



ANNEX I: Case study of Danish Contribution to UNWOMEN Country Programme in Mali

Evaluation of the Danish National
Action Plans for the
Implementation of UN Security
Council Resolution 1325 on
Women, Peace and Security

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1 Summary

This engagement has achieved clear results in Mali relevant to the WPS themes participation, domestication of global normative framework on WPS, and to a lesser degree, protection. Several important lessons can be learned from this engagement to inform Denmark's future NAP activity:

Institutional funding can be an effective way to resource domestication of the WPS agenda and strengthen long-term structures and capacity within a national government where this is lacking, whilst minimizing bureaucratic burden and fiduciary risk to Denmark. This is a model that could be applied in other contexts where the national NAP agenda and capacity needs strengthening and/or where Danish capacity to implement their own direct programmes on WPS are constrained.

Funding a **specialist agency** such as UN Women with expertise in WPS and strong relationships with national government and women's rights organisations has also been beneficial in advancing NAP priorities without needing specialist expertise within the Danish embassy at post.

There is evidence that **monitoring and accountability mechanisms** for Denmark's commitments under the second and third NAPs in Mali have either been ad hoc or non-existent. This has impacted both the visibility of the engagement's contributions to the NAPs as well as the prioritization of WPS oversight and leadership by Denmark in Mali. UN Women has a robust M&E system which has mitigated the risk of non-delivery of results.

It is not clear whether the choice to fund UN Women's country programme was the **most strategic option** for Denmark's investment into WPS in Mali. Denmark's leadership and value-add on WPS in Mali has not been clearly defined nor understood by key staff in the embassy.

2 Introduction

This report presents one of six case studies conducted for the evaluation of two Danish National Action Plans for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2008-2013, and 2014-2019). As outlined in the inception report, the case studies form one of the core methodologies of the evaluation.

The structure of the case study is based largely on the first and second evaluation questions as outlined in the evaluation terms of reference (see Annex A of the evaluation report):

1. What results have been achieved in portfolios related to the NAPs?
2. Based on EQ1, what are the results of the NAPs against their stated objectives to address and enhance women's full and equal participation, protection of women, transitional justice and mainstreaming of gender equality in humanitarian efforts and international operations?

The structure of the case study has also been guided by the sub-evaluation questions organized according to the OECD/DAC criteria and included in the evaluation matrix (see Annex B of the evaluation report).

Interviews for this case study took place remotely through phone or online calls. Interviewees included Danish mission staff in Mali, other donors, representatives of civil society and focal points from implementing partner organisations. A total of six interviews were conducted. Whilst all interviews were transcribed, quotes and perspectives in this case study have not been attributed to specific interviewees to maintain a degree of confidentiality.

Several important limitations may have restricted the depth of insights presented in this case study. Namely the cancellation of planned field travel to Mali due to a security threat and accompanying challenges in accessing a broader range of external stakeholders (additional donors, other UN agencies, civil society organisations). The evaluation team also could not access UN Women's 2018 Annual Report as it was still to be finalised, so relied on excerpts provided by UN Women via email. A mid-term review was being planned at time of writing to take place in autumn 2019.

3 Background

3.1 Country and regional context

Mali has experienced internal armed conflicts, growing instability and insecurity and a rise in violent extremism since 2012, when an armed rebellion by ethnic Tuareg fighters led to the deposing of an elected president and significant violence and displacement. Despite French military involvement and the establishment of a large UN military and police mission, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in 2013, followed by several peace deals between the government and Tuareg rebels, fighting has continued sporadically until today. The 2015 Algiers Accord remains the most recent peace deal which international support has focused on.

