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Policy Paper.

Global and Regional Normative Frameworks for Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Women, Peace and Security in South Sudan

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Executive summary

This policy paper examines the global and regional normative frameworks supporting gender equality, women's empowerment, and women, peace and security commitments in South Sudan. It highlights key international and regional instruments, including CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions, the Maputo Protocol, and African Union frameworks. The paper analyzes South Sudan's progress in domesticating these commitments through national policies, reporting mechanisms, and institutional frameworks. While significant progress has been made through ratification, reporting, and development of national action plans, gaps remain in implementation, financing, coordination, data availability, and enforcement. The paper recommends strengthening institutional capacity, improving accountability mechanisms, increasing financing for gender equality commitments, and ensuring alignment between international obligations and national development priorities.

Keywords: Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Gender Equality, International Normative Frameworks, Women's Empowerment, South Sudan

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GLOBAL AND REGIONAL NORMATIVE STANDARDS

Why International laws are important?

- i. Because they provide better provisions on human rights which are more comprehensive than local, national or customary laws.
- ii. In addition, they are designed to influence national laws towards a more progressive direction in which all human rights are respected and valued, including those of women and girls

The Republic of South Sudan has consistently demonstrated its commitment to advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) by ratifying several global and regional normative frameworks. These, include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

(CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) UN Security Council Resolutions (1325) on Women, Peace, and Security, the African Union Women Peace and Security Continental Framework (2018), the Maputo Protocol (2003),

Purpose of the Paper

This paper provides an overview of key international and regional commitments on gender equality and women, peace and security, and examines their relevance to South Sudan's legal, policy, and institutional environment.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979

CEDAW adopted on 18th December 1979, with more than 188 signatories. CEDAW is often referred to as the ‘women’s bill of rights which calls for women’s equal access to political, economic, social, cultural and civic rights. It is based on the principle of Non-discrimination, Substantive equality and State Obligation. It is a human rights charter that provides an expansive definition of discrimination against women as: “... discrimination against women” shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made based on sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying

the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental’ CEDAW’s seeks “substantive equality” between men and women, going beyond the written law to assess women’s lived realities as a measure of State’s commitment. It holds States responsible in ensuring all entities operating within it (private and public organizations and corporations) adhere to the principles of the law. And most importantly, CEDAW provides temporary special measures (also known as affirmative action policies) aimed at “accelerating” equality between men and women which are not considered as (reverse) discrimination

Table 1: CEDAW and UNSCR Overlaps and Entry Point

i.	The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is another human rights instrument that is closely aligned with the principles of UN SCR 1325
ii.	UN SCR 1325 affirms the essential role of women in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. When combining UN SCR 1325 with the principles of CEDAW, we realize that the discrimination, inequalities and violence that women experience during conflict does not arise solely out of the conditions of conflict. It is directly related to the situation of women during peacetime
iii.	UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW seek to ensure that women’s experiences, needs and perspectives are incorporated into the political, legal and social decisions that determine whether durable peace, reconciliation and development are achieved.
iv.	Using together can broaden, strengthen, and implement gender equality in the context of conflict, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.
v.	The detailed normative and operational guidance of CEDAW provides specific steps and concrete entry points to meet the obligations of UN SCR 1325.
vi.	UN SCR 1325 stresses that international human rights law is also applicable during conflict and is central to peace and stability—armed conflict is not an “excuse” to delay implementation of CEDAW or the achievement of gender equality.

Table 2. UNSCR & CEDAW: Comparative View

ELEMENT	CEDAW	UNSCR
Type of instrument	International Human instrument	UN SECURITY Council Resolution
How brought into effect	Must be acceded to or ratified by State Party to have effect	Automatically binding on all UN Member State
Issues included	Covers the political, social, economic, cultural and civic rights of women	covers the political, social, economic, cultural and civic rights of women in times of armed conflict and post-conflict
Reporting and Accountability	Governments must report to the CEDAW Committee on progress made toward gender equality every four years. The situation of women in armed conflict scenarios is required by the committee to be included	Governments must report to the CEDAW Committee on progress made toward gender equality every four years. The situation of women in armed conflict scenarios is required by the committee to be included
Responsible actors	Governments and their ministries are obligated to implement the elements of CEDAW in public and private life, in business, Education, religion, employment and family life. Civil society has a central role	The UN, Member States and them national governments, donors and all actors of the conflict are obligated to implement the elements of UN SCR 1325. Civil society has a central role
implementation (an example of women's political Participation	CEDAW sets out concrete measures to ensure women's equal opportunity and participation in political life: Inclusion of women in formulating policy, laws, constitutions ✓ Domesticating CEDAW into national policy, laws and constitutions ✓ Representation of women at national and international levels of decision-making ✓ Eligibility of women for running elections ✓ Establishment of quotas and other temporary special measures to	UNSCR 1325 calls on Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of Conflict and to ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

Policy Implication for South Sudan

- Requires alignment of national laws and policies with international gender equality commitments;
- Strengthens women's equal participation in political, economic, social, and civic decision-making;
- Supports adoption of temporary special measures to address historical inequalities;
- Provides a framework for monitoring government accountability on women's rights.

