

WOMEN, PEACE and SECURITY

CHIEFS OF DEFENCE NETWORK CHARTER

2021



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I. BACKGROUND

- I.1. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, which established the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, was unanimously adopted on 31 October 2000. The Resolution addresses the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the historic failure to include women in decision-making processes and peace negotiations, and recognizes the important role that women play in preventing and resolving conflict.
- I.2. Since October 2000, several WPS-related UNSCRs have been adopted, recognizing sexual violence as a tactic of war and identifying sexual violence as a matter of international peace and security that necessitates a security response. They reiterate the United Nations (UN) mandate for increasing women's participation in conflict resolution and recovery, mainstreaming gender perspectives in all decision-making processes and for member states to deploy greater numbers of women military members to UN peacekeeping operations in meaningful roles.
- I.3. UNSCR 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts, and specifically within the four pillars of participation, prevention, protection, and recovery/relief. The world's militaries have a role to serve within this Resolution, in concert with all agents of change of national power.
- I.4. In support of UNSCR 1325 and associated resolutions, the Women, Peace and Security Chiefs of Defence (WPS CHODs) Network was launched by Bangladesh, Canada and the United Kingdom in November 2017. In the very short time since its establishment, its membership has grown significantly and is still growing. The Network represents an invaluable opportunity for CHODs to share and discuss strategies, experiences, best practices, and innovative ideas to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda.

II. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

- II.1. The purpose of the WPS CHODs Network is to provide a collaborative platform for CHODs who have committed to advance the WPS agenda within their defence force. The Network supports members' efforts to build internal capacity and expertise. By sharing experiences, lessons observed and best practices, members will enhance their shared understanding and knowledge thereby increasing their ability to move the WPS agenda forward within their own defence force.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Membership

- III.1. Membership in the WPS CHODs Network is open to all UN Member States willing to advance the WPS agenda in their national militaries. Member states should be represented by the most senior levels of national military leadership, such as CHODs or their Deputies.
- III.2. Membership is also open to senior military representatives from the UN and regional or multinational security organizations, and multinational NGOs. Any Chief of a Defence force, including those of international organizations that wishes to become a member of the network may, either upon invitation or on their own initiative, make a request to the Chair, whereupon receipt and acceptance by the Chair, that body will be considered a member. Upon acceptance to the network, WPS CHODs Network members will:
 - III.2.1. Champion the integration of gender perspectives and improvement of women's participation within their institutions and in UN peacekeeping operations, including through meeting the commitments in UNSCR 1325 and associated resolutions;
 - III.2.2. Champion the elimination of conflict-related gender-based sexual violence;
 - III.2.3. Attend the biennial WPS CHODs Network meeting to discuss progress towards advancing the WPS agenda and identify capacity-building opportunities for the advancement of inclusion, accountable governance, gender equality, and respect for diversity and human rights; and,
- III.3. Pledge to incrementally implement concrete and meaningful measures within their military forces to advance the WPS agenda. A list of potential measures includes, but are not limited to:
 - III.3.1. Broaden and define recruitment and retention targets in order to increase the meaningful participation of women in the military;
 - III.3.2. Open up more, particularly non-traditional, roles to women in own military, identify and eliminate barriers to joining and remaining in the military, and enable full participation in meaningful roles;
 - III.3.3. Host events where current and previous women military members can speak to senior military officers and share suggestions and concerns for creating a more receptive work environment;
 - III.3.4. Hold internal conferences for military members on WPS to lead the transformative cultural and institutional change in own military;
 - III.3.5. Improve access to training and promotions for women in own military;
 - III.3.6. Identify the barriers that prevent the selection of women for roles and training opportunities that would allow them to serve in operational roles with the UN;
 - III.3.7. Where appropriate, include references to the WPS mandates in speeches, meetings and conferences to foster broader understanding in own military;

- III.3.8. Include gender perspectives and the importance of diverse perspectives and inclusive practices as part of the curricula in military junior, middle and senior leadership courses;
- III.3.9. Develop an internal network of Military Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points to support the transformative cultural and institutional change in own military;
- III.3.10. Integrate gender perspectives into the strategic and operational planning processes;
- III.3.11. Include gender perspectives into military operational staff work and activities; e.g. include a consideration of gender dynamics within the human terrain analysis of planning;
- III.3.12. Develop training that promotes or encourages the incorporation of gender perspectives into all aspects of operational and tactical planning;
- III.3.13. Develop and deploy Engagement Platoons on UN operations to enhance connection with the host nation population and provide situational awareness for the command team; and
- III.3.14. Ensure military planners and in situ troops meet with civil society groups to better understand security concerns of women in countries where the military are deployed or are training other militaries to deploy.

Executive Committee

- III.4. The Executive Committee of the WPS CHODs Network is comprised of the following positions: Chair, Vice-Chair, and three Executive Members. The term of the Chair is normally for a period of one-year but may be extended by consensus amongst the Executive Committee as circumstances may dictate. After the Chair's term has concluded, they will act as an ex-officio member for a period of one year, or until the end of their successor ends, and will function in an advisory capacity to the Executive Committee. The Vice-Chair will become the Chair, and the next in line Executive member will become the Vice-Chair, thus continuing the rotation.
- III.5. The new Chair of the Network will work with Network CHODs in order to find another new Executive Member to fill the empty Executive Committee position. The Executive Committee succession plan, and the current Executive Committee, can be found at <https://www.wpschods.com/>.
- III.6. The Executive Committee is responsible for assisting the Chair in:
 - III.6.1. Setting the strategic goals for the WPS CHODs Network;
 - III.6.2. Coordinating the biennial meeting, including development of the agenda;
 - III.6.3. Seeking members to fill vacancies in the Executive Committee; and
 - III.6.4. Ensuring the succession plan for the Chair.