Growing insecurity and ethnic conflicts in central Mali are a cause for concern, as are ongoing intercommunal clashes and instability in the north. Throughout this period there has been a rise in organised crime and criminality, including human trafficking, as well as violent extremist activity, including by groups associated with al-Qaeda in the Maghreb and Islamic State. Terrorists attacks have been on the rise and are increasingly well-organised, targeting hotels, military and policy targets.¹ Political instability has also been a challenge, with the government recently (May 2019) resigning en masse following a spike in insecurity including a shocking massacre of more than 160 herders by a local vigilante group. A young reformist Prime Minister was appointed by the President and is facing high expectations from the people to stem violence and bring lasting peace.²

The Sahel and wider Maghreb/Sahara is a priority region for Denmark's international defence, diplomacy and development efforts, particularly in relation to promoting security and stability. Denmark has a strategic vision and clearly defined approach for its engagement in Mali which is outlined in the Denmark-Mali Country Policy Paper 2016-2021. Denmark takes a whole-of-government approach in Mali, leveraging multiple instruments to achieve strategic aims including: diplomatic and political; the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF) (which has a

¹ See: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF10116.pdf> and <https://www.peaceinsight.org/conflicts/mali/>

² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/04/mali-pm-appointed-ogossagou-massacre-190422143413221.html>

regional Sahel programme); regional stabilisation efforts through multilateral engagement; military and civilian activity via support to MINUSMA; humanitarian assistance; climate funds; and economic influencing/diplomacy.

Denmark's commitment to human rights and gender equality are mentioned within the Mali Country Policy Paper as key aspects of the overall approach to engagement. The promotion of UNSCR 1325 and SDG5 on gender equality are both explicitly cited as strategic objectives for Denmark in Mali, stating that: "Denmark will continue to give priority to addressing violence against women and support women's role in peacebuilding".³

3.2 Women, peace and security context

The Government of Mali launched its first **National Action Plan (NAP)** on Women, Peace and Security in 2012, revised in 2015.⁴ With UN Women's support and as a direct result of Danish funding (discussed further under 'results' below), Mali's Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Families⁵ launched a new NAP in early 2019 for the 2019-2023 period.

In relation to **participation**, Mali has made significant strides over the past decade, but serious gaps remain within peace and security mechanisms. After years of campaigning by Malian women activists a 30% gender quota for appointed officials and electoral lists was passed in 2015. This achieved some successes in 2016 municipal elections.⁶ Presidential elections in 2018 then saw the quota applied successfully to the cabinet.⁷ However, some of these gains were reversed when a new government took office in May 2019 and the number of women in cabinet dropped from 32% to 27%⁸, and UN Women representatives interviewed for this evaluation expressed concern that the new government seems less committed to women's participation. There remains low representation in parliament (8.8%).⁹ Women have been especially underrepresented in mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation; only 1 of the 34 Agreement Monitoring Committee members is female.¹⁰ In late 2018, a working group recommended the direct participation of women in the committee and other follow-up mechanisms, and a women-led, independent consultative forum has been created to monitor the Agreement, with support from UN Women. Transitional justice mechanisms have also seen successes in increasing women's leadership and testimonials from women survivors, again in part thanks to UN Women's support.

Rates of **gender-based violence (GBV)** are significantly higher than global averages in Mali, with nearly four in 10 (38%) of women reporting having experienced GBV in their lifetime, mainly from intimate partners. Rates of GBV among certain ethnic groups are higher than the

³ See 'Denmark-Mali Country Policy Paper 2016-2021', p12

⁴ See: <https://www.peacewomen.org/action-plan/national-action-plan-mali>

⁵ Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme, de l'Enfant et de la Famille.

⁶ See PRIO, 2017: <https://gps.prio.org/utility/DownloadFile.ashx?id=124&type=publicationfile>

⁷ See UN Report of the Secretary General, September 2018, p5: <https://undocs.org/S/2018/866>

⁸ See: <https://www.fresherslive.com/current-affairs/articles/malis-president-ibrahim-boubacar-keta-named-a-new-government-after-the-ogossagou-massacre--19559>

⁹ See World Bank, 2019: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/indicators>

¹⁰ See UN Report of the Secretary General, March 2019: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2019_207_E.pdf

national average, reaching levels of 48% among Sénoufo/Minianka women. Some forms of GBV are particularly prevalent, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) which 83% of women aged 15-49 have undergone; and early and forced marriage, with half of girls (52%) marrying before the age of 18 and nearly 20% before the age of 15.¹¹ Historically there have been no specific laws against GBV in Mali, but the first ever law criminalising GBV is now undergoing review, prepared by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children, and Families with support from UN Women (as above, also partly as a result of Danish funding). Women peacebuilders have continually expressed concern about high levels of sexual or gender-based violence in Mali, as well as concerns about abuse by the security forces or government. An implementation plan prepared by the UN in 2019 on conflict-related sexual violence in Mali covers five priorities: prevention, protection, accountability, capacity-building and communication.