South Sudan engagement on the domestication of CEDAW

Republic of South Sudan ratified the convention on the 30th April 2014 and entered into force in February 2015. The Ministry of Gender, child and social welfare led the process of compiling the initial country report on CEDAW and submitted to the CEDAW Committee in 2019. CEDAW Committee invited the government of South Sudan to defend its first report on the 5th of November 2021 which resulted into the concluding observations which guided implementation for the last

four year. South Sudan is expected to submit its periodic report on CEDAW in November 2025. In line with the above obligation, the Ministry of Gender, child and social welfare through support of UN Women developed a roadmap for reporting on CEDAW. The roadmap encompasses four key areas: (i) national consultations with policy makers, gender focal points and government officials, (ii) Country -wide consultations and dissemination of the concluding observations; (iii) Consultations with Civil society organizations, Women's right organization, Organizations of persons with disabilities; (iv) development of the country report, validation and submission.

South Sudan periodic report on implementation of CEDAW (2025)

The Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare coordinated the process of development of South Sudan report and the following inputs under the road map have been achieved:

Table 3: Roadmap and Progress in the Preparation and Submission of South Sudan's Periodic Report on the Implementation of CEDAW (2025)

Activity	Timeline
✓ Orientation and training of the ministry's staff and UN Women team on CEDAW to carry out country wide consultation	August 2025/MINISTRY and UN WOMEN
✓ National consultation with policy makers, CSOs, Gender focal points on CEDAW	September 2025/UN WOMEN& MINISTRY
✓ States/Administrative areas consultations	September to October 2025, only remaining Ruweng Administrative area. /UN WOMEN/MINISTRY
✓ Consultations with Female legal professions	7 th -9 th October 2025/FEDA
✓ Consultation with Women Rights Organization	Conducted on 17 th -18 th October 2025/WOJE
✓ Consultations with Women rights, women -led and CSOs on shadow reporting	Conducted on the 3 rd -4 th with Ministry in collaboration with CIGJP
✓ Consultation with Parliamentarians/policy makers, WPC	Planned for November 2025 with the support of UNECA, NTLI/MGCSW
✓ Validation of the Final Report	Carried out on the 28 th of November 2025 at palm Africa through support of UNDP
✓ Submission of the Report to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs	MGCSW submitted the Final report on the 29 th of November 2025
✓ Submission of South Sudan Report to the CEDAW COMMITTEE IN GENEVA	Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs submits the final report on the 30 th of November 2025

B. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), 1995

Aimed at promoting women's rights and gender equality globally, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) was adopted during the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, 1995. It outlined commitments in 12 key areas to support women's full development and equality with men. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 is a visionary agenda for the empowerment of women. It remains today the most comprehensive global policy framework and blueprint for action and is a current source of guidance and inspiration to realize gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, everywhere. The BPFA established guiding principles for future actions and strategies for women and emphasizing the integration of women's concerns into national plans and policies. Governments and the UN are committed to promoting gender mainstreaming to ensure a gender perspective in all policies and programs at various levels.

Policy Implication for South Sudan

- Provides a national planning framework for integrating gender equality into policies and programmes;
- Supports gender mainstreaming across government sectors;
- Strengthens mechanisms for collecting gender-disaggregated data for evidence-based planning;
- Guides investment in women's empowerment, peace, and development priorities.

Women and armed conflict

The section on "Women and Armed Conflict" detailed the specific impacts of war on women and girls and called for their participation in peace processes. Wars and armed conflict destroy families and societies and leave women and girls particularly vulnerable. Sexual violence is widespread and often used as a war tactic. The Platform for Action includes peace as one of its 12 critical areas of concern, creating a foundation for the subsequent resolution. Women and Armed conflict--- the Platform's emphasis on women's political participation and elimination of violence provides the necessary framework for implementing UNSCR 1325's call for women's involvement in conflict prevention, resolution, and peace-build

South Sudan undertook national reviews on BPFA including Beijing +15(2009), Beijing +20(2014), Beijing +25(2019) and the Beijing +30(2024). The recent review of Beijing plus 30, reviews is based on the following six dimensions of the 12 concerns areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action but not limited to: 1. Inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work; 2. Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services; 3. Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes; 4. Participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions; 5. Peaceful and inclusive societies; and 6. Environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation.

