



Government  
of Canada

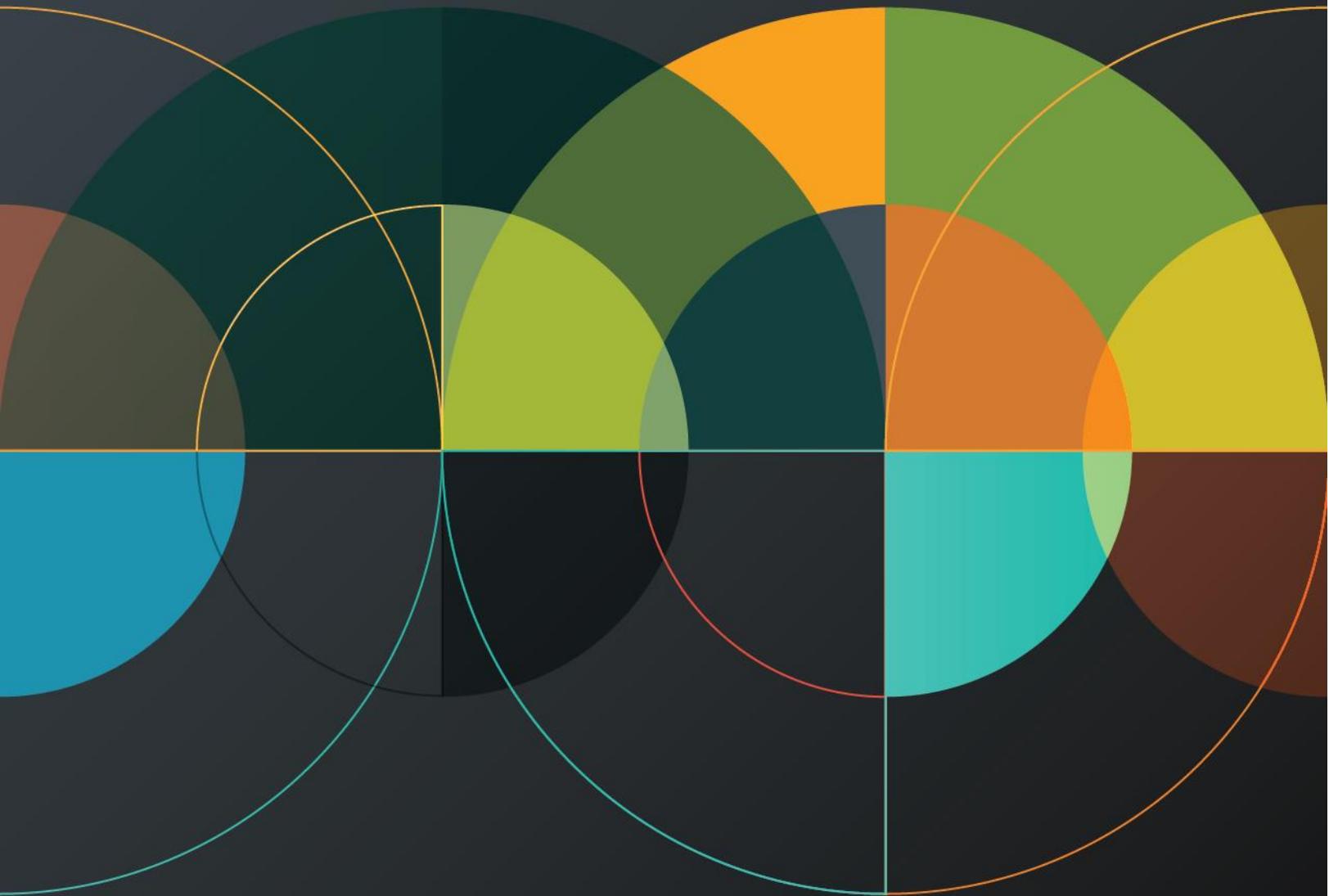
Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada



# **Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces Implementation Plan for Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security – 2023 to 2029**

---



# Table of contents

---

- Introduction and purpose
- Context
- Focus areas
  - Focus area 1: Building and sustaining peace
  - Focus area 2: Security, justice and accountability
  - Focus area 3: Crisis response
  - Focus area 4: Sexual and gender-based violence
  - Focus area 5: Leadership and capabilities
  - Focus area 6: Inclusion
- Measuring progress – Performance measurement framework



# Introduction and purpose

---

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.