There is growing societal support for women to play an active role in defence and security forces and in preventing conflict, according to a recent survey by IMRAP and Interpeace.¹² Women account for 2.6% of military personnel and 19% of police personnel deployed as part of MINUSMA and the police continue to pursue efforts to increase women's participation, progression, and overall gender sensitive conduct. However, UN Women report that engagement on WPS within security sector reform processes has been challenging with a lack of openness among security institutions to outside involvement.

In terms of current and future entry points for work on WPS, UN Women reported that the Ministry for Reconciliation has expressed an interest in working more on women's inclusion. A key problem now is that the peace process is "stuck – all the nominations for the peace agreement have already been made and are all men" (interview with UN Women WPS team). Since women were not included at the start, UN Women are trying to create a Track 2 process to create a women's group to engage in the Track 1 process already agreed. There is a feeling that political will to promote women's participation in peace is lacking at the central government level. There is little being done in the regions where state presence is very limited, so UN Women will focus the next phase of programming (2019-2021) on localizing the WPS agenda and activity.

3.3 Summary of Danish engagement

Denmark has committed 56 million DKK to **UN Women's Mali Country Programme** over a five-year period (2017-2022) with a focus on UNSCR 1325. Of this 56 million DKK, 26 million has already been released for 2017-2019 under an agreement signed in August 2017 and expiring in December 2019;¹³ an additional 30 million DKK has been tentatively committed for 2020-2022 pending mid-term review findings. The mid-term review has been initiated by UN Women and will be completed in autumn 2019 after this evaluation has concluded.

¹¹ SDDirect/VAWG Helpdesk, Mali Gender Issues Briefing Note, May 2019.

¹² See IMRAP and Interpeace, 2018: https://www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2018-Mali-Coup_de_Ma%C3%A9tre-WEB.pdf

¹³ See 'Signed Development Engagement Document' between the Royal Embassy of Denmark to Mali and UN Women, August 2017.

Denmark is the second largest donor to UN Women's Country Programme in Mali, second to Sweden – the only other institutional donor. There are several additional project donors to UN Women in Mali including the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), Belgium and France.

Denmark's contribution provides core funding to UN Women for all areas of their work in Mali, spanning three thematic strands as defined by their Mali Country Strategy:

1. Women's economic empowerment;
2. Combating violence against women and girls; and
3. Women, peace and security and humanitarian actions (at least 50% of humanitarian funds by UN spent on women and girls).

Denmark also funds a full-time P4 adviser (WPS Policy Specialist) who is specifically dedicated to supporting UN Women's WPS thematic programme. It is not just the thematic strand on WPS which has achieved results relevant to this evaluation; results under the thematic programme on combating violence against women and girls are also relevant to the WPS agenda (1325 prevention and protection pillars) and have been considered here.

The objectives of Denmark's funding to UN Women as defined in the Programme Agreement are 1) institutional support for UN Women's Country Programme; and 2) supporting the Government of Mali's efforts to implement the Malian NAP through UN Women.

The UN Women engagement is part of Denmark's overall Mali Thematic Programme 2017-2022 on **Peaceful Coexistence and Reconciliation**. Danish contributions to UN Women represent around 19% of Denmark's total spending in Mali over this period (total funding - 294.1 million DKK). Other components within Denmark's Peaceful Coexistence and Reconciliation Programme are FAMOC (a civil society fund to support drivers of change – 97 million DKK), a project implemented by Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (52.7 million DKK), and contributions to the MINUSMA Trust Fund (the UN Mission to Mali) (55 million DKK).¹⁴

4 Results

4.1 Theory of Change and strategic framework

Gender and WPS themes are well-integrated into Denmark's Country Programme Document for Mali 2017-2022 which defines the activities Denmark will focus on during this period. There is a dedicated section for gender analysis, and recognition that women and youth – especially young women – have been hit hardest by the political and security crisis in Mali whilst also been seriously underrepresented in peace and political decision-making processes. Promoting inclusive (of women, and youth, in particular) governance, economic development, peace and reconciliation is stated as a key priority for Denmark's engagement and promotion of stability in Mali (p7).

