

Ranking the Nordic National Action Plans for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

As a response to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security, a number of countries have adopted and published National Actions Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of the resolution. Since resolutions adopted in the UN are written in rather general terms, NAPs constitute important documents that provide specific guidelines for the national governments. Kvinna till Kvinna has done a comparative study of the Nordic countries' National Action Plans (NAP) UNSCR 1325: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The analysis is based on five minimum standards developed by the Nordic 1325 network that consists of various civil society organisations.

Establishing minimum standards

The minimum standards are to be seen as crucial for a NAP to be successfully implemented and are as follows:

1. time-limited, specified goals and actions of priority
2. accountability attribution between ministries and authorities for the specified actions
3. an allocated budget
4. a result oriented and transparent reporting and monitoring mechanism, including a system for tracking funds allocated to the national action plan
5. the extent to which civil society organisations, including women's organisations, in their own country, as well as in conflict affected countries prioritised for action, have been actively engaged throughout the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the NAP

1. Time limited goals and actions of priority are not specific enough

Setting a time limit for the plan is important both for evaluation and for guaranteeing implementation. Even if all the NAPs (with the exception of the Icelandic one) have set a general time limit all of them fail to provide time lines for the actual actions. An overall weakness in all the NAPs is the lack of a clear division between comprehensive goals, strategic objectives and actions. As the term indicates, *comprehensive* goals are broad and are therefore to be seen of mainly as a long term vision: i.e. the Swedish goal “to increase the participation of women in conflict areas at all levels in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peace building”. The strategic objectives on the other hand need to be more specified so that they can be evaluated: i.e. “men and women are to participate equally in peace negotiations”. The actions would then relate to how to achieve the strategic objective: i.e. “include representatives from women’s organisation in peace negotiations”, “nominate women to leading positions in peace negotiations”.

The Finnish NAP provides fairly good overall goals but fails in defining what measures that should be taken in order to achieve these goals. Iceland on the other hand does not provide any overall goals at all and their objectives are very general and difficult to measure.

2. Unsatisfactory accountability attribution for the specified actions

Identifying the specific institutions, departments and functions in charge of implementing the different actions and priorities listed in the NAP is necessary for holding the stakeholders and government ministries to account as a matter of priority. All of the NAPs indicate one or several responsible actors for the different actions at some point. The Danish NAP provides the most detailed information since each action is preceded by the responsible ministry. However, none of the NAPs indicate on a more specific level which department within the ministries in question that is

responsible for implementing the various parts of the action plan. In for example the Norwegian NAP, “Norway” is stated as responsible.

3. No allocated budgets

Remarkably, none of the NAPs mention a set budget for its implementation. While the Finnish and the Swedish NAP mention budget as something that is to be decided within the ministries or within existing budget lines, the NAPs in Denmark, Iceland, and Norway do not mention budget at any point. Naturally, a budget is necessary for the implementation of the NAP. Many activities may need a specific budget dedicated to 1325-related activities, such as the need to educate people in order to be able to start off the process. Even if funding comes from an existing budget, a financial framework should be presented in the NAP in relation to the actions and implementation of the plan. This would increase transparency and facilitate the monitoring process.

4. Weak monitoring mechanisms

A well established monitoring system with a follow-up system and a reporting system is necessary for guaranteeing the implementation of the NAP as well as for creating transparency which is a prerequisite for accountability. Despite being the crucial point for formulation of an action plan, the weak monitoring mechanisms constitute a major weakness of more or less all the NAPs. The Norwegian NAP is the most detailed one regarding its monitoring system since it provides information about the dates for the evaluations to be submitted (although Norway fails in accomplishing this in practice). An important strength of the Finnish monitoring group is that civil society representatives are included. One important aspect of the Danish NAP is the presence of indicators that facilitate a result oriented reporting and monitoring mechanism. The Swedish NAP on the other hand does not mention any monitoring group nor does it explicitly mention inclusion of representatives from civil society in the annual evaluation.

5. Insufficient inclusion of civil society organisations

Civil society is expected to be involved with the plan during all phases from development to evaluation and monitoring of the plan. Concerning the *development* of the NAP civil society was included in all the NAPs at some point. Yet, only the Finnish 1325 network mentions that civil society was included in the writing process and not only in a consultative manner. All the NAPs mention the role of civil society in *monitoring* the NAP. However, only the Finnish NAP includes representatives from civil society in the formal structures of the monitoring in the NAP as well as in practice.

Final ranking list

After a comprehensive assessment of the extent to which the NAPs are fulfilling the minimum standards a ranking list was established:

1. Finland
2. Denmark
3. Sweden
4. Norway
5. Iceland

Worth noting is that **none of the NAPs fulfilled any of the above mentioned minimum standards**. The ranking list should therefore be seen and used of mainly as a relative comparison and as a starting point for a discussion on how to improve National Action Plans on 1325 in all countries.

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