



Australian Government
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POLICY ANALYSIS: AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENTS TO ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Guidance paper prepared by Dr Nicole Dicker, Strategic Development Group
for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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INTRODUCTION

This guidance paper was commissioned by the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE), a unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which monitors the quality and assesses the impact of the Australian aid program. The purpose of this paper is to inform ODE's [strategic evaluation of Australia's development assistance to end violence against women and girls](#). This evaluation will be a ten-year follow up to ODE's 2008 strategic evaluation *Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on global and regional promising approaches*.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 2 |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS | 3 |
| I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY | 4 |
| Overview of the Policy Analysis | 4 |
| Background to the Policy Analysis | 4 |
| Policy Analysis Rationale | 4 |
| Scope of the Policy Analysis | 4 |
| Questions for the Policy Analysis | 4 |
| Policy Analysis Approach | 5 |
| II. ANALYSIS | 6 |
| Australian Aid: Australia's Commitments to EVAWG | 6 |
| Domestic: Australia's Commitments to EVAWG | 9 |
| Regional and Global: Australia's Commitments to EVAWG | 11 |
| III. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS | 14 |
| How Sexual and Gender-Based Violence has been Positioned in Key Policies | 14 |
| Emerging Trends and Issues of Coherence in Australia's Commitments to EVAWG | 15 |
| Australia's EVAWG Targets and Commitments | 16 |
| ANNEX I: EVAWG COMMITMENTS IN AID INVESTMENT PLANS / AID PARTNERSHIP DOCUMENTS | 23 |
| LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED | 29 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper analyses Australia's commitments to ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) overseas as articulated in Australian aid policies and strategies as well as in domestic, regional and global documents. It answers the central question prompting the policy analysis: **what has been Australia's policy position/emphasis on EVAWG over the last decade?** The paper identifies the way in which sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has been positioned in key policies over the last ten years that have influenced the delivery of the Australian aid program; Australia's targets, commitments and public focus with respect to EVAWG; and emerging trends and issues of coherence.

The paper has been prepared for the Office of Development Effectiveness which will be conducting an evaluation of Australia's development assistance towards EVAWG. This will be a ten-year follow up to ODE's 2008 evaluation *Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor*. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of Australian policy engagement and development assistance to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls since 2008. This paper on Australia's policy commitments to EVAWG will inform the evaluation, particularly its accountability dimension.

The findings presented in the paper derive from a desk-based review of key documents: Australian aid policy and strategy documents, including current Aid Investment Plans and Aid Partnership documents; Australian domestic policy and strategy documents; and global and regional policy, strategy and legal documents. The analysis revealed the Australian Government's strong commitment to promoting gender equality, empowering women and girls, and preventing and reducing SGBV, both within Australia and internationally. The documents reviewed consistently highlighted the unacceptably high prevalence of SGBV, globally. They position SGBV as inherently linked to, and resulting from, gender inequality. The documents describe SGBV as criminal, a significant human rights violation, a form of discrimination against women, and threat to development.

A major finding of this analysis is that gender equality and EVAWG have consistently been given importance in the policies of Australian Governments over the past decade. Documents reviewed also show that the emphasis Australia gives to promoting gender equality internationally has increased over the course of the last decade. This has been accompanied by a greater focus on EVAWG across the aid program. While EVAWG has been a consistent theme across Australian Government policies of the past ten years, Australia's policy emphasis on EVAWG has shifted. The Australian aid program has evolved over the last decade from positioning SGBV as principally a health concern, to a justice and security issue, to a complex development challenge requiring a variety of interventions spanning many sectors and issues and involving a broad range of partners. Aid policy documents show the Australian aid program to now emphasise a comprehensive approach to addressing SGBV. The approach combines improving the quality of services and responses, access to justice, and prevention.

The documents reviewed contain numerous targets and commitments for EVAWG, cutting across a range of development issues/themes: gender equality, empowerment of women and girls and violence against women and girls; peace, justice and strong institutions; service provision; prevention; women and girls in conflict and disaster zones; disability-inclusive development; an integrated approach to EVAWG; global, regional and bilateral engagement with governments; research and reporting. The specific commitments are set out in the document; a list containing all targets and commitments is provided at page 16. Australia's development assistance can then be cross-checked against this list to assess the extent to which Australia has met its commitments to EVAWG.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| AFP | Australian Federal Police |
| AusAID | Australian Agency for International Development |
| CAPF | Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| EVAWG | Ending violence against women and girls |
| FSV | Family and sexual violence |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| JSCFADT | Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| ODE | Office of Development Effectiveness |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| UNSCR | United Nations Security Council Resolution |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SGBV | Sexual and gender-based violence |

I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW OF THE POLICY ANALYSIS

This paper identifies and analyses Australia's commitments to ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) overseas as articulated in Australian aid policies and strategies as well as in domestic, regional and global documents.

BACKGROUND TO THE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) is conducting an evaluation of Australia's development assistance towards EVAWG. This will be a ten-year follow up to ODE's 2008 evaluation *Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor*.¹ The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of Australian policy engagement and development assistance to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls since 2008. This policy paper on Australia's EVAWG commitments will inform the evaluation.

POLICY ANALYSIS RATIONALE

The evaluation has both accountability and learning dimensions. This policy analysis paper will help frame the accountability dimension of the evaluation.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY ANALYSIS

The paper analyses all relevant aid policy and strategy documents since 2008 through to the present, including policies and strategies on gender equality, humanitarian response and child protection. It also considers Australia's domestic, regional and global commitments.

QUESTIONS FOR THE POLICY ANALYSIS

The overarching question prompting the policy analysis is: **what has been Australia's policy position/emphasis on ending violence against women and girls over the last decade?** Within the framework of this guiding question, the paper addresses the following three key questions:

¹ In 2009, the Australian Government responded to the 2008 evaluation: *Stop Violence: Responding to Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor*. The document includes EVAWG commitments (see section III).

1. How has sexual and gender-based violence been positioned in key policies over the last ten years that have influenced the delivery of the Australian aid program?
2. Are there any emerging trends and issues of coherence in Australia's policies, strategies and/or commitments with respect to ending violence against women and girls?
3. What are Australia's targets and commitments with respect to ending violence against women and girls?

POLICY ANALYSIS APPROACH

The methodology is a desk-based review of key documents: Australian aid policy and strategy documents, including current Aid Investment Plans and Aid Partnership documents; domestic policy documents; and global and regional legal and policy documents. The analysis prioritises distilling key themes; identifying targets, commitments and public policies; and pinpointing patterns and emerging trends. It also considers any country, sub-regional or regional variations.

II. ANALYSIS

This section answers the main question guiding the policy analysis: **what has been Australia's policy position/emphasis on EVAWG over the last decade?** The analysis starts by examining Australian aid policy documents that have influenced the delivery of the Australian aid program since 2008 relevant to EVAWG. It then moves to consider domestic, regional and global commitments. Section III below synthesises the findings with reference to the three key questions for the policy analysis (listed above).