Denmark has a country-level Theory of Change for its overall engagement in Mali. One of the five development engagement outcomes under the Peaceful Coexistence and Reconciliation thematic programme is "gender equality and the political, economic and social roles of women are integrated dimensions of the consolidation of peace and peaceful coexistence in

¹⁴ See 'Denmark-Mali Partnership – Country Programme Document 2017-2022'.

Mali” (p10). The integration of gender equality and women’s participation in peacebuilding is also included in the Theory of Change diagram (p10).

The UN Women engagement was a strategic choice for Denmark in order to meet this goal. The Country Programme Document states that: “youth and women are critical to peace and recovery, but less able to exercise their rights. This has been a key consideration behind the choice of UN-Women as a partner and the design of the Fund for Drivers of Change (Fonds d’Appui aux Moteurs du Changement (FAMOC)). The latter engagement focuses almost exclusively on youth and within this target group at least 50% women and girls” (p13).

However, Danish MFA stakeholders interviewed expressed a feeling that instead “it [UN Women engagement] was chosen as simply an easy way to fund something”.

4.2 Results against NAP indicators

There is one action and accompanying indicator within the third Danish NAP (2014-2019) which relates specifically to the UN Women Mali engagement:

Action: *Promotion of a strengthened role of women in national peace and reconciliation processes.*

Indicator: *Inclusion and participation of women in national peace and reconciliation processes.*

The NAP indicator does not define a specific target for women’s inclusion in peace and reconciliation processes nor specific which processes, so there is scope to define this according to what was relevant at the time the engagement began (August 2017). UN Women’s own results framework includes indicators tracking 1) “% of women in peace-building bodies, transitional justice mechanisms and complainants” and 2) “national forums or meetings (organized as part of the peace process) in which at least 30% of participants directly involved were women”. This provides a good basis to assess progress against the broad ‘women’s participation’ NAP indicator.

Key results reported to date by UN Women (documents and key informants) include:

1. **Increase in women’s participation and leadership in the Commission for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation (CVJR):**
 - a) Since UN Women began working with the CVJR, five female Commissioners (out of 25), three female mission officers to the CVJR’s five Sub-Commissions (out of 14), one female Chief of Staff (out of six), 12 female deposition takers (out of 45) and one female advocate (out of 12) have been appointed.
 - b) UN Women supported the creation of a gender sub-unit responsible for ensuring gender mainstreaming into the CVJR. An accompanying gender action plan was also created acknowledging the specific needs of women and girls in transitional justice and reconciliation processes. UN Women has trained all staff in gender-sensitivity to ensure they can receive testimonies from men and women in a gender-sensitive and women-friendly way.
 - c) These initiatives have contributed to an increase in the number of depositions from women to the CVJR from 6,953 in December 2017 (including 4,390 women or 63%), to 10,247 in December 2018, including 5,338 women (52%).

- d) With UN Women's support, the CVJR undertook thematic consultations with women and children in late 2018 to better address their reparations needs – 91 out of 150 people consulted were women.

2. **Creation of a structure for women's participation in the Peace Agreement**

Monitoring Committee (CSA):

- a) Recognising women's very low level of representation and participation in the CSA, and barriers to changing this since the membership is now fixed, UN Women and MINUSMA partnered to facilitate a Women's Advisory Group to the CSA in collaboration with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Families and the Office of the High Representative of the President of the Republic for the implementation of the Peace Agreement.
- b) 45 women civil society leaders and groups that signed the Agreement have participated to date in the group, from Bamako, Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Mopti, Sikasso and Timbuktu.
- c) Ongoing outreach efforts by UN Women in partnership with other key stakeholders resulted in the inclusion of women's participation on the CSA agenda for the first time at its 29th session on 12 November 2018. Following this meeting, a working group chaired by MINUSMA and the European Union was set up to explore and propose concrete options. In December 2018, the working group recommended the integration of women into the monitoring mechanisms of the Agreement.

