/the_role_of_csos_in_monitoring.pdf> at 1.
[34] Government of the United Kingdom, "UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022: Guidance Note – Implementing Strategic Outcome 3: Gender-based violence" https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/959778/UK_NAP_Guidance_on_Strategic_Outcome_3-GBV.pdf.

Nigeria

In 2017, the Nigerian government released their second NAP on Women, Peace, and Security, which was effective until 2020.[35] In this NAP, they [the government] recognized the importance of integrating civil society in decision making and monitoring of NAP objectives, so they outlined various opportunities for CSOs to participate in these processes. The NAP also briefly discussed the development of a template for evaluating progress towards implementing some of the initiatives. That said, there is no indication that Nigerian CSOs engaging in the kind of work covered by the NAP actually took on those initiatives, which include monitoring.

On the topic of GBV monitoring in particular, Nigeria, along with the UNDP, have developed the National GBV Data Situation Room.[36] The foregoing electronic framework allows for the reporting of gender-based violence incidents and service delivery. However, while such a system allows for the collection and analysis of high-quality data that can be used to determine government compliance with their own NAP to end GBV, it is another non-CSO monitoring effort.

New Zealand

Like the UK and Nigeria, New Zealand also adopted an NAP on Women, Peace and Security, which was to be enforced from 2015-2019. The NAP had 3 key priorities it sought to address: (1) representation and meaningful participation of women at all levels of peace and security governance; (2) promotion of all pertinent rights for women and girls; and (3) the protection of rights for women and girls in fragile, conflict and post-conflict situations.[37] As part of the NAP, a working group was created with the intention of "consider[ing] interim progress reports" on the implementation of the NAP's mandates.[38] Progress reports were informed by submissions from participants, such as CSOs, who were to nominate a representative to "feed a consolidated view directly into the annual reporting process." That said, there does not appear to be public access to

---

[35] Government of Nigeria, "National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security in Nigeria for the period 2017 – 2020" (2017), online: <www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/NAPNigeria.pdf>.

[36] United Nations Development Programme, "Harnessing the Power of Data for Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in Nigeria" (June 2022), online: <www.undp.org/nigeria/news/harnessing-power-data-gender-based-violence-prevention-and-response-nigeria>.

[37] New Zealand Government, "New Zealand National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, Including 1325, on Women, Peace & Security 2015-2019" online: <*NZ National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security* http://peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/NZ%20National%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Women%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf> at 4.

[38] Ibid., at 34.

these "consolidated views" by CSOs on government compliance with the NAP—assuming the feedback exists and was provided at all as outlined in the NAP.

b) Semi-Exception: Jamaica and its CSO's Indirect Monitoring of NAP Progress

Jamaica

Unlike the above-mentioned countries and their CSOs, Jamaican CSOs are more transparent in how they monitor their country's NAPs. Consider the NAP for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence, 2018-2023 as an example. In it, the crucial role of CSOs in the development and delivery of children's services is discussed as "support[ing] the mission" of the NAP.[39] There is also discussion of how CSOs advance the NAP through public education (material dissemination), lobbying, research, policy and legislative advocacy, legal support, campaigning, promoting the participation of children in knowing and accessing their rights, and producing and providing international reports.[40]

The NAP does not identify CSOs as bearing a responsibility to monitor progress on the NAP, but some can still be viewed as doing so [monitoring]. Hear the Children Cry, a non-profit based in Kingston, Jamaica, aims to provide urgent support to Jamaican youth facing social and/or economic challenges. On their website, they provide access to a series of statements addressed to Jamaica's Prime Minister on matters related to the NAP [such as child sex abuse]—with the intention being to hold the government accountable to its promises. For instance, in January of 2022 they gathered data from senior medical officers in Jamaican hospitals as well as local organizations that suggested that there has been a significant increase in child-sex abuse, a major topic covered by the mentioned NAP, since the pandemic. Accordingly, by collecting such data and then publicly addressing the government on its limited efforts to prevent this harm from re-occurring, this CSO can be viewed as both monitoring and evaluating the government's commitment to its own NAP.

