



# Introduction and purpose

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The Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda is a commitment toward addressing, and working toward eliminating, gender inequality as a root cause of conflict that leads to insecurity as well as persistent and recurring instability in any given situation, institution or context. It is also a commitment to advance gender equality through responses to conflict and instability and ensuring that interventions do not reinforce or exacerbate such inequalities.

Through the four pillars of participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery, the WPS agenda is built on a long-standing body of knowledge and research and reflects a requirement for gender analysis of conflict, peace and security. The WPS agenda is a feminist framework based on United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 (2000), and related resolutions (9 to date), that recognizes that diverse women must be critical actors in all efforts to achieve sustainable, international peace and security. It recognizes the disproportionate and unique impact armed conflict can have on women and girls.

In 2008, the groundbreaking UNSC Resolution 1820 on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) acknowledged that when sexual violence is used as a tactic of war it can pose a threat to international peace and security. Rape and other forms of sexual violence are no longer viewed as inevitable side effects of armed conflict. Depending on the situation, such acts could constitute a crime against humanity and/or a war crime. The UNSC Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security also highlight the impact of conflict and crises on men and boys, including their experiences with CRSV and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). The resolutions have also brought forward men and boys' active and robust roles in addressing the symptoms of, and ultimately contributing to, the elimination of gender inequality for everyone.

Gender inequality in patriarchal societies also negatively impacts men and boys, particularly through harmful definitions of masculinity. As such, the WPS agenda is a transformative equality agenda benefiting all. Increased Canadian Department of National Defence (DND) and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) knowledge, capacity and capability to implement the WPS agenda is critical and will strengthen CAF operational effectiveness at home and abroad, as well as supporting Canada's human rights commitments.



# Context

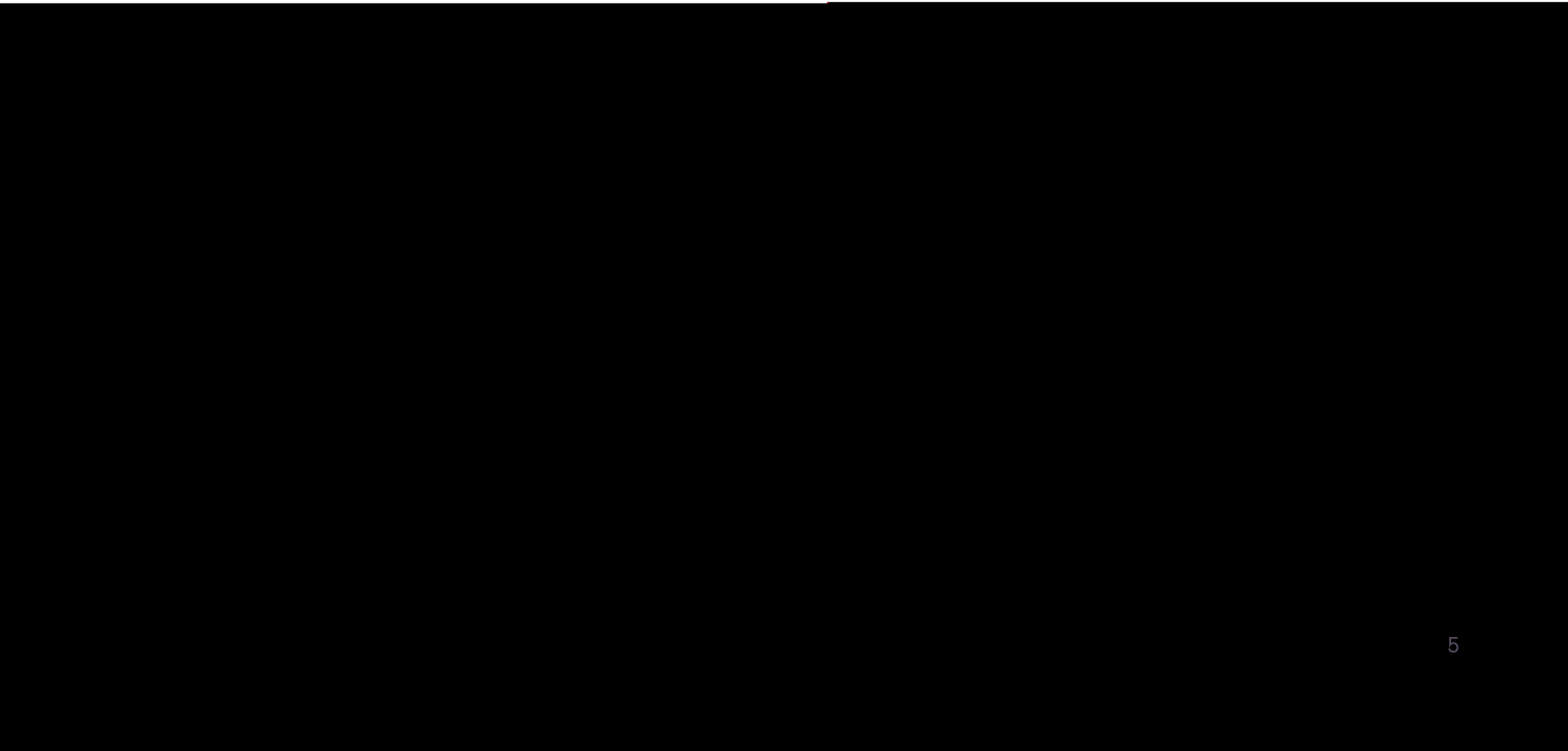
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The WPS agenda calls for all actors to incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts, reflecting the commitment of all UN members made in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, informing decision making through gender-based analysis. Since 1995, the Government of Canada has required the use of gender-based analysis (GBA) to inform the development of policies, programs and legislation. GBA later evolved to gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) to place greater emphasis on it being an intersectional analytical tool that examines relevant intersecting identities, such as ethnicity, race, age, rank, etc., with gender. Such analyses inform an understanding of, and approaches to, peace and security and ensure that actions to address traditional and non-traditional defence threats enable long-term peace and security.