3. **Women's participation in local security committees for dialogue between communities and the Defence and Security Forces (SDF):** UN Women supported the establishment of four local security committees in the Tenenkou Circle, promoting women's participation. Out of 30 members nine are currently female.

4. **Increased participation of women in conflict early warning systems:** UN Women's capacity building support to women in Timbuktu and Mopti contributed to increased female participation in monitoring mechanisms associated with WANEP-Mali's early warning system. There are now 56 female members across the six local mechanisms, comprising 384 members in total.

UN Women reported challenges and limitations in engaging with the DDR Commission to promote women's participation, and this is an area of planned activity for late 2019 onwards. As noted above, engagement in security sector reform (SSR) processes remains challenging since these processes remain "political and closed to outsiders" (interview with UN Women WPS team). However, UN Women has provided input to the SSR action plan and this is now part of the new operational plan of Mali's NAP for 2019-2023 (discussed more below).

It should be noted that UN Women reports annually to Denmark as part of their standard annual institutional reporting. They also submit quarterly reports on financial management, risks and output-level progress. However, the relationship between UN Women and the Danish MFA and level of Danish oversight has not been as strong as initially envisaged, with the Danish MFA reporting that "In the beginning we envisaged monthly/bi-monthly meetings. On how's it all going, to get more regular progress updates, facts, figures, stories. But this hasn't panned out".

4.3 Results against internal results framework

WPS thematic programme:

UN Women Mali has developed a standalone results framework specific to the Danish-funded activities. This includes several other indicators relevant to WPS which are not directly linked to the NAP indicator discussed above on increasing women's participation in national peace and reconciliation processes. They measure additional aspects of UN Women's WPS contributions, including:

- % of women involved in the peace process who feel safe;
- % or number of national meetings that benefited indirectly from women's contributions (through preparatory workshops organized by women to collect their contributions to make available to meetings);
- Number of women or women's associations strengthened (in terms of: preventing conflict and violence based on gender, protecting and rehabilitating victims, participating and representing women in women's decisions, gender promotion and women's empowerment); and
- **Level of implementation of the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 NAP in Mali (% of actions of Mali's NAP actually implemented).**

In particular, implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Mali – through support to domestication of the 1325 framework and to the implementation of Mali's own NAP – has been a major area of activity and results for UN Women under this engagement. Thanks to Danish funding, UN Women seconded a dedicated team to Mali's Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Families to support implementation, coordination and follow-up of Mali's existing NAP (2015-2018) and to help develop a new and longer-term NAP spanning 2019-2023.¹⁵ This team comprised of a coordinator, communications officer, WPS Policy Specialist (the funded P4 position mentioned above) and a driver. It was reported by UN Women that very few countries in the global South have a dedicated NAP coordination team within government, and that this was a key enabler for achieving sustainable results.

When UN Women began this engagement there was reportedly no structure in the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Families to coordinate the NAP and it was not being actively coordinated nor implemented. Under UN Women's WPS programme, and with the direct oversight of the Danish-funded P4 adviser, a Technical Management Unit was set up within the Ministry to enable embedded technical assistance and collaboration between UN Women and the NAP team within the Ministry. UN Women reported that this approach was key in providing sustained support and momentum for WPS activities, under the external leadership of the Ministry and therefore embedded within Malian Government structures.

Key results achieved under this indicator/theme since UN Women's engagement began in late 2017, as reported in the 2017 and 2018 annual reports and validated by interviews with UN Women and the Royal Embassy of Denmark to Mali, include:

¹⁵ Mali's NAP 2019-2023 was shared by UN Women with the evaluation team but is not yet publicly available. It has been approved by all government stakeholders in Mali and will be launched soon.

