Government of Canada | Gouvernement du Canada

WPSN-C

Readout

WPS Advisory Group Meeting

Proposed Date: June 30, 2026
Proposed Time: 1:00–3:00 PM Eastern
Format: Virtual

Opening / Welcome by Co-Chairs

The Advisory Group on Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) convened for the first time since June 2023. The meeting brought together all ten federal government partners and approximately 23 civil society representatives to discuss the implementation of *Foundations for Peace: Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2023–2029)* (CNAP 3).

The agenda was jointly determined by the Advisory Group co-chairs, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C). WPSN-C Chair Dr. Katrina Leclerc opened the meeting with a land acknowledgement and an overview of the Advisory Group's objectives, which include promoting transparency on Action Plan implementation, identifying challenges and opportunities to advance the WPS agenda, and strengthening collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders. The meeting was co-moderated by Jacqueline O'Neill, Director, Transnational Conflict Analysis and Support, GAC.

Presenters highlighted the meeting's purpose as an opportunity to review progress under CNAP 3, discuss key implementation challenges, and foster dialogue and cooperation to support Canada's WPS commitments. At the time of the meeting, the government had not yet tabled the first progress report under CNAP 3 (the government has committed to annual tabling). To enable a more substantive discussion, GAC received permission to share a draft of the report, under embargo, with meeting participants. All committed to not share a copy or discuss the report's contents beyond the meeting itself.

Briefings and discussions

The first segment of the meeting included presentations by Elin Miller, Deputy Director, WPS, GAC, Mayssam Zaaroura, Deputy Director, WPS and GBA Plus/Chief of Defence Staff Special

Advisor WPS, Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF) and Junli Feng, Initiatives Project Manager, Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Team, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), highlighting key accomplishments and challenges in WPS implementation. Some highlights include:

Key Achievements

- GAC: Continued leadership and coordination in support of Canada's WPS commitments and a more robust results-based management and accountability framework introduced in CNAP 3, including new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and quantitative baselines, which has enabled improved measurement of progress.
- DND/CAF: Creation and approval of the Chief of Defence Staff and Deputy Minister of Defence Directive: Progressing Women, Peace and Security Commitments in Defence, and the Defence Team Framework to Implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which support the integration of gender and intersectional perspectives across defence activities.
- DND/CAF: Establishment and expansion of gender and intersectional advisor functions to support implementation and decision-making. Improved understanding and application of intersectional analysis.
- VAC: Formalization and promotion of the Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Peer Support Program.
- VAC: New commemorative and engagement initiatives recognizing the contributions of women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.

Key Challenges

- GAC: Delays associated with reporting and performance measurement due in part to limited human and financial resources.
- GAC: Reductions in available WPS-related funding and impacts on programming.
- DND/CAF: Challenges integrating gender and intersectional perspectives into rapidly evolving institutional and operational contexts.
- VAC: Need to increase participation in support programs and improve awareness among target populations.
- VAC: Resource constraints affecting the scale and sustainability of outreach and commemorative initiatives.

Civil society representatives raised questions about localization, Canada-supported efforts to include women in conflict resolution and mediation processes, defence spending and militarization, accountability, and capacity-building, prompting government responses and commitments to further dialogue, including on reporting.

On localization, emphasis was placed on the importance of local women's networks and the need for Canadian missions abroad to support grassroots peacebuilding, citing both positive

and missed opportunities in mission engagement, particularly in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

On increased defence spending and militarization, concern was expressed about Canada's role in global conflicts and the need for peace-oriented policies.

Concern was also raised about the lack of reference to the environmental impacts of increased defence budgets.

In the second segment of the meeting, civil society presentations emphasized accountability, WPS financing, and capacity-building as priority areas.

Accountability Mechanisms, Shayne Wong, Steering Committee member of the WPSN-C: Civil society representatives identified seven key themes for strengthening accountability within Canada's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, including the need for clear benchmarks and indicators, transparent funding and staffing information, stronger collaboration with civil society, inclusion of intersectional and lived-experience perspectives, greater attention to domestic implementation, and the ability to adapt to emerging risks. Participants stressed that accountability mechanisms must be supported by robust monitoring, disaggregated data, and accessible reporting, to ensure WPS implementation remains feminist, transparent, and grounded in human rights principles.

Key recommendations included improving transparency around WPS investments and departmental capacity, strengthening the monitoring of both domestic and international commitments, and ensuring meaningful participation of civil society in accountability processes. Participants also emphasized the importance of regularly reviewing accountability frameworks so that Canada's WPS commitments remain relevant, measurable, and responsive to evolving challenges such as climate change, cyber threats, disinformation, and geopolitical instability.

Financing and Resource Allocation, civil society presenter Beth Woroniuk, Senior Fellow at the Feminist Foreign Policy Collaborative: The presentation focused on the lack of a dedicated budget for the C NAP, global declines in Official Development Assistance (ODA), and the need for protected funding streams and transparency in resource tracking, raising questions about departmental strategies and human resource trends.

Civil society recommended stronger financial and human resource reporting, including staffing levels, program expenditures, and departmental investments, to determine whether C NAP-3 is a genuinely resourced strategy or an unfunded commitment.

Capacity Building, Expertise and Accountability, Ghazaal Habibyar, WPSN-C member: The presenter shared feedback focused on three themes: (1) clarity and expertise, (2) people, learning and continuity, and (3) accountability. The presenter emphasized the need for updated

WPS guidance, accessible tools, consistent training, support for departmental focal points, workforce planning, and opportunities for peer learning to strengthen implementation capacity across government. Under the accountability theme, the presenter called for stronger feminist monitoring and evaluation frameworks, more transparent reporting, and better support for departmental reporting processes. They stressed the importance of measuring outcomes, sharing good practices, and learning from both domestic and international experience to ensure Canada's WPS commitments remain effective, credible, and responsive to evolving challenges.

During the last segment, an open discussion focused on localization and improving support to grassroots women's organizations, and concerns were raised about alignment between defence spending and WPS objectives. Participants highlighted the need for inclusivity, including Indigenous perspectives. Greater coordination across government and engagement with civil society was emphasized.

Government representatives acknowledged resource constraints and emphasized continued commitments to civil society, the importance of their advocacy, and ongoing efforts to build capacity.

Closing remarks emphasized continued collaboration, and plans were outlined to reinitiate regular Advisory Group meetings, with the next meeting ideally to take place in the fall.

Next steps and action items

- Civil society members noted their intention to pursue engagement with ministers and parliamentarians to advance WPS priorities.
- An annual shadow report on WPS implementation will be developed by the WPSN-C once the government's report is tabled and made public.
- GAC committed to sharing a meeting readout and answering outstanding questions relating to the department's work.

This report was prepared by GAC and consulted with federal partners and the WPSN-C.