AUSTRALIAN AID: AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENTS TO EVAWG

The Australian Government's overarching development policies of the past decade have each, in varying ways, committed Australia to provide development assistance towards EVAWG. The 2006 *White Paper on the Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program* (the *White Paper*) positioned sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as both a health and gender equality concern. The *White Paper* committed Australia to significantly increase its support to combat gender-based violence (GBV) and to integrate domestic violence considerations into HIV/AIDS strategies and interventions.²

The 2012 *Effective Aid* policy positioned SGBV as both a gender equality and 'safety and security' issue.³ Building on the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, including its recommendation to prioritise promoting gender equality in the aid program and increase the focus on GBV,⁴ *Effective Aid* committed Australia 'to work to enhance the safety and security of women and girls in their homes, their communities, and in disaster and conflict situations'.⁵ *Effective Aid* emphasised addressing GBV through law and justice programs and supporting access to counselling and other practical support services. The 2012 *Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework* (CAPF) outlined expected results and performance measures for the implementation of *Effective Aid*.⁶ CAPF committed Australia to support 40,000 women survivors of violence to receive services, including counselling, by 2015-16.

Australia's 2014 (current) development policy, *Australian Aid*, commits Australia to invest strongly in EVAWG, including by helping build effective law and justice systems to address violence against women.⁷ It refers to an existing 10 year commitment, *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women)*, to work with Pacific governments, civil society, the private sector, and multilateral and regional agencies to

² AusAID, *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability. A White Paper on the Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program*, April 2006, 49-50.

³ AusAID, *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a Real Difference – Delivering Real Results*, January 2012 and updated June 2012, 31.

⁴ Australian Government, *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, April 2011, 7 & 15.

⁵ Ibid 31.

⁶ AusAID, *Helping the World's Poor through Effective Aid: Australia's Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework to 2015-2016*, May 2012.

⁷ DFAT, *Australian Aid: Promoting Prosperity, Reducing Poverty, Enhancing Stability*, June 2014 and *Making Performance Count: Enhancing the Accountability and Effectiveness of Australian Aid*, November 2014.

reduce violence against women and increase access to support services and justice for survivors of violence. The policy addresses SGBV in three of its six investment priorities: effective governance, building resilience, and gender equality and empowering women and girls. In this way, SGBV is positioned as a development challenge requiring a range of interventions targeting multiple sectors and issues. This comprehensive approach is reflected also in DFAT's current strategies on education, humanitarian assistance and disability-inclusive development as each strategy addresses SGBV (see section III below for commitments).⁸

The three above-mentioned overarching development policies consistently position promoting gender equality as an aid priority. Also, the 2017 *Foreign Policy White Paper* provides that gender inequality 'undermines global prosperity, stability and security' and 'contributes to and often exacerbates... poverty, weak governance and conflict and violent extremism'.⁹ It makes clear that 'Australia's foreign policy pursues the empowerment of women as a top priority' and that Australia strives to end violence against women and girls. The 2012 and 2014 policies similarly pair gender equality with empowering women and girls as an EAWG strategy. Focusing here on gender equality, the Australian aid program has had three gender equality strategies since 2008. The three gender equality strategies take as their starting point the unacceptably high prevalence of SGBV.

The *2007 Gender Equality Strategy* linked gender inequality and GBV: 'gender inequality perpetuates violence against women, and violence against women restricts women's ability to use their capabilities and take advantage of opportunities, thereby reinforcing gender inequality'.¹⁰ The *2007 Gender Equality Strategy* positioned violence against women and girls as a development challenge requiring 'urgent attention' and identified a range of areas where Australia may assist: support for legislative change; effective law and justice responses; support services for women and children; community education for men, women, girls and boys; and programs that support men to promote gender equality, women's rights and nonviolence.¹¹ The Strategy fell short of committing Australia to any specific actions on EAWG, other than to focus on reforming institutions to establish a foundation of equal opportunities for women and men, including to protect against violence.

The *2011 Gender Equality Strategy*¹² included EAWG as one of the four pillars of Australia's approach to gender equality and women's empowerment — so it strengthened Australia's emphasis on EAWG as the previous strategy did not count EAWG among its four priorities.¹³ It positioned EAWG as an enabler for development: 'when the safety and security of women and girls is guaranteed, they can more effectively contribute to better outcomes for their families, communities, and countries'.¹⁴ This strategy was published shortly after Australia's *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*¹⁵ (see discussion on Australia's domestic commitments below), and was likely influenced by bipartisan support for a coherent domestic strategy to address VAWG.

The *2011 Gender Equality Strategy* labelled violence against women a 'significant human rights violation' and threat to development resulting from 'unequal power distribution between women and men, exacerbated by a lack of functioning laws, policies, and institutions in place to deal with perpetrators of violence and

⁸ Violence against girls is identified as a barrier to access to education: DFAT, *Strategy for Australia's Aid Investments in Education 2015-2020*, September 2015, 27-28.

⁹ DFAT, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper: Opportunity, Security, Strength*, November 2017, 93.

¹⁰ UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality 2005, 110-111 (cited in the Strategy).

¹¹ AusAID, *Gender Equality in Australia's Aid Program: Why and How*, March 2007.

¹² AusAID, *Promoting Opportunities for All: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, November 2011.

¹³ The *2007 Gender Equality Strategy* prioritised improved economic status of women; equal participation of women in decision making and leadership; improved and equitable health and education outcomes; and gender equality advanced in regional cooperation efforts. EAWG was not among the four key priority outcomes.

¹⁴ AusAID, *Promoting Opportunities for All: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, November 2011, 4.

¹⁵ Council of Australian Governments, *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, 2011.

provide protection and services to survivors'.¹⁶ This stance gave rise to a multifaceted approach to EAWG combining, inter alia, working with partner governments to help develop and implement laws and policies for ending violence against women, including increased access to justice; support for quality service delivery (counselling, crisis accommodation, legal support and health services); and helping change attitudes to violence (see section III for all commitments).

The (current) *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* is DFAT's first gender equality strategy, following AusAID-DFAT integration in 2014.¹⁷ Significantly, it is the first gender equality strategy to position gender equality and women's empowerment as a priority across Australia's foreign policy, economic diplomacy and internal DFAT corporate policies,¹⁸ in addition to the aid program. EAWG is one of three priority areas for gender equality. Like the *2011 Gender Equality Strategy*, the document describes violence against women and girls as a 'significant human rights violation' that constrains development. Its policy position is that '[a]n effective response to ending violence against women is based around improved quality services and responses, access to justice, and prevention'.¹⁹ It promotes '[i]ntegrated responses that account for diverse forms of violence against women and girls' and marks out a role for 'informal structures' and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to respond to SGBV.²⁰ It commits Australia to support strong justice sector responses, help increase women's access to support services, and assist in preventing violence against women and children (commitments in section III).

The three gender equality strategies similarly recognise that women and girls are especially vulnerable to violence in conflict and disaster situations. DFAT's *Humanitarian Strategy* reinforces and expands on this message, flagging increased rates of SGBV in crisis contexts and its use as a weapon of war.²¹ It positions preventing and responding to SGBV in disaster and conflict situations as a priority for Australia's humanitarian assistance (see section III for commitments). The *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* was the first of the Australian aid program's gender equality strategies to connect GBV and disability, affirming that women and girls with disabilities are more likely to experience violence and face additional barriers in seeking justice and support. This issue is addressed in DFAT's strategy for disability-inclusive development, *Development for All* (commitments in section III).²²

There are other Australian aid policies and strategies relevant to the analysis. They are touched on briefly here and the commitments they entail are in section III. Child protection policies emphasise Australia's zero tolerance of child abuse in the aid program.²³ Australia's *2016 Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery* positions tackling human trafficking and slavery as vital for EAWG.²⁴ The *2011-2012 Budget Statement* for the aid program committed Australia to invest \$96.4 million over four years on EAWG in East

¹⁶ AusAID, *Promoting Opportunities for All: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Thematic Strategy for Gender Equality*, November 2011, 15.