1. **Creation of cross-government leadership and institutional structures for monitoring and coordinating the NAP**, including:
 - a. Activation of a National Committee for Monitoring, Coordinating and Managing implementation the NAP coordinated by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Families and comprising 13 sectoral ministries, 3 CSO networks (two women-led), the UN system, CVJR, DDR National Commission, Office of the Commissioner for Security Sector Reform, National Assembly and the Sahel Mission in Mali (MISAHEL) to secure inclusive and broad leadership;
 - b. Assignment of NAP focal points in each major signatory ministry; and
 - c. Delivery of capacity building programme to ministries on 1325 and how to integrate into their work (UN Women and Denmark's Embassy to Mali report that ministries are now actively engaged in the National Committee as a result).

2. **Development of a new Malian NAP for 2019-2023, including:**
 - a. Facilitated consultations across all regions of Mali across many sectors – security sector, traditional leaders, women's groups, relevant ministries, peace agreement mechanisms, media;
 - b. Technical support to drafting of the NAP itself;
 - c. Validation and support secured by the National Committee; and
 - d. Development of an operational plan¹⁶ and annual action plan for the NAP.

3. **Production and publication of high-level report on the implementation of Mali's NAP 2015-2018**, under the direction of the Ministry of Promotion of Women, Children and the Family with support from UN Women.

Combating Violence Against Women and Girls thematic programme:

In addition to the WPS indicators, UN Women also reports annually against a set of indicators for its GBV thematic programme. Whilst not formally part of the Danish-specific results framework, Danish funding does contribute significantly (as the second largest donor) to this work, and several indicators and accompanying results are also relevant to WPS. Relevant indicators are as follows:

- % of GBV survivors who believe a satisfactory mechanism exists for supporting survivors;
- Existence of an institutional coordination mechanism on GBV prevention at national level;
- Existence of a strategy on GBV at national level;
- Existence of a module on GBV within training programmes for armed forces;
- % of 25,000 members of armed forces and security services trained on protection of and prevention of GBV against women and girls in conflict;
- Number of regions covered by the GBV programme and presence of rapid intervention units supported by UN Women;

¹⁶ This was shared with the evaluation team but has not yet been formally published.

- Number of one stop centres for survivors of GBV with satisfactory services, and appropriate expertise/capacity;
- Number of political directives, traditional or religious declarations in support of UNWomen's HeforShe campaign; and
- Number of young men and women trained and equipped to inform the public via social media on women's rights.

Key output level results reported in UN Women's 2018 annual report is as follows:

1. 195 officers (police and justice officers, health workers, paralegals) including 77 women trained in the prevention and fight against GBV and sexual assistance, medical and psychosocial assistance at national and local levels (Bamako and Gao);
2. One-Stop Center managed by National Police in Bamako is now operational, with technical support and provision of equipment from UN Women; and
3. Training to 1,574 members (including 83 women) of the armed and security forces (Officers, Deputy Officers, rank-and-file military) trained on the protection of women and girls, national and international legal instruments including 1325, civil-military relations and the military code of conduct, the role of the military in protecting vulnerable populations, the role of female personnel in peacekeeping operations, sexual and gender-based violence.

However, targets for training within the armed and security forces in terms of both overall numbers and proportion of women trained have not been met to date. UN Women reports challenges in gaining access to sufficient numbers of women trainees and the security sector more generally.

5 Case study contribution to Danish NAP

5.1 Contribution of engagement to NAP objectives

The UN Women Mali engagement contributes clearly to the first of three overarching objectives underpinning Denmark's second and third NAPs, namely: "Achieving greater, active participation of women in peace building at international and local levels". It also contributes to the third objective focused on: "Providing protection of girls and women against violence, including gender-based violence, such as rape and sexual abuse, and ending impunity for gender crimes."¹⁷ (p9, Danish NAP 2008-2013).

UN Women's achievements in promoting greater participation of women in the leadership of and testimonials reported to the CVJR (Commission for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation) are relevant both to achieving greater participation of women in peacebuilding as well as the goal of ending impunity for gender crimes. Achievements by UN Women in Mali on strengthening the capacity of security and justice actors to prevent and respond to GBV also contribute to protecting girls and women against GBV.