Over the period of Canada's last National Action Plan on WPS (from 2017 to 2022), threats to democracy, peace, security and the rules-based international order have intensified and accelerated, and new threats have emerged altogether. Further, in the context of increasingly disruptive weather events, Canadians have looked to the Government of Canada when local and provincial capacities were overwhelmed. Canada's defence policy ensures that the Department of National Defence (DND) has the necessary direction, resources and future-ready capabilities to be ready and resilient in this increasingly dangerous, dynamic, and complex global and domestic security environment. Addressing these security challenges will require reflection on National Defence capabilities, as well as how to use these capabilities to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda.

The WPS agenda features prominently in the policies, action plans, strategies and training of the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The priorities and guidelines articulated by the UN and NATO inform Canada's integration of WPS principles. At the same time, Canada plays a key role in advancing the WPS agenda in multilateral organizations, including the UN and NATO, and is a leader on WPS issues among NATO allies. To this end, DND/CAF continues to develop policies, formulate plans, and conduct training and operations that align with NATO and UN direction, standards and targets. This includes improving the safety and security of women peacekeepers, strengthening the professional conduct of peacekeeping personnel, and increasing accountability for the integration of gender perspectives in all peacekeeping components.

that there are unequal power relationships, differences in access to, and control over, resources, and a need for Indigenous Peoples'





## Focus area 2: Security, justice and accountability

Conflict, insecurity and defence issues are becoming more complex. This requires more nuanced knowledge of how gender inequality is a causal factor of conflict leading to differential and disproportionate impacts on women, men, girls, boys and gender-diverse people. Further, a deeper understanding is required of how gender inequality influences the tactics of actors and stakeholders in a conflict or context of insecurity and how gender biases can create vulnerabilities or operational risks. These risks include potential failures to prevent and protect CAF members and local communities that are engaged in or impacted by military operations or defence approaches.