Through its resolutions, the UNSC calls for National Action Plans on the implementation of the WPS agenda. These action plans reflect national commitments, demonstrate priorities and provide information on how the implementation of the WPS agenda is governed, funded and monitored. Canada launched its first National Action Plan ("action plan") on WPS in 2011, its second in 2017 and its third in 2023 for the period between 2023 and 2029. Government departments are responsible for developing their own implementation plans to contribute to the Government of Canada's objectives in the National Action Plan. In this regard, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF) Implementation Plan (IP) builds on the previous two Defence Team IPs and ensures policy coherence and pan-government alignment. In particular, the defence sector seeks to strengthen the capacities to advance the WPS agenda across all missions and address long-standing inequalities, barriers and harm within the institution.

DND/CAF recognizes that understanding gendered power dynamics and gender inequalities, along with other human rights violations, is critical for informing gender-responsive mandates, strategies and tactics at the policy and operational levels, as well as internally at the institutional level. Understanding the common and differential impacts of a crisis on diverse women, men, girls, boys and gender-diverse people must also inform CAF decision making in order to uphold gender equality, human rights, peace and security.

The use of the term “diverse women” is deliberate: this is an explicit reminder that it is critical to understand differing strategic interests and needs and the various barriers for different women based on the intersection of their identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc.) with their gender. Gender-responsive decision making is of importance to domestic and international operations in recognizing and addressing exclusion, marginalization, harassment and sexual violence experienced by those employed in the defence and security sector or interacting with defence personnel.

This new DND/CAF IP is informed by several pan-government initiatives, understanding of the commitments made by participating departments, and the expectations clearly articulated in the Minister of National Defence’s mandate letter. Current priorities are to build an inclusive and diverse defence team with a healthy workplace free from any form of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual misconduct, harassment and discrimination. The new IP will also address the profound systemic inequities and disparities that remain present in Canadian society and in its core institutions, and it will work to improve diversity in the workforce, including increasing the recruitment, retention and career progression of diverse women.



# Context

---

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.

Concurrently, events in Canada and elsewhere led to increased recognition of pervasive, systemic injustices, which resulted in calls from many sectors across society for substantive social changes, including within the Government of Canada. Both external perspectives, from multiple sources, and the clear voices of those currently in uniform identified that diverse women, men and gender-diverse members of the CAF continue to experience sexual harassment, with weak or ineffective responses to hold individuals and institutions accountable or facilitate restorative healing. The last few years have highlighted that substantive changes are required to address institutionalized and systemic factors within the CAF that have resulted in previous efforts failing to achieve intended results. Further, the results of the annual Public Service Employee survey and other research demonstrate that more is required to ensure that all members of the defence team experience a positive, safe workplace and have access to effective supports if they are subject to harmful behaviour. Finally, the Clerk of the Privy Council stated in his 2021 Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service that "as public servants come forward and courageously share their lived experiences, the urgency of removing systemic racism from our institutions and from our culture becomes more evident."

Additionally, since the last action plan, the Government of Canada has committed to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This means that when conducting GBA Plus, particular attention will be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and people with disabilities. This means we must understand

that there are unequal power relationships, differences in access to, and control over, resources, and a need for Indigenous Peoples' participation in decision making, in full recognition of their human rights.

DND/CAF has had mixed results delivering on previous WPS commitments. Successful initiatives have enhanced awareness of WPS principles, such as conducting GBA Plus. The percentage of women serving on international missions has increased, including a significant number serving in senior leadership positions. However, the CAF is lagging in efforts to achieve the aspirational target of 25% women by 2026. Significant changes to internal culture, conduct and daily practices are required, with respect to how women, racialized people, Indigenous Peoples, and diverse individuals are disproportionately experiencing harmful behaviours and institutional betrayal. Additionally, more is required to provide appropriate support for women who are conducting operations or deployed as part of multi-national missions. Analyses of past plans have informed the development of outcomes under this current Action Plan.

With the establishment of the new Chief Professional Conduct and Culture, a range of initiatives will position the Defence Team to evolve its culture, become more reflective of Canada's changing demographics and norms, and attract, retain and inspire a highly competent and sophisticated workforce. In the context of increasingly demanding missions and challenging Canadian labour force demographics, DND/CAF is committed to establishing an inclusive culture, continuously aligning policies and programs to attract and advance individuals representing Canada's pluralistic diversity working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to address colonial legacies through meaningful changes to systems and structures that ensure Indigenous ways of knowing and doing are understood, valued, practised and leveraged.

This IP includes responses to a number of reports and recommendations specific to DND/CAF, such as the Independent External Comprehensive Review, conducted by former Supreme Court justice the Honourable Louise Arbour, the Heyder-Beattie class action settlement, and broader strategies including Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy from 2019 to 2022, Canada's Disability Inclusion Action Plan, the 2022 National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People National Action Plan, and the Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan.