¹⁷ These objectives are outlined on page 9 of Denmark's second NAP 2008-2013 but remain the underpinning objectives of the third NAP 2014-2019.

Finally, UN Women’s activities on promoting women’s participation and integration of protection needs in humanitarian actions – through long-term training and support to UN OCHA in implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy – contribute to the “mainstreaming gender including SCR1325 perspectives at the overall coordinating level of humanitarian action”.¹⁸ Section 4 above outlines the results of this engagement in more detail as relevant to these two objectives.

However, feedback from the MFA in Mali suggested that these contributions were not systematically captured within a monitoring framework and there has been no mechanism for reporting them to Copenhagen. This was felt to have weakened prioritization of NAP/WPS objectives within the Danish Embassy in Mali, especially with a strong push from Copenhagen recently on ‘youth, peace and security’ which was felt to have received greater policy attention in Mali. Stakeholders consulted commented that there had been “no links to, nor reminders of, the Danish NAP during the past two years” and it “would be good if the NAP could be connected to our ongoing work, to give it more visibility – what is the NAP, who’s in charge of it, why is it relevant to embassies and countries where there has been a commitment to WPS activities, why should we care about it. Is there a vision behind it; what is that global level vision and activity”. Instead of systematic reporting stakeholders commented that they had received only one request for updates on WPS at the time of the 2017 parliamentary update, with “only 3 days to reply”.

5.2 Relevance of the NAPs to the case study engagement

Evidence from the engagement suggests that the NAP was not the driving force of the selection of UN Women as a partner and their country programme as a vehicle for WPS activity. As noted above, stakeholders expressed a feeling that UN Women was selected due to its convenience as a mechanism for funding WPS/NAP in Mali. There is clear evidence that gender issues were nonetheless prioritised within Denmark’s overall strategy, policy and programming for Mali, however, as described in Section 4.1 – although the NAP itself is not mentioned in any of the key documents reviewed for this engagement. Instead references are made to Denmark’s commitment to implementing SDG 5 and integrating gender equality into diplomatic efforts and development cooperation.

As one of only two institutional donors to UN Women in Mali, it is clear that Denmark’s funding has made a significant difference to the breadth and extent of UN Women’s achievements on WPS. UN Women were very positive about their relationship with Denmark and the transformational difference Danish funding has made to their work in Mali. It also appears that the engagement has strengthened the link with Sweden as the other institutional donor to UN Women, and who were reported as one of the leaders on WPS in Mali alongside Canada. UN Women’s priorities – to strengthen the Malian Government’s capacity and leadership of its NAP, to focus on localization of the NAP and to strengthen participation of women in peace and reconciliation mechanisms – were validated as key needs to advance WPS in Mali by other donors consulted for this evaluation (Sweden, Belgium and Denmark themselves).

¹⁸ As described on page 15 of Denmark’s second NAP 2008-2013.

However, Danish stakeholders felt that Denmark's vision for WPS as distinct to that of other donors is not currently clear and therefore whilst they believe UN Women has done a good job, there has not been a process of considering whether there are other ways Denmark could add value on WPS in Mali. They also felt that the lack of connection between WPS activity in Mali and Denmark's global vision/approach to WPS, because of the absence of reporting or communication with Copenhagen on the NAP, has meant that Denmark's particular 'value-add' and areas of leadership on WPS in Mali have not been defined. Lastly, whilst this engagement did not review all Danish activities on peace, security, humanitarian and development programmes in Mali, available documents suggest that there may have been missed opportunities to mainstream NAP objectives across all of Denmark's activity in Mali. For example, despite ambitions for the Sahel Peace and Stabilisation Programme (PSP) to integrate WPS objectives into activities, Danish stakeholders in Mali reported that delivery on these ambitions had been weak to date.

5.3 Sustainability and resourcing

The UN Women Mali engagement is an example of earmarked funding for WPS activities. The approach UN Women has taken to embedding technical assistance within the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Families and providing significant resources to the domestication and institutionalisation of Mali's NAP has had clear sustainability benefits compared to other potential approaches. UN Women cited the funding of their WPS P4 adviser by Denmark as a key enabler of their achievements with the Ministry and in securing cross-government engagement in Mali's NAP implementation.