Secretariat

- III.7. The incumbent Chair is responsible to provide the Secretariat. The Secretariat responsibilities include:
- III.7.1. Organize and prepare the biennial meeting in collaboration with the Executive Committee;
 - III.7.2. Support the Chair in strengthening the Network and setting objectives and goals;
 - III.7.3. Draft, prepare and circulate meeting agendas, preparatory documentation, and recording of pledges and progress reports presented by members to be published on the WPS CHODs Network website at <https://www.wpschods.com/>; and
 - III.7.4. Maintain the WPS CHODs Network's official documents and website for efficient exchange of information and sharing amongst Network members.

Regional Champions

- III.8. Regional Champions may be identified by the Chair to assist partners in implementing the WPS agenda in their geopolitical area.

Key Advisor

- III.9. Each serving Chair is encouraged to appoint a women General Officer or the highest ranking women officer in their military organization to the role of Key Advisor to the Executive Committee. The role of Key Advisor will be to:
- III.9.1. Provide the Executive Committee with timely information, updates, and advice on developments in WPS;
 - III.9.2. Engage with Gender Champions across the Network; and
 - III.9.3. Recommend key initiatives for the Executive Committee to undertake.

Summary of Resources and Training

- III.10. A list of tools, WPS related training events, seminars, conferences and symposiums can be found at <https://www.wpschods.com/>.

IV. WORKING PROCEDURES

Meetings

- IV.1. Regular meetings of the network members will occur on a biennial basis, called by the Chair, and normally in the margins of meetings such as UN CHODs or UN Peace-keeping Defence Ministerial. Meetings will be presided over by the Chair, or in their absence, by the Vice-Chair. Notice of upcoming meetings will be sent to Member State CHODs by the Secretariat not less than 60 days before the date of the meeting that will include a draft agenda. The frequency of WPS CHODs Network meetings may change based upon consensus amongst the Executive. Member states are encouraged to offer to host meetings of the Network in the off years where UN CHODs meetings will not be taking place. Every effort should be made to apprise the Chair of national and/or Regional WPS meetings so that they may be considered as possible venues for WPS CHODs Network meeting.
- IV.2. Classified material or information will not be exchanged, generated or discussed at meetings.
- IV.3. Meetings will normally consist of:
 - IV.3.1. Opening statement from the Chair to cover key achievements, new pledges, and state of the Network since previous meeting;
 - IV.3.2. Keynote speakers' address and/or panel discussion on relevant topic;
 - IV.3.3. Updates from CHODs who have indicated an interest in addressing the group regarding achievements, lessons learned, or best practices;
 - IV.3.4. Handover of Chair if applicable; and
 - IV.3.5. Closing statement from the New Chair.

Pledges

- IV.4. The purpose of the public pledges is to provide a venue for states to publicly declare their intentions in fulfilling the requirements of UNSCR 1325 and associated resolutions. Members are encouraged to register their pledges for the implementation of the WPS agenda in their own military and convey them, by some instrument such as a letter, to the Chair of the WPS CHODs Network either in advance of, or at the biennial meeting. The Chair will confirm receipt via formal correspondence within 60 days of receipt, and ensure opportunities for members to provide updates at subsequent meetings. Pledges will be recorded on the WPS CHODs Network website at <https://www.wpschods.com/>.

Financial Considerations

- IV.5. Participation in the network will not impose any financial responsibilities on its participants, except that each participant will be responsible for the funding costs it incurs in its own interest, related to the support of this Charter.

Interpretation and Application

- IV.6. The Network is intended to operate on the basis of consensus and collaboration amongst the participants, and that participants are free to take part in the aspects of the Network that they feel are most beneficial to their efforts in implementing the WPS agenda. The Network and its Charter are non-contractual and non-binding arrangements, the nature of which will be to enable the Members to be mutually supportive. There exists no mechanism, nor any avenue of appeal, to outside bodies should participants disagree on the direction or aims of the network.

Launch and Dissolution of the Group and Amendments to the Charter

- IV.7. There is no sunset clause or end-date set for this Charter. However it may be reviewed upon request from a member to the Chair, and anytime there is significant developments in the wider WPS domain. There is no fixed duration, nor is there any need for a renewal and termination mechanism; this is a wholly voluntary association. Changes/updates to the Network Website will be made secretarially and are not considered as changes to this Charter.

V. SUMMARY

- V.1. The WPS CHODs Network exists to support Member States and UN regional and multinational security organizations to translate and interpret the WPS agenda from policy to military practice in times of conflict and peace. Upon joining, members pledge to take concrete measures to strengthen, enhance, and accelerate the integration of the WPS agenda into their national armed forces at home and when deployed. The WPS CHODs Network thereby drives transformational cultural and institutional change in support of UNSCR 1325 and associated resolutions.