¹⁷ DFAT, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, February 2016.

¹⁸ A feature of the *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* is that of DFAT's corporate policies relating to gender equality and EAWG. In recent years, there has been a growing focus and momentum on these issues. Most relevantly, DFAT has started developing family and sexual violence (FSV) policies for its staff. To date, Port Moresby and Honiara Posts have FSV policies and DFAT is currently developing one in Canberra. The policies provide for, inter alia, zero tolerance for domestic and family violence by employees in the workplace and access to paid personal leave to access medical, legal or counselling services, moving into emergency accommodation, attending court hearings and police appointments.

¹⁹ Ibid 11.

²⁰ Ibid 11.

²¹ DFAT, *Humanitarian Strategy*, May 2016.

²² DFAT, *Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for Strengthening Disability-Inclusive Development in Australia's Aid Program*, May 2015.

²³ AusAID, *Child Protection Policy*, January 2009 & January 2013; DFAT, *Child Protection Policy*, October 2017.

²⁴ DFAT, *Amplifying Our Impact: Australia's International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery*, March 2016.

Asia and the Pacific. It included funding for establishing and improving crisis services, strengthening counselling and legal support, and sharing best practice approaches.²⁵

The Australian Federal Police's (AFP) *Gender Strategy 2014-18* commits the AFP to assist partner policing organisations to address the law enforcement needs of women, particularly in relation to GBV.²⁶ The 2017 *Australian Government Response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee Report (JSCFADT): Empowering Women and Girls* details Australia's commitments flowing from the JSCFADT recommendations, a number of which relate to EVAWG. Also, most Aid Investment Plans/Aid Partnership documents include EVAWG commitments (see annex I).

Lastly, the 2017 *Statement by Australia to the UN Women Executive Board (National Statement)* reveals the links and complementarities between Australia's aid initiatives and global advocacy efforts on EVAWG. The *National Statement* highlights that Australia places gender equality and women's empowerment at the centre of Australia's foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development efforts. It also articulates an ongoing commitment to partner with UN Women, refers to the unacceptable levels of violence faced by women in the Pacific, and encourages a focus on disability-inclusive development and the need for the UN to respond appropriately to the needs of Small Island Development States in the Pacific.

DOMESTIC: AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENTS TO EVAWG

Australia's domestic policy commitments to EVAWG are contained in the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the *National Plan*)²⁷ and the *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018*.²⁸

The *National Plan* provides the framework for action by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to reduce violence against women and their children within Australia. The vision of the *National Plan* is that 'Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities'.²⁹ It aims to achieve 'a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children'.³⁰ It focuses on the two main types of violent crimes that have a major impact on women in Australia: domestic and family violence and sexual assault. Its overarching emphasis is on preventing and reducing violence against women and children from occurring, stressing that domestic violence and sexual assault are crimes that must be stopped. It is grounded in research linking violence against women and children with how people view the roles of women and men. As such, it promotes building respectful relationships and working to increase gender equality in order to prevent violence.

The *National Plan* emphasises supporting women who have experienced violence (through improved service delivery for victims), stopping men from committing violence (by holding perpetrators accountable and encouraging behaviour change), and building an evidence base on innovative and effective approaches to reducing domestic and family violence and sexual assault. It is premised on the recognition that change takes time and reducing violence requires a sustained effort — to this end the *National Plan* is a 12 year commitment. The *National Plan* incorporates separate three year Action Plans that build on each other over

²⁵ *Budget: Australia's International Development Assistance Program 2011-12*, 10 May 2011.

²⁶ Australian Federal Police, *International Deployment Group Gender Strategy 2014-2018*.

²⁷ Council of Australian Governments, *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, 2011 (the *National Plan*). The *National Plan* is a 12 year commitment that consists of separate action plans: First Action Plan: Building a Strong Foundation 2010-2013; Second Action Plan: Moving Ahead 2013-2016; Third Action Plan 2016-2019. The *National Plan* coordinates across State and Territory jurisdictions.

²⁸ *Australian National Action on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018*, March 2012.

²⁹ *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, 10.

³⁰ *Ibid* 10.

12 years; this format allows for a process of taking stock of what has been achieved and adjustment of strategy to help maximise impact and effectiveness.

The *National Plan* identifies outcome areas indicative of its multifaceted approach: communities are safe and free from violence (targeting social norms, attitudes and beliefs and building support for gender equality); relationships are respectful (promoting equal and positive relationships, positive parenting practices and violence-free home environments); services meet the holistic needs of women and their children experiencing violence (services must be appropriate and flexible in meeting the diverse needs of clients); justice responses are effective (enhancing access to civil and criminal measures); and perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

It is worth flagging some key trends, or developments, over the years of implementation: notably, the Second Action Plan (2013-2016) places increased emphasis on the value of integrated systems³¹ and improving perpetrator interventions. The Third Action Plan (2016-2019) places renewed emphasis on early intervention and holding perpetrators accountable. It also targets sexual violence and responding to children living with violence as discrete priorities — in so doing, it invites more targeted and nuanced responses to sexual violence (avoiding conflating sexual assault with other forms of GBV) and more appropriate strategies for addressing the unique needs of child victims.

The *National Plan* incorporates commitments to monitoring and reporting progress to ensure the prevalence of violence against women and their children is decreasing. It also includes a commitment to evaluate the National Plan in terms of its effectiveness and efficiency as well as cumulatively measuring progress towards achieving a significant and sustained reduction in violence. It features four high-level indicators of change: reduced prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault, increased proportion of women who feel safe in their communities, reduced deaths related to domestic violence and sexual assault, and reduced proportion of children exposed to their mother's or carer's experience of domestic violence. These indicators reflect the emphasis on reducing violence against women and their children and promoting safer communities within the *National Plan*.

While the *National Plan* does not address EVAWG in the Australian aid program or in diplomatic efforts overseas — rather, it articulates the commitments of Australian governments to prevent and reduce violence against women and children *within* Australia — it is useful for this analysis.³² This is because it shows Australia's domestic targets, commitments and public policy focus on EVAWG, much of which aligns with Australia's approach to EVAWG internationally. In this way, analysis of the *National Plan* helps to reveal and distil key themes and issues that are relevant for the broader analysis.

For example, the *National Plan's* stance that all forms of violence against women and their children are unacceptable in any community and in any culture echoes the contents of Australian aid and regional and international documents reviewed. Also, its framing of domestic and family violence and sexual assault as gendered crimes (that is they have an unequal impact on females) requiring an immediate and focused response, mirrors their framing in policy documents on EVAWG that have influenced the delivery of the Australian aid program. Similarly, the multifaceted approach to violence prevention described in the *National Plan*, combining a variety of interventions across a number of sectors and involving myriad actors, generally parallels Australia's approach abroad. In sum, the *National Plan* signposts key concepts and strategies on EVAWG relevant for this policy analysis.

³¹ This involves services and systems working well together in order for women and their children to be protected and supported. Survivors of violence are likely to need a range of services, including one-stop and wrap-around support, regardless of where they live; service systems share information; and governments work together to ensure violence against women is considered across all policy settings (see Second Action Plan: Moving Ahead 2013-2016, 29).