That said, it is important to note that this is not a formal monitoring scheme in that the CSO does not address or assess compliance with every issue the NAP aims to resolve. Accordingly, if a

---

[39] Government of Jamaica, "National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence (NPACV) 2018-2023" (June 2018) online: <National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence 2018-2023 - DocsLib> at 54.
[40] Ibid.

similar process is to be recommended to Canadian CSO's for monitoring NAPs [specifically the one to end GBV, as it is the subject of this report], it will have to be more structured and far more comprehensive.

Country Spotlight and Key Learnings

Country Spotlight + Key Learnings	
Australia	Australia implemented a National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010-2022), but it lacked a robust MEAL strategy, which created a significant weakness in the plan.[41] The Australian government established a research-based organization to monitor the NAP, called Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (ANROWS). ANROWS is embedded in the NAPs architecture and works with the Australian government to develop strategies and build an evidence base that supports ending violence against women and children.[42] This research-based organization has other functions, including collecting and disseminating data, evaluation, independent research, training, and providing technical advice.[43] The ANROWS and community organizations in the GBV field felt that there was weakness in the government planning with respect to a MEAL strategy. Interviews with these organizations revealed that going forward, they recommend creating a targeted method for this function, that can drill down to specific public policy responses, service delivery models and decisions, and evaluate what is actually making a difference in the lives of women in the country.[44]
South Africa	In the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security 2020-2025, the Government of South Africa recognized the instrumental role of civil society organizations in promoting safety and peacebuilding.[45] The commitments in the NAP were also echoed in the National Strategic Plan (the "NSP") on Gender Based Violence and Femicide released in 2020.[46]

The NAP was developed in consultation with members of civil society in order to |

---

[41] Amanda Dale et al., "A Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence" (April 2021), online: *National Action Plan - Roadmap for the NAP on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence* <https://nationalactionplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAP-Final-Report.pdf > at 212.

[42] Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (ANROWS), "Who We Are" (2021), online: <https://www.anrows.org.au/about/>.

[43] Amanda Dale et al., "A Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence" (April 2021), online: *National Action Plan - Roadmap for the NAP on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence* <https://nationalactionplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAP-Final-Report.pdf > at 214.

[44]Ibid., at 369.

[45] Government of South Africa, "National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2025" (2020), online: <www.dirco.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/sa_national_action_plan_women_peace_security_2020-2025.pdf> at 5.

[46] Government of South Africa, "National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence & Femicide*"* (March 2020), online: <www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202006/stratplan-gbvs.pdf>.

draw on their experiences to identify key issues and actions for promoting the NAP's objectives. With regards to monitoring and evaluation, the Government of South Africa outlined some of the following goals:

- In 2018, the Government of South Africa announced its Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (GRPBM&E) Framework in an effort to bridge the gap between effective gender-responsive monitoring, evaluation, planning, and budgeting. The NAP discussed the government's commitment towards further development and implementation of the GRPBM&E[47] amongst other monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure regular reviews.
- Creating additional opportunities for civil society to participate in the development and assessment of gender-sensitive laws, policies, and strategies, including through the development of a tracking tool to monitor educational campaigns, program development and service delivery.[48]

In the NSP, the Government of South Africa stated that civil society will implement some of the programmes targeted towards supporting victims of violence and recognizing the important role they play in monitoring and evaluation. The government also recognized the importance of creating greater integration of the NSP with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation's processes.

