

WPS Consultation

Soroptimists International ROI would like to take this opportunity to endorse the submission by the National Women's Council of Ireland on Ireland's proposed Second National Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Soroptimists International speaks on behalf of 80,000 women in 3,000 communities across 127 countries. We are founded on the principles of being a global collection of women who join our movement to serve women and girls locally, nationally and internationally. We work towards a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.

We applaud the Government and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for its work in this area so far. The first National Action Plan and its further resolutions finally recognised the impact of conflict on women and girls. It also acknowledged their critical role in prevention, resolution, peace negotiations, peace building and post conflict resolution and governance. We urge you now to ensure the plan's effectiveness.

We recognise women's vital role in their communities. A civil organisation, such as Soroptimist International, has a role to play and should be involved in empowering communities to break down barriers between individuals and governments and to promote developmental agendas.

In line with this, we must prioritise our strategic objectives:

We need to act promptly to prevent violence against women.

Progress is not possible without those affected **by** the decisions being involved **in** the decision making process.

We need to listen to what women **say** they need rather than what we **think** they need.

Soroptimists advocate the 3E approach Educate, Empower, Enable.

How can Ireland help women affected by conflict?

Involve women at all levels of society in peace negotiations in areas of conflict.

Be a voice for the marginalised.

How should the National Action Plan approach actions relating to Ireland - Northern Ireland?

Ireland does not have jurisdiction over Northern Ireland. However we must realise that the families there are our nearest neighbours with a history of conflict and fear. Ireland must learn from them by listening to and continuing to work with the women

there to build strong communities where there is security and trust. The voice of experience should prevent history repeating itself.

Improvements to existing monitoring mechanisms and how the Oireachtas can play a greater role?

Capacity building to ensure individuals have the skills they need and want, to give them confidence to use those skills and then to work within the wider community to enable those skill to be deployed. If women are equipped with knowledge and skills from an early age they are more likely to take leadership roles in later life.

Empowering women and girls without involving men and boys will achieve minimal short term results so everyone should be part of the empowerment programme.

We need to increase availability and access to services for post trauma victims where they are met with understanding and sensitivity by sympathetic, well trained personnel.

There should be continual education and training available as required by social workers and law enforcers.

We need to work on laws to protect women from violence and a criminal justice system that will not let gender based violence to continue.

Efforts , i.e education , health, immigration ,legal and other services , must be coordinated.

We must listen to the victims and provide for their needs to recover.

Funds must be made available for education, training and support.

Accountability, implementation and review – it is vital that appropriate accountability mechanisms are not only in place but enforced without exception.

Aspirations are good, but have no value without implementation.

How should Ireland promote Women, Peace and Security in multilateral organisations?

We should hold governments and organisations accountable for human relations issues for women in their jurisdictions.

We should look at creating work environments which are conducive to both women and men having quality family time.

We encourage stronger action and increased resources to realise gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights for women and girls.

In addition to the above observations we wish to endorse the submissions of the NWC I to the review team.

Yours Sincerely,

Noreen Walsh
National President
Soroptimist International ROI