The nature of conflicts and insecurities is also changing. For example, there is rapid development of new, disruptive technologies resulting in malicious activities, such as cyber threats, disinformation campaigns, cyber violence and online recruitment. Gender-based power dynamics that exist in traditional conflict spaces are amplified in the online space. Defence intelligence production requires a deeper knowledge of the WPS agenda and use of GBA Plus, as the knowledge generated is critical to the planning and conduct of operations. Intelligence production includes reviewing how and from whom data and information is collected, how it is analyzed and used to inform early warning indicators, as well as decision making on military operations in terms of objectives. CAF approaches to countering violent extremism/organizations, as well as preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers, also need to be informed by gender-based analysis. Lastly, the nexus of climate change, peace and security, and gender inequality is increasingly relevant in understanding and informing defence policy and military responses as climate change is an accelerator of instability. Initiatives under this focus area will seek to:

- increase integration of women, peace and security issues and gender perspectives in military operational planning, implementation and reporting

- strengthen a gender-responsive intelligence production cycle

- strengthen direction on, and use of, gender-responsive approaches to the prevention of, and response to, the unlawful recruitment and use of girl and boy child soldiers

- increase knowledge and awareness on the impact of the nexus of gender inequality and evolving issues, such as cybersecurity, countering violent extremism and climate change, on peace and security

## Focus area 3: Crisis response



## Focus area 4: Sexual and gender-based violence

An important element of the WPS agenda is the recognition that rape, and other forms of sexual violence may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide. Globally, it is recognized that women and girls disproportionately experience discrimination and Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV), but men and boys are also affected. Further, people with intersecting identities (ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities) often experience higher rates of rape and sexual violence. However, there are significant data gaps in this area.

SGBV is a vast umbrella term that refers to a broad continuum of violence, ranging from sexual harassment to CRSV (as a deliberate tactic of war) to human trafficking. Canada has committed to preventing, responding to and ending impunity for SGBV perpetrated in conflict. When conducting operations in any context, armed forces have a responsibility and role within their mandates to prevent and protect in their responses to SGBV. In the last few years, NATO has developed new policies, action plans and military guidance on SEA and CRSV, with implications for member nation alignment. SGBV is experienced in numerous circumstances, including when civilians interact with security force personnel and when they are employed within DND/CAF. Thus, concrete action must be taken to prevent and respond to SGBV within the Defence Team. The Defence Team is working to strengthen the prevention of sexual

align principal policies and directives with the WPS agenda and inform them with GBA Plus and related Government of Canada action plans

## Focus area 6: Inclusion





**1230** Strengthened direction on, and use of, gender-responsive approaches to the prevention of, and response to, the unlawful recruitment and use of girl and boy child soldiers

**1240** Increased knowledge and awareness on the impact of the nexus of gender inequality and evolving issues (e.g. cybersecurity, countering violent extremism, and climate change) on peace and security.

**FOCUS AREA 3 : CRISIS RESPONSE**

**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME**

**1300** Strengthened gender-responsive CAF operational planning and implementation in humanitarian responses

**IMMEDIATE OUTCOME**

**1310** Enhanced gender-responsive operational planning for Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Response

**1320** Enhanced gender responsive Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations for Canadians

**FOCUS AREA 4: SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME**

**1400** Enhanced prevention and response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

**IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES**

**1410** Strengthened gender-responsive direction and capacity on the prevention and response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)

**1420** Strengthened gender-responsive direction and capacity on the prevention and response to Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

**1430** Strengthened gender-responsive and inclusive systems and services for the prevention of, and

**FOCUS AREA 5: LEADERSHIP AND CAPABILITIES**

**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME**

**IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES**

<b>1540</b> Strengthened technical cooperation with allied and partner militaries to build capacity on WPS agenda implementation
<b>1550</b> Alignment of principal DND/CAF policies and directives with the WPS agenda that are also informed by GBA Plus and related Government of Canada action plans (e.g., GBV, MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+)
<b>FOCUS AREA 6: INCLUSION</b>
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME</b>
<b>1600</b> Increased representation and meaningful participation of diverse women within the Defence Team
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</b>
<b>1610</b> Increased understanding of, and targeted responses to barriers to the recruitment of diverse women within the Defence Team
<b>1620</b> Increased understanding of, and targeted responses to barriers to the retention and career progression of diverse women within the Defence Team
<b>1630</b> Revised systems to support the increased deployment of uniformed women on UN Peace Operations