In light of these objectives, our research suggests that there is an absence of information about the steps that civil society organizations have taken to monitor the government's progress towards meeting the commitments outlined in the NAP and the NSP. Outside of the NAP context, the South African Institute of International Affairs published a guide to assist civil society in monitoring the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism developed in 2003 as a self monitoring tool by member states of the African Union.[49] Additionally, the Commonwealth Foundation and the Co-operative for Research and Education (CORE), South Africa developed a "Civil Society Accountability: Principles and Practice – A toolkit for civil society organisations in South Africa" to promote accountability in their daily activities and to identify gaps for future actions.[50] Although this toolkit is not specific to the prevention of gender-based violence in South Africa, it provides a foundational framework for evaluating progress towards achieving specified objectives. In summary, an article by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes located in South Africa states that with regards to NAPs, "member states with NAPs lack adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, hindering their

---

[47] Government of South Africa, "National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2025" (2020), online: <www.dirco.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/sa_national_action_plan_women_peace_security_2020-2025.pdf> at 83.
[48] Ibid., at 72.
[49] South African Institute of International Affairs, "Monitoring APRM Implementation: A Civil Society How-To-Guide" (September 2014), online: <https://saiia.org.za/news/monitoring-aprm-implementation-a-civil-society-how-to-guide/#:~:text=Launched%20in%20Lusaka%2C%20Zambia%20during%20a%20workshop%20on,Peer%20Review%20Mechanism%3A%20A%20Civil%20Society%20How%E2%80%93To%20Guide.%E2%80%99>.
[50] Commonwealth Foundation, "Civil Society Accountability Principles and Practice: South Africa Toolkit" (2013), online: <https://commonwealthfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Civil_Society_Accountability_Toolkit_South_Africa.pdf>.

	ability to report on the agenda."[51]
United States	In 2023, the United States ("U.S.") released its first-ever U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence: Strategies for Action ("National Plan") and established a White House Gender Policy Council tasked with developing a government-wide plan to address gender-based violence.[52] The National Plan was developed with the participation of civil society and other actors who will continue being engaged.[53] In short, the National Plan does not provide many details about how progress will be evaluated to ensure objectives are being met. In 2020, the U.S. also released the Department of State's Plan to Implement the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security 2020-2023 (the "Strategy") in response to the *Women, Peace and Security Act* of 2017, which stated that the National Security Council would coordinate consultations with civil society to share information on the progress towards meeting the Strategy's objectives.[54] Outside of the National Plan context, the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), which is a coalition of over 100 women's organizations worldwide headquartered in New York,[55] launched a 1325 Civil Society Scorecard in 2019 to track the implementation of Women, Peace, and Security resolutions.[56] This scorecard was developed to compliment the "Women Count" project, which is "a first civil society-led monitoring of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 initiative" implemented between 2010-2014.[57] As part of the "Women Count" project, GNWP worked with civil society organizations in 24 countries to "collect and analyze monitoring date, and prepare monitoring reports," most recent one being published in 2014 (which did not provide an overview of the evaluation framework used to assess the objectives and identify recommendations).[58]
UK	Under the UK's national action plan related to Women, Peace, and Security, they recognize that governments are not properly able to monitor NAPs and state that in order to ensure the implementation of the NAP, continuous monitoring from diverse actors is important. Although monitoring was not conducted by civil society groups, rather it was conducted by the Gender Associations International Consulting, a consultancy firm working for the UK government, there are some aspects of the monitoring that could be helpful to civil society groups seeking to monitor NAPs.

---

[51] Thokozile Nkgadima, "Monitoring and Evaluating the WPS Agenda in the SADC Region" (October 2022), online: <www.accord.org.za/analysis/monitoring-and-evaluating-the-wps-agenda-in-the-sadc-region/>.
[52] Government of the United States, "Release of the National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence: Strategies for Action" (May 2023), online: <www.whitehouse.gov/gpc/briefing-room/2023/05/25/release-of-the-national-plan-to-end-gender-based-violence-strategies-for-action/>.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Government of the United States, "The Department of State's Plan to Implement the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security 2020-2023" (2020), online: <www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/20-01943-SGWI_v11_forWeb_Bookmarks508.pdf> at 5.
[55] Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, "About GNWP," online: <https://gnwp.org/about-gnwp/>.
[56] Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, "1325 Civil Society Scorecard," online: <https://gnwp.org/1325-civil-society-scorecard/>.
[57] Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, "Women Count: Civil Society Monitoring Report on UN Security Council Resolution 1325," online: <https://gnwp.org/women-count/>.
[58] Ibid.