³² The *National Plan* does briefly acknowledge (in one sentence) that Australia works internationally on initiatives to reduce violence against women and their children and to promote human rights.

The 2012 *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* contains Australia's commitment to and plan for implementing the United Nations (UN) Women, Peace and Security Agenda, at home and overseas. UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, together with seven subsequent UNSC resolutions under the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, address the harrowing impact of conflict on women and girls, and highlight the vital role women can play in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.³³ As it relates to SGBV in conflict affected settings, the document provides that the impact of conflict is 'highly gendered' and that women and girls often suffer high levels of SGBV.³⁴ It labels the use of GBV to achieve military or political objectives a violation of international human rights law, and in armed conflict, international humanitarian law.

The document positions the Women, Peace and Security Agenda as a 'responsibility' the Australian Government takes 'very seriously', prompting Australia to integrate a gender perspective into its peace and security efforts, protect women and girls' human rights, and promote women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution.³⁵ It lists strategies and actions that Australia has committed to undertake towards EVAWG (set out in section III).

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL: AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENTS TO EVAWG

The international community, including Australia, has recognised the importance of addressing SGBV. At the Pacific regional level, the 2012 *Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration* contains a joint commitment to advance gender equality and empower women in the Pacific.³⁶ The document frames gender equality as a development issue: 'gender inequality is imposing a high personal, social and economic cost on Pacific people and nations' and 'improved gender equality will make a significant contribution to creating a prosperous, stable and secure Pacific'.³⁷ It positions violence against women and girls as intrinsically linked to gender inequality and states that it is 'unacceptably high'.³⁸

The Leaders committed to implement policies on EVAWG in their respective countries, including essential services (protection, health, counselling, legal) for survivors of SGBV as well as legislation regarding SGBV to protect women from violence and impose appropriate penalties for perpetrators. In the document, Leaders call on Development Partners to support national led efforts to address gender inequality in line with aid and development effectiveness principles. While this request for assistance does not bind Australia to provide aid for EVAWG, it does create an entry point and rationale for Australian aid. Moreover, Australia's endorsement of the document might reasonably be interpreted as a willingness to support EVAWG initiatives in Pacific Island Forum member countries.

The document follows commitments in the 2009 *Forum Communiqué* to eradicate SGBV and to ensure everyone enjoys equal protection of the law and access to justice.³⁹ The 2009 *Forum Communiqué* frames

³³ *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, 31 October 2000; *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820*, 19 June 2008; *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1888*, 30 September 2009; *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1889*, 5 October 2009; *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1960*, 16 December 2010; *United Nations Security Council Resolution 2106*, 24 June 2013; *United Nations Security Council Resolution 2122*, 18 October 2013; *United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242*, 13 October 2015.

³⁴ The *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*, March 2012, identifies a range of acts that constitute GBV, including rape, sexual slavery, genital mutilation, forced pregnancy, abortion and sterilisation.

³⁵ *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018*, March 2012, 3.

³⁶ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, *Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration*, 30 August 2012.

³⁷ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, *Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration*, 30 August 2012, 1.

³⁸ *Ibid* 1.

³⁹ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, *Forum Communiqué*, 5-6 August 2009, 9.

SGBV as ‘a risk to human security and a potential destabilising factor for communities and societies alike’.⁴⁰ It similarly flags the high rates of SGBV in the region, though notes its prevalence often goes underreported, and promotes nationally owned processes to address SGBV.

Globally, the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) guided international development efforts from 2000-2015. Of most relevance, MDG 3 promoted gender equality (Promote gender equality and empower women) but did not incorporate any targets on EVAWG. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) build upon the MDGs and include targets that directly address EVAWG. Together with the 2015 *Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development*, they comprise the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (the *2030 Agenda*). Australia has endorsed the *2030 Agenda* and while non-binding, it is intended to be ‘highly influential’ in shaping development cooperation.⁴¹ DFAT describes the SDGs as ‘form[ing] a roadmap for global development efforts’ — so the way in which the SDGs address EVAWG may be seen to reflect Australia’s current policy perspective on the issue.⁴²

SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) includes EVAWG targets: 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere;⁴³ 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; and 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. The targets reveal an emphasis on ending all forms of violence against all women and girls in all settings.

Also, SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and provide access to justice for all) gives rise to EVAWG commitments. See especially targets 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere; 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children; and 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime. Targets 5.c and 16.a reveal the importance placed on strengthening policies, legislation and institutions to combat violence. The SDGs are a commitment of all countries, including Australia, to implement the goals and targets domestically, regionally and globally ‘taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities’.⁴⁴

Core international human rights treaties also contain provisions relevant to Australian aid for EVAWG. The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) requires States Parties⁴⁵ to undertake measures to end discrimination against women: to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women; to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination

⁴⁰ Ibid 9.

⁴¹ DFAT, *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* < <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/development-issues/2030-agenda/Pages/default.aspx>>.

⁴² DFAT, *Sustainable Development Goals* < <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/development-issues/2030-agenda/Pages/sustainable-development-goals.aspx>>.

⁴³ Note that international standards recognise violence against women as a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

⁴⁴ *Sustainable Development Goals, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1*, 25 September 2015 6 [21].

⁴⁵ Note that Australia and most countries where Australia provides aid are State Parties to CEDAW and so bound by its provisions under international law. The list of CEDAW States Parties is available at <https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en>.

against women by persons, organisations or enterprises.⁴⁶ CEDAW's definition of discrimination includes GBV.⁴⁷

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (established in article 17 of CEDAW to consider progress made in the implementation of CEDAW) encourages international cooperation to eliminate GBV. The Committee urges States Parties to implement their obligations in relation to GBV, whether in the territory of the State Party or extraterritorially — this is a firm basis for Australian aid for EVAWG.⁴⁸ The *Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action* builds on the undertakings in CEDAW; it was adopted in 1995 by 189 countries, including Australia, and remains influential today.⁴⁹ It signals the international community's commitment to gender equality, women's empowerment and the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* requires States Parties to take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from violence, including sexual violence.⁵⁰ The *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* recognises that women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk of violence, both within and outside the home, and requires States Parties to take legislative, administrative, social, educational and other measures to protect persons with disabilities from violence, including its gender-based aspects.⁵¹ It also requires States Parties to promote the physical, cognitive and psychological recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration of persons with disabilities who become victims of violence and to put in place legislation and policies, including women and child-focused legislation and policies, so that cases of violence against persons with disabilities are investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted.⁵²

These treaties, which Australia has voluntarily entered into, set out Australia's international human rights obligations. Under international law, Australia is bound to comply with their provisions and to implement them *domestically*. However, the Australian Government has noted its voluntary commitment to support the protection and promotion of human rights overseas through foreign aid, including by advancing the *2030 Agenda* and applying its disability-inclusive development strategy.⁵³

The UNSC resolutions comprising the Women, Peace and Security Agenda are binding on UN member states, including Australia. UNSCR 1325 was the first Resolution to address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women; to stress the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace-building and peacekeeping; and to urge all actors to incorporate a gender perspective in all areas of peace-building. Subsequent Resolutions build on this foundation. Australia's commitments are set out elsewhere in this paper (see analysis of Australia's domestic commitments above and section III below).

⁴⁶ UN Women, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Text of the Convention* <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>>.