# Focus areas

---

DND/CAF will make meaningful contributions to each of the six Action Plan focus areas. As a broad overview, DND/CAF's core issue areas cover internal institutional change with regards to systems, structures, and culture, as well as both domestic and international military operations. Further, within these six focus areas, the Defence Team's broadening and deepening of its commitments reflects a more nuanced approach to implementing the WPS agenda.

Internally, DND/CAF is implementing significant initiatives to address the harm arising from unprofessional conduct and sexual violence; and to confront biases and remove barriers that diverse women face in terms of inclusion, as well as barriers to career progression and optimizing career success.

Externally, the CAF will strengthen its implementation of the WPS agenda through its mission objectives. The effectiveness of military planning and activities will be enhanced by incorporating WPS knowledge and principles into international engagements, approaches to intelligence, the prevention and response to the recruitment and use of girl and boy child soldiers, as well as understanding the nexus of gender inequality and evolving issues (e.g., climate change on peace and security, cybersecurity, the prevention and countering of violent extremism). GBA Plus and WPS agenda research and lessons will therefore strengthen operation orders, contingency plans, and guidance to task force commanders and reporting mechanisms. Tailored training and supports will be strengthened for deployed Gender Advisors and Focal Points (GENADs and GFPs) as well as continuous updates to the content of professional development, pre-deployment training and exercises.

## Focus area 1: Building and sustaining peace

The WPS agenda recognizes that increased efforts must be made by security institutions to meaningfully listen and respond to the voices and diverse experiences of women, girls and gender-diverse people. Extensive research and evidence have shown that the processes of ending conflict and insecurity towards building and sustaining meaningful peace are more effective and longer lasting when women's rights organizations, women human rights defenders and women community leaders and activists are engaged to inform and influence decision making. A key challenge for militaries and other stakeholders within conflict contexts is **when and how** to responsibly engage with women and girls, WROs and other equality seeking groups. Decision makers must ensure that they understand context-specific power dynamics so that engagement is not limited to elite or powerful organizations that could perpetuate harmful and unequal distribution of power within a community, region or nation. These decision makers must also address how to mitigate potential harmful risks that may arise from engagement with the defence team. Initiatives under this focus area will seek to:

- strengthen systems and capabilities to responsibly engage women's rights leaders, activists and WROs to inform strategic, operational and tactical-level planning and implementation and
- increase policy and strategic influence with international organizations to meaningfully engage with women's rights leaders and WROs.

## 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

While actions under Focus area 2 will ensure that effective training, relevant guidance and preparatory planning is completed prior to CAF members conducting scheduled operations, crisis responses can require rapid decision making in often dynamic and confusing contexts. These responses can include domestic operations to support communities when local and provincial capacities are overwhelmed, providing international emergency aid and assistance due to disasters or assisting in evacuating Canadians when instability puts their lives at risk. The WPS agenda highlights that these emergency situations will have differential impacts on sub-groups within the overall population. It is critical that those planning and conducting rapid deployments in response to unpredicted situations are informed by the WPS agenda and GBA Plus. Initiatives under this Focus area will seek to ensure that gender-responsive approaches are incorporated in both contingency planning and the operational guidance provided for Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Response and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations.

## 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 violence and enhance responses to Military Sexual Trauma. Both at home and abroad, emphasis will be given to enhancing the capabilities of leaders and managers to engage in proactive and preventative measures and to ensuring accountability when individuals fail to maintain legal or professional standards of conduct. Initiatives under this focus area will seek to:

- strengthen gender-responsive direction and capacity on the prevention and response to SEA and CRSV
- strengthen gender-responsive and inclusive systems and services for the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Misconduct and Military Sexual Trauma within the Defence Team

## Focus area 5: Leadership and capabilities

DND and CAF are committed to supporting Canada's initiatives in maintaining a focus on the WPS agenda in international forums. This starts by ensuring that leaders are fully informed on WPS issues and principles and enabled to raise WPS issues as relevant. Further, achieving the outcomes articulated in this Action Plan requires strengthening internal capabilities to effectively generate and apply GBA Plus.

Conducting GBA Plus and using its findings to inform decision making in all areas of responsibility, and at all levels within an institution (initiatives, directives, policies, budgets, operations, capabilities, etc.), is required within the Government of Canada and critical to effective implementation of the WPS agenda. GBA Plus is a powerful tool behind successful and positive culture evolution within the Defence Team. It is the responsibility of DND and CAF leaders at all levels to use this tool and apply its findings, as well as to have appropriately qualified expert staff to ensure effective GBA Plus knowledge. It is also critical that DND/CAF gather, reflect on and share lessons learned in implementing the WPS agenda, as well as mobilize knowledge and consistently highlight issues and analysis from the WPS agenda with other government departments and through defence diplomacy with international and regional partners and allies. Initiatives under this focus area will seek to:

- increase the institutionalization of GBA Plus under a new Enterprise Approach
- strengthen a sustainable GENAD and GFP system for operations
- increase policy and strategic influence with international organizations on the implementation of the WPS agenda
- strengthen technical cooperation with allied and partner militaries to build capacity on WPS agenda implementation

- 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

This section is focused on internal institutional change within the Defence Team, with impacts extending internationally. The Defence Team is committed to ensuring an inclusive, equitable and safe work environment for all. The primary objectives are to ensure that all women can achieve their career goals and, in doing so, are able to make an optimal contribution to DND/CAF. While this can enhance operational effectiveness, the outcomes under this Focus area are being advanced as a moral imperative. All who seek to provide defence and security for Canadians deserve to do so under conditions that fully respect their own human rights, promote personal dignity, enhance personal health and well-being, and ensure that all members of the Defence Team are evaluated and advanced based on non-biased assessments of their merit. Internal lessons and research, as well as external assessments, have identified systemic and institutionalized factors, including the prototypical “ideal” military member, inflexible leadership styles and exclusionary practices that create barriers for diverse women and to an inclusive work force. Such barriers impact the CAF’s ability to recruit diverse Canadian women, thus affecting career progression, health and well-being, and retention in the CAF. An indicator of barriers to career progression is the representation of diverse women at senior decision-making levels in both DND and the CAF. A challenge to preventing and responding to systemic discrimination is the collection and use of disaggregated data for analysis in order to understand intersecting barriers based on indigeneity, race, ethnicity, age, gender, identity, sexual orientation, etc. This includes learning from colonial and racist legacies, as well as discrimination against 2SLGBTQI+ members. Initiatives under this focus area will seek to increase understanding of, and targeted responses to, the barriers diverse women experience with regards to:

- recruitment
- retention and career success
- the increased deployment of uniformed women on UN Peace Operations



# Measuring progress – Performance measurement framework

---

An important lesson identified from the previous Action Plan was that reporting produced large amounts of data but limited information on progress toward the achievement of results. A departure from previous reporting, the performance measurement framework for this Action Plan will support annual reporting that provides qualitative descriptions and illustrative examples to describe the progress achieved against sought intermediate and immediate outcomes listed in the following table. Quantitative data may be included to inform the narrative. These broad outcomes reflect the aggregation of numerous separate activities and initiatives being undertaken across DND/CAF. DND/CAF will continue productive engagement with Civil Service Organizations to inform future reporting structures.

<b>Outcomes</b>
<i>Ultimate outcome: Enhanced peace, security and equality for all people</i>
<b>FOCUS AREA 1: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING PEACE</b>
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME</b>
<b>1100</b> Increased engagement with women’s rights leaders and Women’s Rights Organizations (WROs) to address gender inequality as a root cause of conflict and instability
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</b>
<b>1110</b> Strengthened systems and capabilities to engage with international and domestic women’s rights leaders and WROs
<b>1120</b> Increased policy and strategic influence with international organizations, including the UN and NATO, to meaningfully engage with women’s rights leaders and WROs
<b>FOCUS AREA 2: SECURITY, JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME</b>
<b>1200</b> Strengthened gender-responsive CAF operational planning and implementation
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</b>
<b>1210</b> Increased integration of WPS issues and gender perspectives in military operational planning, implementation and reporting
<b>1220</b> Strengthened gender-responsive intelligence production cycle

<b>1230</b> 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
<b>1240</b> 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.
<b>FOCUS AREA 3 : CRISIS RESPONSE</b>
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME</b>
<b>1300</b> Strengthened gender-responsive CAF operational planning and implementation in humanitarian responses
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOME</b>
<b>1310</b> Enhanced gender-responsive operational planning for Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Response
<b>1320</b> Enhanced gender responsive Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations for Canadians
<b>FOCUS AREA 4: SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE</b>
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME</b>
<b>1400</b> Enhanced prevention and response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</b>
<b>1410</b> Strengthened gender-responsive direction and capacity on the prevention and response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)
<b>1420</b> Strengthened gender-responsive direction and capacity on the prevention and response to Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)
<b>1430</b> Strengthened gender-responsive and inclusive systems and services for the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Misconduct and Military Sexual Trauma within the Defence Team.
<b>FOCUS AREA 5: LEADERSHIP AND CAPABILITIES</b>
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME</b>
<b>1500</b> Enhanced capabilities and leadership for the implementation of the WPS agenda within the Defence Team and globally
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</b>
<b>1510</b> Increased institutionalization of the GBA Plus Enterprise Approach
<b>1520</b> Strengthened and sustainable GENAD and GFP system for operations
<b>1530</b> Increased policy and strategic influence with international organizations, including the UN and NATO, on implementation of the WPS agenda

<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