> The monitoring was conducted through document review and interviews. The document review included review of policy briefings and annual reports to assess the relevance of the NAP in these policies/reports. In their case selected case studies, a mix of government officials and civil society leaders were interviewed to gain insight on the implementation of the NAP. However, the report found that due to the lack of an applied Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework and without benchmark indicators, the true impact of the NAP activities cannot be empirically assessed.

Conclusion: Best Practices

Ensuring the effective implementation of Canada's ten-year NAP to End Gender-Based Violence requires comprehensive monitoring and evaluation. CSOs play an important part in monitoring and evaluation efforts as they ensure independent oversight of government actions and hold governments accountable to the commitments they make. While many NAPs, including Canada's NAP to End Gender Based Violence, highlight the importance of CSOs monitoring government efforts to implement NAPs, there is little evidence of the monitoring being conducted by CSOs. Without proper monitoring and evaluation, citizens have no indication of how well their governments are holding up to their commitments.

Recently, NAP's have been increasingly omitting the role of CSOs in their monitoring frameworks. In 2020, Caitlin Hamilton, Nyibeny Naam, and Laura J. Shepherd of the University of Sydney created a dataset analyzing the trends in various NAPs from around the globe.[59] One of the areas considered was the "level of civil society involvement in the production and implementation of the [NAP]."[60] The report states that the most recent NAPs "mention civil society in passing" without elaborating on the extent of engagement and consultation as well as whether the feedback was incorporated in the production of the NAP.[61] This trend is concerning as it indicates a diminishing recognition of the essential role that CSOs play in the development and implementation of NAPs. It is essential that CSOs actively participate in monitoring the

---

[59] Caitlin Hamilton, et al., "Twenty Years of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans: Analysis and Lessons Learned" (March 2020) online: <*University of Sydney,* www.wpsnaps.org/app/uploads/2020/03/Twenty-Years-of-Women-Peace-and-Security-National-Action-Plans_Report_Final_Web.pdf.
[60] Ibid., at 3.
[61] Ibid.

implementation of NAPs to ensure transparency, accountability, and the effective realization of the set goals.

Based on best practices from around the world as well as identified gaps in monitoring efforts, we recommend CSOs seeking to monitor Canada's NAP consider the following:

1. **Make monitoring and evaluation efforts transparent and publicly available.** While most NAPs outline monitoring and evaluation frameworks that call on civil society groups to conduct external monitoring, the lack of publicly available information on these monitoring efforts from civil society groups limits the effectiveness of these NAPs.

2. **MEAL strategies must outline a specific method for tracking data, along with specific outcomes and metrics that it seeks to monitor.** As recommended by the government of Australia in light of their challenges monitoring their National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010-2022), a robust MEAL strategy is necessary to evaluate what is actually making a difference in the lives of women.[62]

3. **Monitoring efforts should track both legislative changes and the respective impacts on communities.** As with other NAPs, the true impact of NAPs is seen on the ground in impacted communities. As such, effective monitoring must also include speaking with community leaders and experts in the field to assess the impact of government initiatives and legislation aimed at advancing the NAP.

4. **Members of civil society groups should meet regularly with respective the government body/ agency to outline progress.** Monitoring efforts must be consistent, and feedback should be regularly provided to the respective government bodies to allow for improvement.

---

[62]Amanda Dale et al., "A Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence" (April 2021), online: *National Action Plan - Roadmap for the NAP on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence* <https://nationalactionplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAP-Final-Report.pdf > at 369.

5. **An intersectional analysis must be implemented to account for the impact on the most marginalized communities.** By applying an intersectional lens, monitoring efforts can identify gaps in support and progress for marginalized groups, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and effective NAP.