⁴⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *General Recommendation No. 19, Violence against Women*, 11th sess, UN Doc A/47/38 (1992) [6].

⁴⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19*, CEDAW/C/GC/35 (2017).

⁴⁹ United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women*, 15 September 1995.

⁵⁰ *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, opened for signature 20 November 1989, 1577 UNTS 3 (entered into force 2 September 1990) arts 19 & 34.

⁵¹ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, opened for signature 13 December 2006, 2515 UNTS 3 (entered into force 3 May 2008) preamble and art 16(1).

⁵² *Ibid* art 16(4-5).

⁵³ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Australia*, UN Doc A/HRC/31/14 (13 January 2016).

III. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

This section draws together and synthesises the analysis of section II above to sum up the key findings for the policy analysis. In so doing, it makes conclusions about Australia's policy position/emphasis on EVAWG over the last decade and pinpoints Australia's policy commitments to EVAWG. It systematically considers how SGBV has been positioned in key policies that have influenced the delivery of the Australian aid program; emerging trends and issues of coherence in Australia's commitments to EVAWG; and Australia's targets, commitments and public policy focus for EVAWG.

HOW SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE HAS BEEN POSITIONED IN KEY POLICIES

1) How has sexual and gender-based violence been positioned in key policies over the last ten years that have influenced the delivery of the Australian aid program?

The documents reviewed for this policy analysis paper are premised on the recognition that the prevalence of SGBV is unacceptably high, globally. They reveal that violence against women and girls occurs in many settings — at home, in their communities and in disaster and conflict situations. They highlight that violence against women and girls takes many forms including: domestic and family violence, sexual abuse of girls at school, sexual harassment at work and in the streets, rape by husbands or strangers, child marriage, acid attacks, trafficking of women, female mutilation and the use of rape as a tactic of war.⁵⁴ Also, the documents make clear that certain groups are more vulnerable, for example, women and girls with disabilities are more likely to experience violence and face additional barriers in seeking justice and support.

The documents generally position SGBV as criminal, a significant human rights violation, a form of discrimination against women, and threat to development. The *2011 Gender Equality Strategy* emphasises that violence against women and girls 'devastates lives' and 'undermines good development'.⁵⁵ Further, the *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* provides that violence against women 'undermines a community's social fabric' and 'creates a significant strain on national economies with escalating costs in health care, social services, policing and the justice system'.⁵⁶

The policies consistently position SGBV as inherently linked to, and resulting from, gender inequality. For example, the *2011 Gender Equality Strategy* considers EVAWG as an aspect of gender equality and the *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* establishes EVAWG as a gender equality priority. As such, efforts to prevent and reduce SGBV are commonly positioned as part of a broader gender equality goal or agenda. Aid policy

⁵⁴ See especially AusAID, *Promoting Opportunities for All: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, November 2011; DFAT, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, February 2016.

⁵⁵ AusAID, *Promoting Opportunities for All: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, November 2011, 15.

⁵⁶ DFAT, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, February 2016, 4 & 23.

documents show the Australian aid program to have a comprehensive approach to addressing SGBV. The approach combines improving the quality of services and responses, access to justice, and prevention. As it relates specifically to services, some of the documents reviewed promote integrated systems and responses, or holistic services, for survivors of SGBV.⁵⁷ The documents confirm that the Australian aid program supports a variety of services for survivors of violence including emergency accommodation, referral, counselling, health and legal services.

As it relates specifically to violence against girls, Australia's *National Plan* is part of a broader COAG reform agenda, and explicitly links its work to the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*. In addition, a stated focus of the *National Plan* is reducing the proportion of children exposed to their mother or carer's experience of domestic violence, and addressing the specific needs of children. In contrast, while DFAT's aid policies and strategies consistently mention violence against women and girls, support for girls at times is less apparent in policy commitments and program implementation. The specific and different needs of girls/children are generally not addressed in the documents reviewed. By way of example, annex I (below) sets out EVAWG commitments by country according to current Aid Investment Plans and Aid Partnership Arrangements. For most countries where Australia provides aid (other than Federated States of Micronesia, Pakistan, Samoa, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu), commitments relate only to ending violence against women and do not mention girls/children at all.

EMERGING TRENDS AND ISSUES OF COHERENCE IN AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENTS TO EVAWG

2) Are there any emerging trends and issues of coherence in Australia's policies, strategies and/or commitments with respect to ending violence against women and girls?

Documents reviewed show that over the past decade, Australia has given increasing emphasis to promoting gender equality overseas. The *White Paper* (2006) established gender equality as an 'overarching principle' for the aid program and the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness* (2011) recommended that '[p]romoting gender equality should be a critical cross-cutting objective for the aid program. Australia should be a firm and persistent advocate and practical supporter of gender equality, especially in the Pacific'.⁵⁸

From there, the subsequent development policies setting the strategic framework for the aid program, *Effective Aid* (2012) and *Australian Aid* (2014), positioned gender equality as an 'overarching goal' and 'investment priority', respectively. *Effective Aid* committed Australia to increase its efforts to meet gender equality goals and targets. Moreover, *Australian Aid* conveyed the Australian Government's strong commitment to being at the forefront of efforts to promote gender equality in the Indo-Pacific region. The policy set a target for more than 80 per cent of aid investments to effectively address gender issues in their implementation. The *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* further strengthens gender equality as a priority across Australia's foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development efforts.

Analysis of current Aid Investment Plans/Aid Partnership Documents similarly reveal the priority given to promoting gender equality through the aid program. They show that Australia gives some attention to promoting gender equality in all countries where it provides aid. Notably, with this increased emphasis on gender equality has come a greater focus on EVAWG across the aid program. To illustrate, the 2011 and 2016 *Gender Equality Strategies* strengthened the Australian aid program's emphasis on EVAWG. Also, many of DFAT's current Aid Investment Plans and Aid Partnership Documents include commitments towards

⁵⁷ See, eg, *Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017, 10; DFAT, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, February 2016, 11.

⁵⁸ Recommendation 11, *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, April 2011.

EVAWG. Whereas the *2011-12 Budget Statement* focused Australia's EVAWG efforts on East Asia and the Pacific, Australia's commitments to EVAWG today extend across the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, to the Palestinian Territories, Iraq, Afghanistan and Sub-Saharan Africa.

There is an increasing trend to pair gender equality with efforts to empower women and girls. The 2006 *White Paper* contained no reference to 'empowerment' in the context of gender equality and EVAWG, whereas current Australian aid policies couple gender equality with empowering women and girls as an EVAWG strategy.⁵⁹ This has been accompanied by a move away from language describing women and girls experiencing violence as 'victims' towards the more empowering 'survivor'. Further, there is an emerging trend in the aid program towards empowering women survivors of violence to access justice by increasing women's knowledge of the legal system and their rights.⁶⁰ In sum, the trend is towards an empowerment approach to development assistance for EVAWG.