They also reported that the funding of a dedicated staff team in UN Women over multiple years via the core funding approach taken by Denmark had enabled more flexible, adaptive and context-appropriate support to WPS in Mali. One of UN Women's priorities for the remaining period of its funding under this engagement (2019-2021, assuming funding continues after the upcoming mid-term review is complete) is to focus on decentralization and localization of Mali's NAP which will further contribute to sustainability of WPS in Mali.

Lack of support for or engagement with the Danish Embassy in Bamako from Copenhagen level on the NAP was the main limiting factor mentioned by stakeholders, constraining prioritization and leadership of NAP priorities across Danish activities in Mali.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Overall conclusions

This engagement has achieved wide-ranging and clearly evidenced results for the advancement of WPS in Mali since it began just under two years ago. Whilst results cannot exclusively be attributed to Danish funding, Denmark has been a key enabler of UN Women's achievements in Mali. Danish provision of core funding for UN Women alongside funding of a dedicated WPS P4 adviser have both been crucial factors for the systematic and sustainable nature of UN Women's achievements on WPS in Mali and embedding of WPS capacity across the Government of Mali. Finally, the setting of clear indicators between Denmark and UN Women on WPS has helped to bring focus to Denmark's funding and agree clear areas of focus that align with UN Women's and Mali's WPS priorities, particularly participation, domestication of the 1325 framework and protection.

This engagement provides several important lessons for Denmark's overall approach to NAP implementation.

Institutional funding can be an effective way to resource domestication of NAP agenda and strengthen long-term structures and capacity within a national government where this is lacking, whilst minimizing bureaucratic burden and fiduciary risk to Denmark. This is a model that could be applied in other contexts where the national NAP agenda and capacity needs strengthening and/or where Danish capacity to implement their own direct programmes on WPS are constrained.

Funding a specialist agency such as UN Women with expertise in WPS and strong relationships with national government and women's rights organisations has also been beneficial in advancing NAP priorities without needing specialist expertise within the Danish Embassy at post.

There is evidence that monitoring and accountability mechanisms for Denmark's commitments under the second and third NAPs in Mali have either been ad hoc or non-existent. This has impacted both the visibility of the engagement's contributions to the NAPs as well as the prioritization of WPS oversight and leadership by Denmark in Mali. UN Women has a robust M&E system which has mitigated the risk of non-delivery of results.

It is not clear whether the choice to fund UN Women's country programme was the most strategic option for Denmark's investment into WPS in Mali. Denmark's leadership and value-add on WPS in Mali has not been clearly defined nor is understood by key staff in the Embassy.

6.2 Recommendations

Recommendations flowing from this case study are as follows:

1. Denmark should seek to define its priorities and vision for WPS in Mali and the wider Sahel based on the objectives and priorities of the NAP, and its potential value-add in the country/region relative to the influence, position and resources of other donors. This should be done in a participatory process with Danish staff in Bamako empowered to influence strategy and policy and informed by analysis of gaps and needs in Mali.
2. Denmark should strengthen and regularize its communication with UN Women on progress and lessons learned as originally intended, to improve levels of Danish understanding and oversight of the engagement in Mali.
3. Training and/or structured communications activities on Denmark's commitments and vision under the NAP and how this relates to its other commitments on peace and security, humanitarian and development programming should be considered by the MFA in Copenhagen to Embassy staff in Bamako.
4. A clear monitoring and reporting system for countries to feedback on progress, results, risks and lessons learned of NAP activities should be instituted to strengthen accountability, learning and prioritization of the WPS agenda in-country. This could include greater connection and communication between Danish priorities and

activities on WPS at the diplomatic level in the UN in New York and relevant country posts (in this case Mali).

5. Denmark should convene a discussion between all development and diplomacy actors in Mali to explore opportunities to strengthen overall WPS integration into all of Denmark's engagements in the country/region, including the PSP and support to peacekeeping and humanitarian response, and to bring greater coherence to the WPS strategy in the region.

7 References

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