Another notable trend is towards a comprehensive and integrated approach to EVAWG involving a broad range of partners. Notably, *Australia's Response to the ODE Report* (2009) committed the Australian aid program to adopt an integrated approach for EVAWG assistance. Over the past decade, the aid program has moved from positioning SGBV as principally a health concern, to a law, justice and security issue, to a complex development challenge requiring a range of interventions spanning many sectors and issues. Documents reviewed show that Australia now contemplates working with a broad range of partners on EVAWG, including partner governments, civil society, the private sector, and multilateral and regional agencies. Indeed, the *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* flagged a role for 'informal structures' in helping strengthen the capacity of the justice system to respond effectively to SGBV. Aid Investment Plans for Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Vanuatu similarly identify a role for informal institutions/local conflict resolution mechanisms. This is an example of a sub-regional variation in Australia's commitments to EVAWG — it is only in Melanesia that Australia considers strengthening informal institutions as an EVAWG strategy.

There is also an emerging trend to include efforts to eliminate harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage among Australia's EVAWG responses overseas. The *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* was the first DFAT policy or strategy to explicitly mention female genital mutilation or child marriage — the document lists both as forms of violence against women and girls. Logically then, EVAWG commitments contained in the *2016 Gender Equality Strategy* (set out in section III) extend to include these harmful practices, as relevant. Further, SDG 5.3 sets a target to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Lastly, the *2017 Australian Government Response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee Report* does not make any mention of female genital mutilation but does commit the Australian Government to press other governments to enact and enforce laws that protect the human rights of women and girls, including in relation to under-age and forced marriage.

AUSTRALIA'S EVAWG TARGETS AND COMMITMENTS

3) What are Australia's targets and commitments with respect to ending violence against women and girls?

Australia's overarching focus with respect to EVAWG is to promote gender equality, empower women and girls, and prevent and reduce SGBV. To achieve this, Australia has set targets and made commitments for its development assistance, as listed below. As this list is intended to help frame the accountability dimension of

⁵⁹ See, eg, DFAT, *Australian Aid: Promoting Prosperity, Reducing Poverty, Enhancing Stability*, June 2014; *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, February 2016.

⁶⁰ See, eg, DFAT, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, February 2016;

the evaluation, it includes the source of the commitment and the date the commitment came into effect. Australia's development assistance can then be cross-checked against this list to assess the extent to which Australia has met its commitments to EVAWG.

The list amalgamates all targets and commitments contained in all of the documents reviewed for this policy analysis. To aid clarity, the targets and commitments are grouped by theme/issue. The list also shows EVAWG commitments by place (where specified) — this supports the accountability dimension of the evaluation and helps distil any country, sub-regional or regional variations.⁶¹

Gender Equality, Empowerment of Women and Girls and Violence against Women and Girls

Targets

- More than 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation (*Australian Aid*, November 2014).
- End all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere (SDG 5.1, January 2016).
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (SDG 5.2, January 2016).
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (SDG 5.3, January 2016).
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels (SDG 5.c, January 2016).

Commitments

- Prioritise promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls through the aid program (see especially the gender equality strategies, the overarching development policies, *Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009, and the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, April 2011).
- Significantly increase support to combat GBV (*White Paper*, April 2006. See also the *2011-2012 Budget Statement* and *Australian Aid*, November 2014, which commit Australia to invest strongly in EVAWG. The *Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017, further commits Australia to consider increasing funding for activities to combat violence as a proportion of Australia's development assistance budget, as well as commit to the provision of resources for the long term. Also, analysis of available Aid Investment Plans/Aid Partnership Documents revealed that Australia provides development assistance for EVAWG in almost every country⁶²).
- Australia will not fund any individual or organisation that does not meet AusAID child protection compliance standards in their operations and activities (*Child Protection Policy*, January 2009 and January 2013), nor will DFAT knowingly engage — directly or indirectly — anyone who poses a risk to children (*Child Protection Policy*, October 2017).

⁶¹ Many of the commitments in the documents reviewed are not country specific. Rather, they apply generally across the Australian aid program, noting the aid program mostly focuses on the Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific region.

⁶² For example, there is no reference to any EVAWG initiatives in the Aid Investment Plans and Aid Partnership Documents for Nau ru and Tuvalu.

- Work to combat human trafficking and slavery through prevention and deterrence, detection and investigation, prosecution and compliance, and victim support and protection (*Amplifying our Impact*, March 2016).

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Targets

- All AFP missions support partner country policing organisations to lawfully respond to gender-based violence, as demonstrated through mandatory reporting (*AFP Gender Strategy*, 2014).
- All AFP missions support civil society capacity to deliver prevention initiatives and provide services to GBV victims, including through mandatory reporting (*AFP Gender Strategy*, 2014).
- Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere (SDG 16.1, January 2016).
- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children (SDG 16.2, January 2016).
- Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime (SDG 16.a, January 2016).

Commitments

- Reform institutions to establish a foundation of equal opportunities for women and men, including to protect against violence (*Gender Equality Strategy How*, March 2007).
- Support governments to review, develop and implement laws and policies that address violence against women and girls and improve their access to justice (*Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009, *2011-12 Budget Statement; Gender Equality Strategy*, November 2011 and February 2016) (Afghanistan, Federated States of Micronesia, Pakistan, Palau, PNG, Regional Pacific, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu).
- Help strengthen the capacity of the justice system, including the police, courts and informal structures, to respond effectively to violence against women and children (*Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009; *Gender Equality Strategy*, February 2016. See also *2011-12 Budget Statement* which commits Australia to improve legal responses for women survivors of violence in East Asia and the Pacific; *Australian Aid*, November 2014, commits Australia to support the building of effective law and justice systems to address violence against women; *AFP Gender Strategy*, 2014, commits the AFP to support partner country policing organisations to lawfully respond to GBV; *Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017, reinforces the above and emphasises support for the timely collection of evidence of physical injury for prosecution.) (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Pakistan, Palau, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu).
- Prioritise aid investment in local women's legal aid organisations, advocacy bodies and law reform commissions where laws that disadvantage women and girls are in place (*Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017) (Afghanistan, Indo-Pacific region).
- Engage with civil society to help women access justice, including by increasing women's knowledge of the legal system and their rights (*Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009, *Gender Equality Strategy*, February 2016. See also *Pacific Women*, 2012, commitment to work with civil society to increase women's access to justice).

Service Provision (Protection, Education, Health, Counselling)

Commitments

- Expand and improve the quality of support services (crisis accommodation, referral, counselling, health and legal services) for women who have been subjected to violence, including services provided by civil society (See especially *Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009; *Gender Equality Strategy*, November 2011. See also: *2011-12 Budget Statement* commitment to provide support through women's crisis centres in the Pacific; *Pacific Women*, 2012, commits Australia to work with civil society to increase access to support services for survivors of violence; *AFP Gender Strategy*, 2014, commits the AFP to support civil society to deliver prevention initiatives and provide services to the victims of GBV, in collaboration with partner-country policing organisations.) (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Pakistan, Palau, Palestinian Territories, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Regional Pacific).
- Support countries and organisations to increase women's access to support services by:
 - Supporting counselling, accommodation, legal and practical support for women and their children (*Gender Equality Strategy*, February 2016).
 - Training health workers and developing procedures within national health systems for proper diagnosis and treatment of victims of violence (*2011-12 Budget Statement*; *Gender Equality Strategy*, November 2011 and February 2016) (Regional Pacific).
 - Supporting governments to enable access to social protection or social transfers (*Gender Equality Strategy*, February 2016).
 - Ensuring responses to HIV and AIDS consider women's vulnerability to GBV (*White Paper*, April 2006; *Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009; *Gender Equality Strategy*, February 2016).
- Support 40,000 women survivors of violence to receive services, including counselling, between 2012 and 2016 (CAPF, May 2012).

Prevention

Commitments

- Work with men and boys, community organisations (including women's organisations and faith-based organisations) and leaders to prevent violence against women and help change community attitudes to violence (*Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009; *2011-12 Budget Statement*), including through work in the education sector (*Gender Equality Strategy*, November 2011 and February 2016) (East Asia and the Pacific, Pacific Regional).
- Support and advocate for a broad range of organisations to conduct community awareness and advocacy to prevent violence against women and children (*Gender Equality Strategy*, February 2016) including non-government, community and faith-based organisations (*Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017).
- Support women as peacemakers (*Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009).
- Uphold gender equality as a guiding principle of Australia's aid program and support activities to empower women, including promoting women's leadership and economic empowerment (*Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009).

Women and Girls in Conflict and Disaster Zones

Commitments

- Work to combat violence against women in conflict and disaster settings (*2011-12 Budget Statement; Gender Equality Strategy*, November 2011; *Humanitarian Strategy*, May 2016).
- Work with humanitarian partners to identify and respond to vulnerability in order to prevent and respond to GBV (*Humanitarian Strategy*, May 2016).
- Support protection measures, for example, the provision of transitional shelter to vulnerable groups to reduce the risk of exposure to violence (*Humanitarian Strategy*, May 2016).
- Prioritise the protection and empowerment of women and girls to prevent and respond to GBV (*Humanitarian Strategy*, May 2016).
- Organisations implementing DFAT's disaster risk reduction, humanitarian preparedness and response activities must assess child protection risks, and comply with and build on the child protection policy's minimum child protection standards (*Child Protection Policy*, March 2017).

Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Commitments

- Support and advocate for women to play an active role in peace processes, peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts, ensuring women's safety is a priority (*2011-12 Budget Statement; Gender Equality Strategy*, February 2016).

The *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* (March 2012) sets out strategies and actions to which Australia has committed.⁶³ Commitments most relevant for this analysis are:

- Strategy 1: Integrate a gender perspective into Australia's policies on peace and security.
 - Action 1.1: Policy frameworks of relevant Government departments are consistent with the objectives and intent of UNSCR 1325.
- Strategy 2: Embed the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Australian Government's approach to human resource management of Defence, AFP and deployed personnel.
 - Action 2.1: Refine training for Australian defence, police and civilian personnel to enhance staff competence and understanding of Women, Peace and Security.
- Strategy 4: Promote Women, Peace and Security implementation internationally
 - Action 4.3: Support humanitarian action that responds to GBV in crisis situations, with particular regard to health.
 - Action 4.5: Ensure peace processes in which Australia plays a prominent role promote the meaningful participation of women, and consider local women's needs, rights and capacity.
 - Action 4.10: Incorporate the protection of the rights of women and girls in bilateral and multilateral discussions on the protection of civilians in conflict and post-conflict situations, particularly with regard to GBV.

⁶³ See *Australian National Action on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018*, 19-25 for all commitments.

- Action 4.11: Promote formalised complaint mechanisms for the safe reporting of allegations of GBV and harassment in fragile, conflict and post-conflict settings.
- Action 4.12: Support efforts by local or international authorities to prosecute perpetrators of GBV during conflict and/or in post-conflict settings.

Disability-Inclusive Development

Commitments

- Support data collection on the situation and needs of women and girls with disabilities, to make this group more visible to decision makers (*Development for All*, May 2015).
- Provide support to DFAT employees (and others, as suitable) on how to address intersections between disability and gender-based discrimination (*Development for All*, May 2015).
- All EAWG initiatives funded or supported by Australia should take into account the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities (*JSCFADT Report*, April 2017).

Supporting an Integrated Approach

Australia will support partner countries to take an integrated approach to EAWG by:

- Engaging in high-level policy dialogue with partners to raise the importance of addressing violence against women.
- Encouraging partner countries to develop mechanisms — such as national action plans and policies — to coordinate and monitor national responses to violence against women.
- Actively participating in interagency taskforces that bring together stakeholders to better coordinate and monitor responses to violence against women
- Supporting research on violence against women, including on the prevalence of violence, promising practices in responding to violence, and gaps in services to inform future responses (*Australia's Response to the ODE Report*, August 2009).

Global, Regional and Bilateral Engagement with Governments

Commitments

- Contribute to international debate on EAWG, including through support for UN Women, and other UN agencies with a global mandate (*Gender Equality Strategy*, November 2011).
- Support the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda internationally (*Gender Equality Strategy*, November 2011; *Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017).
- Engage with governments in the Indo-Pacific region, including at regional fora, to highlight the extent of violence against women and girls, the persistence of the problem, and its consequences (*Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017).
- Press other governments to enact and enforce laws that protect the human rights of women and girls, in particular in relation to SGBV, especially under-age and forced marriage and marital rape (*Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017).

Research and Reporting

Commitments

- Contribute to international debate by improving understanding of the prevalence and impact of violence against women through research (*Gender Equality Strategy*, November 2011. See also *Response to the JSCFADT Report*, April 2017 committing Australia to facilitate quantitative and qualitative surveys of community attitudes towards violence against women and girls).
- The Australian Government will report on progress implementing UNSCR 1325 and related UNSC resolutions against agreed measures⁶⁴ every two years over the six year life span of the *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* (March 2012).

⁶⁴ The agreed measures are set out at pp 28-30. Progress reports will be tabled in Australian Federal Parliament.

ANNEX I: EVAWG COMMITMENTS IN AID INVESTMENT PLANS / AID PARTNERSHIP DOCUMENTS

| WHERE AUSTRALIA PROVIDES AID | EVAWG COMMITMENT? | FURTHER DETAIL |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Pacific | | |
| Cook Islands | ✓ | Aid Fact Sheet provides that Australia will support activities to eliminate violence against women. |
| Federates States of Micronesia | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia, through the <i>Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development FSM Country Plan 2015-18</i> , will progressively implement activities to improve the legislative and regulatory framework that protects women and girls from violence; and strengthen support services available to women and girls who have experienced violence. |
| Fiji | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that through the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program in Fiji, Australia will support initiatives that address gender-based violence. |
| Kiribati | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that across all Australian investments, Australia will seek to strengthen the Government of Kiribati's capacity to improve gender equality (including investments to strengthen violence response services, legal systems and local policing). |
| Nauru | X | Neither the Aid Investment Plan or Australia-Nauru Aid Partnership Arrangement contain any explicit EVAWG commitments. Both documents do provide that all investments will improve opportunities to empower women and girls and address issues of gender equality. |
| Niue | X | No EVAWG commitments in the Aid Fact Sheet |
| Papua New Guinea | ✓ | The Papua New Guinea-Australia Aid Partnership Arrangement contains a mutual commitment of the two Governments to work together to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and increase efforts to address |

| WHERE AUSTRALIA PROVIDES AID | EVAWG COMMITMENT? | FURTHER DETAIL |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| | | <p>family and sexual violence in PNG. The Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia's renewed investments in the law and justice sector will continue to focus on strengthening access to justice and local conflict resolution mechanisms to promote community safety and security and address family and sexual violence. It also commits Australia to expand support to improve women's safety in PNG by supporting access to services for survivors of family and sexual violence, and to continue to support the implementation of the Bougainville Gender Investment Plan, which aims to reduce gender-based violence.</p> |
| Regional Pacific | ✓ | <p>Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia will work to reduce violence against women and increase access to justice and support services for survivors of violence.</p> |
| Republic of Palau | ✓ | <p>Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia will progressively implement activities to strengthen the national response to violence against women and increase and enhance support services available to survivors of violence.</p> |
| Republic of the Marshall Islands | ✓ | <p>Aid Investment Plan provides that through the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Republic of Marshall Islands Country Plan 2015-18, Australia will help improve economic and social opportunities for women in RMI. Australia will progressively implement activities aimed at reducing violence against women and expanding support services available to survivors of violence.</p> |
| Samoa | ✓ | <p>The Australia-Samoa Aid Partnership Arrangement commits Australia to provide development cooperation to help reduce violence against women and girls.</p> |
| Solomon Islands | ✓ | <p>Aid Investment Plan provides that gender will be integrated into all new program designs and existing programs reviewed to strengthen the gender focus. Targeted programming will focus on preventing family violence and implementing the landmark Family Protection Act 2014, which criminalises domestic violence. This will be complemented by RAMSI's work to ensure the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force is adequately trained and equipped to</p> |

| WHERE AUSTRALIA PROVIDES AID | EVAWG COMMITMENT? | FURTHER DETAIL |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| | | respond to domestic violence issues and to educate communities on how to address the problem. |
| Tokelau | X | No EVAWG commitments in the Aid Fact Sheet. |
| Tonga | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia will strengthen its focus on prevention of violence against women initiatives. |
| Tuvalu | X | Neither the Aid Investment Plan or Australia-Tuvalu Aid Partnership Arrangement contain any explicit EVAWG commitments. Both documents do contain a joint commitment to work to improve gender equality in Tuvalu. |
| Vanuatu | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan articulates Australia's development objective in Vanuatu of working through a range of partners to reduce the prevalence of violence against women and children and to increase access to counselling support and legal services. It also contains a proposal to provide support for outreach focused on gender-based violence. |
| South-East and East Asia | | |
| Cambodia | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia's investments in community policing will have a special focus on addressing gender-based violence. The document also commits Australia to implement a specific program on ending violence against women, working with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to help provide services to women who have experienced violence and take steps to prevent violence occurring. |
| Indonesia | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan states that reducing violence against women for Australia in Indonesia. |
| Laos | X | No mention of any EVAWG commitments in the Aid Investment Plan. The document does provide that Australia will work with institutions responsible for promoting gender equality (and disability inclusion) to ensure our investments support inclusive human development policies. |
| Mongolia | X | No EVAWG commitments in the Aid Fact Sheet. |

| WHERE AUSTRALIA PROVIDES AID | EVAWG COMMITMENT? | FURTHER DETAIL |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Myanmar | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that when responding to humanitarian emergencies we work to reduce exploitation and violence against women. |
| ASEAN and Mekong | X | No EVAWG commitments in Aid Investment Plan. |
| Philippines | X | No EVAWG commitments in Aid Investment Plan. Note however the commitment to implementing UNSCR 1325: this program will improve the capacity of institutions, ensure the peace process is more credible and widely supported, and strengthen local mechanisms for averting the escalation of violence. The role of women in peace building is critical. Through BASIC we will prioritise opportunities for women's engagement in the implementation of the peace agreement and in the establishment of the new Bangsamoro regional entity. |
| Timor-Leste | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan commits Australia to focus support on the protection from violence for women and children. Also, it provides that the Australian Federal Police will work with the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) to increase community access to formal justice systems, particularly in cases of violence against women. |
| Vietnam | X | No mention of any EVAWG commitments in the Aid Investment Plan. The document does include a commitment to promote gender equality. |
| South and West Asia | | |
| Afghanistan | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan establishes gender equality and women's empowerment as a key investment priority and commits Australia to help improve support services, access to justice and advocacy efforts to combat violence against women. |
| Bangladesh | X | No mention of any EVAWG commitments in the Aid Investment Plan. The document does include a commitment to prioritise gender equality by focusing on empowering women and girls. |
| Bhutan | X | No EVAWG commitments in the Aid Fact Sheet. |

| WHERE AUSTRALIA PROVIDES AID | EVAWG COMMITMENT? | FURTHER DETAIL |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Maldives | X | No EVAWG commitments in the Aid Fact Sheet. |
| Nepal | ✓ | No mention of any EVAWG commitments in the Aid Investment Plan. The document does provide that gender equality will be a key feature of all major investments. |
| Pakistan | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia supports the elimination of violence against women and girls in Pakistan through improved access to services such as shelters, counselling, legal medical services as well as income generation support. The document also provides that Australia's support also strengthens the capacity of police, medical institutions and the judiciary to respond to cases of violence, and supports parliamentarians to influence policy and legislation to protect women from violence. |
| Regional South and West Asia | X | No mention of any EVAWG commitments in the Aid Investment Plan. The document does provide that gender equality will be a focus in all Australian investments under the regional program. |
| Sri Lanka | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia will seek to address the underlying drivers of gender inequality, including social exclusion and inter-communal and domestic based violence, across all programs, and will also develop a targeted, stand-alone initiative. Supported activities will expand women's economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets, increase the effective representation of women at all levels of decision-making, reduce violence against women and increase access to support services and justice for survivors of violence. |
| Middle East and North Africa | | |
| Iraq humanitarian response | X | No evidence of EVAWG commitments from documents available on DFAT website. |
| Palestinian Territories | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia's policy dialogue with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) will include advocacy for gender-responsive services through its new Gender Equality |

| WHERE AUSTRALIA PROVIDES AID | EVAWG COMMITMENT? | FURTHER DETAIL |
|--|-------------------|---|
| | | Strategy for 2016-2021. This will include the build-up of systems and capacity among its medical staff, teachers and social workers to respond to gender-based violence through increases in detection and referrals. |
| Syrian humanitarian response | X | No evidence of EVAWG commitments from documents available on DFAT website. |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | X | No evidence of EVAWG commitments from documents available on DFAT website. |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | ✓ | Aid Investment Plan provides that Australia will use its grants programs, such as the Direct Aid Program, to provide targeted support to gender equality objectives and reducing violence against women. |

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DFAT Aid Investment Plan Afghanistan: 2015-16 to 2017-18

Memorandum of Understanding on Development Cooperation between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2017-2020

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Cambodia: 2015-2018

DFAT Cook Islands Aid Fact Sheet, May 2017

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Federated States of Micronesia: 2016-17 to 2018-19

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Fiji: 2015-16 to 2018-19

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Indonesia: 2015-16 to 2018-19

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Kiribati: 2015-16 to 2018-19

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Laos: 2015-16 to 2019-20

DFAT Maldives Aid Fact Sheet

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Republic of the Marshall Islands: 2016-17 to 2018-19

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Myanmar: 2015-16 to 2018-19

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Nauru: 2015-16 to 2018-19

Australia-Nauru Aid Partnership Arrangement: 2016-2019

DFAT Niue and Tokelau Aid Fact Sheet

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Papua New Guinea: 2015-16 to 2017-18

Papua New Guinea-Australia Aid Partnership Arrangement: 2016-2017

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Pacific Regional: 2015-16 to 2018-19

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Republic of Palau: 2016-17 to 2018-19

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DFAT Aid Investment Plan Philippines: 2015-16 to 2017-18

DFAT Aid Investment Plan Samoa: 2015-16 to 2018-19

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