Table 4: Beijing and UNSCR resolutions overlap and entry point

ELEMENTS	BEIJING(BPFA)	UNSCR
Type of instrument	A global agenda for the rights of all women and girls, adopted by 189 governments ✓ BPFA was the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. Adopted by 189 governments, it is the most comprehensive global agenda ever created for women's rights and empowerment.	What it is: A UN Security Council resolution that specifically addresses women, peace, and security
Binding nature	It is not a legally binding resolution but a strategic agenda outlining actions to be taken by governments and international organizations	UNSCR 1325 is a legally binding Security Council resolution adopted on October 31, 2000. It recognizes the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls and formalizes the commitment of governments to include women in peace and security
Key Components	It identifies 12 "critical areas of concern" for action, including peace, women's economic and political participation, and ending violence against women	It calls for increased participation of women at all decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as well as protection for women and girls from gender-based violence during armed conflict
How brought into effect	is a visionary blueprint for gender equality that laid the groundwork for the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325	UNSCR 1325 built on this foundation by creating a specific, legally binding framework for women's inclusion in peace and security matters
Reporting and Accountability	Beijing Reports to the United Nations Commission on the Implementation of BPFA, Countries undertake national reviews every five years(Beijing +15, +20, +25 and +30) The reviews provide opportunity to assess critically implementation across the 12 critical areas of concern.	United Nations accountability through the Universal periodic reporting using the global indicators - Reporting to African Union using the continental result Framework (CRF) - Reporting to the IGAD regional Action (Logical Framework) - Reporting to the Great Lakes Region - Report to EAC's commitment to implementing UNSCR 1325 and the broader women, peace and security agenda,
	Framework for states to advance women's empowerment.	Led to National Action Plans to formalize commitment to the WPS agenda

Beijing Platform for Action provided the foundational, broad-reaching agenda for gender equality, including a commitment to peace and women's political participation. Together, they form a powerful linkage: Beijing provides the *why* and the general *what*, while UNSCR 1325 provides the specific *how* and *where* for action on women, peace, and security.

Ensuring the success of the Platform for Action, which will require a strong commitment on the part of Governments, international organizations and institutions at all levels. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people (BPFA, 2024)

Policy Implication for South Sudan

- Requires effective implementation and financing of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security;
- Strengthens women's participation in peace negotiations, governance, and security institutions;
- Supports protection mechanisms against conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence;
- Reinforces the need for gender-responsive budgeting and accountability systems.

How the Beijing platform for action contributed to women's security issues at the National and grassroot level in South Sudan

Since the adoption of the BPFA, Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare have used five-year reviews to critically assess progress made and provide a roadmap of actions to be undertaken to accelerate implementation across government wide institutions. The review showed positive steps in promoting gender equality, especially through instruments like the National Gender Policy Framework and its 2013–2018 Strategic Plan, development of gender sector-specific strategies in the ministry of water resources (Gender mainstreaming strategy, 2021), mining (---) Education, Health (Girls' Education Strategy(--)), Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Strategy/Policy(-----) and Agriculture.

The review assisted the Ministry in identifying gaps in gender management system and tools for the collection of gender statistics. It identified major gaps in the availability and accessibility of reliable gender data, which is essential for evidence-based planning and programming (Beijing Evaluation Report, 2025). It provided in-depth analysis of the structures for gender statistics, coordination mechanisms and the need for data privacy Policy in South Sudan. In August 2025, the Ministry launched the Gender Monitoring System for South Sudan, and a few positive initiatives are being undertaken by the National Bureau of Statistics in relation to strengthening statistical system in South Sudan.

National Gender Results Tracking Mechanism

South Sudan intends to establish a national Gender Results Tracking Mechanism led by the Ministry of Gender in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics with other partners. International Partners such as UN Women and CSOs. This has come forward as one of the recommendations of the Beijing plus 30 reviews. The national mechanism is expected to track gender results across sectors to complement and update gender bank and enhance sex disaggregated data in South Sudan (Beijing +30, 2024)

South Sudan has made promising strides toward advancing women's participation through initiatives such as the South Sudan Women in Local Government Administrators, the revision of the Women's General Association Constitution, and the development of a 10-Point Plan for women's inclusion.

For South Sudan, hand delivery of messages or dissemination via various channels such as marketplaces, churches and radio or offices could be more successful. Otherwise, many women may miss an opportunity to contribute to the national affairs

According to the National Evaluation Report on Implementation of BPFA (2025), rural women face entrenched legal and cultural barriers to land access and ownership, despite protections in the 2009 Land Act, Local Government Act, and National Gender Policy. Customary laws—dominated by male traditional authorities—often override statutory rights, especially in cases of divorce or widowhood. Compounding this is the lack of a permanent constitution, limited public awareness (only 13 percent of women know their land rights), and an absence of gender-disaggregated data. These factors leave many women vulnerable to displacement and livelihood insecurity. Addressing these gaps calls for legal reforms, robust enforcement mechanisms, and gender-responsive governance that links land rights, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience.

A. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Subsequent Resolutions

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is rooted in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 which was adopted unanimously on October 31, 2000. This landmark resolution was the first to formally recognize women's critical role in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding, and established the foundational pillars of the agenda, including participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery.

Women, Peace and Security subsequent resolutions

The nine WPS subsequent resolutions are UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467, and

2493, which expand on UNSCR 1325 by providing more detailed guidance on women, peace, and security. These resolutions address specific issues such as protecting women from gender-based violence, ensuring women's

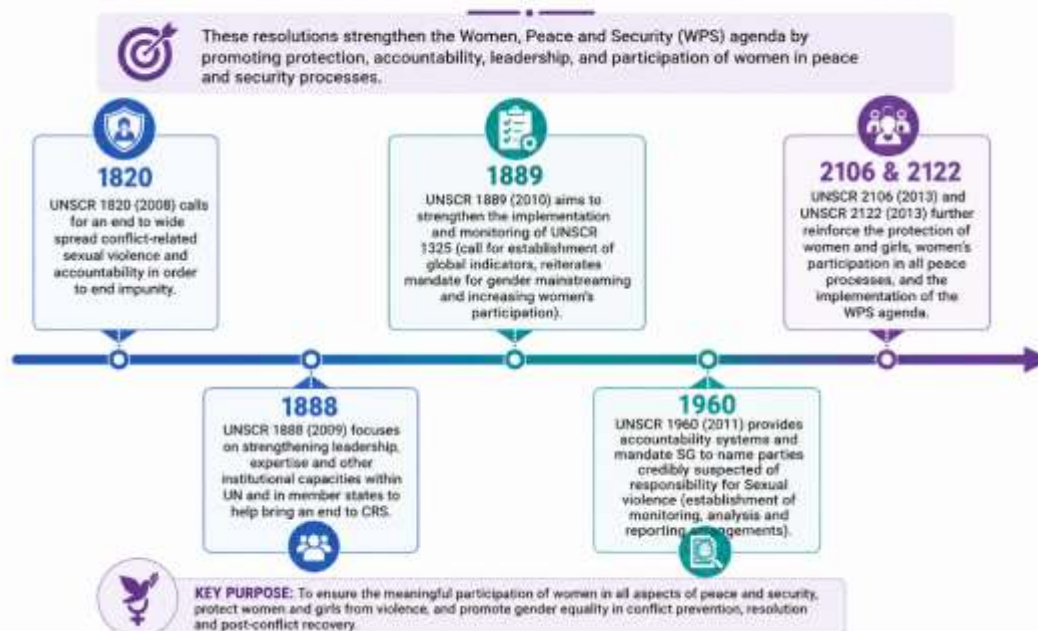
participation in peace processes, and integrating a gender perspective into peacekeeping and counter-terrorism efforts,

Key themes of the subsequent resolutions

Table 5: Key Themes of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Subsequent Resolutions

i. Protection from sexual and gender-based violence:	vii. Integration with other agendas: Resolution 2242 specifically seeks to better integrate the WPS agenda with counter-terrorism efforts and other related agendas.
ii. Protection from sexual and gender-based violence: Resolutions like 1820, 1888, and 2467 specifically address sexual violence in conflict and call for measures to prevent it and hold perpetrators accountable	viii. Support for civil society: The resolutions urge support for women's civil society organizations, which are often on the front lines of peacebuilding effort
iii. Participation and leadership: The resolutions emphasize the need for women to participate in all levels of decision-making related to peace and security, including peace negotiations and post-conflict recovery	
iv. Gendered aspects of conflict: They highlight how conflict affects women and girls differently and call for a gender-sensitive approach in humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction.	
. Vi. Implementation and accountability: Later resolutions, such as 2242 and 2493, focus on practical implementation challenges, financing, institutional reforms, and calls for greater accountability from Member States and	

GOALS OF UNSCR's 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 AND 2122



UNSCR 2106 (2013)
focuses on CRS and efforts
to end impunity and affirm
women's social, economic,
political empowerment to
prevent CRS

UNSCR 2122 (2013)
reiterates the importance
of women's involvement in
peace building and conflict
prevention.

Call upon member states to
fund Women CSOs
working on conflict
prevention

Include measures for the
development and
deployment of gender
expertise in peace keeping
missions and UN mediation
teams

GOALS OF UNSCRS CONT.

RESOLUTION 2242(

Adopted by security council at
its 7533rd meeting on the 13th
October 2015

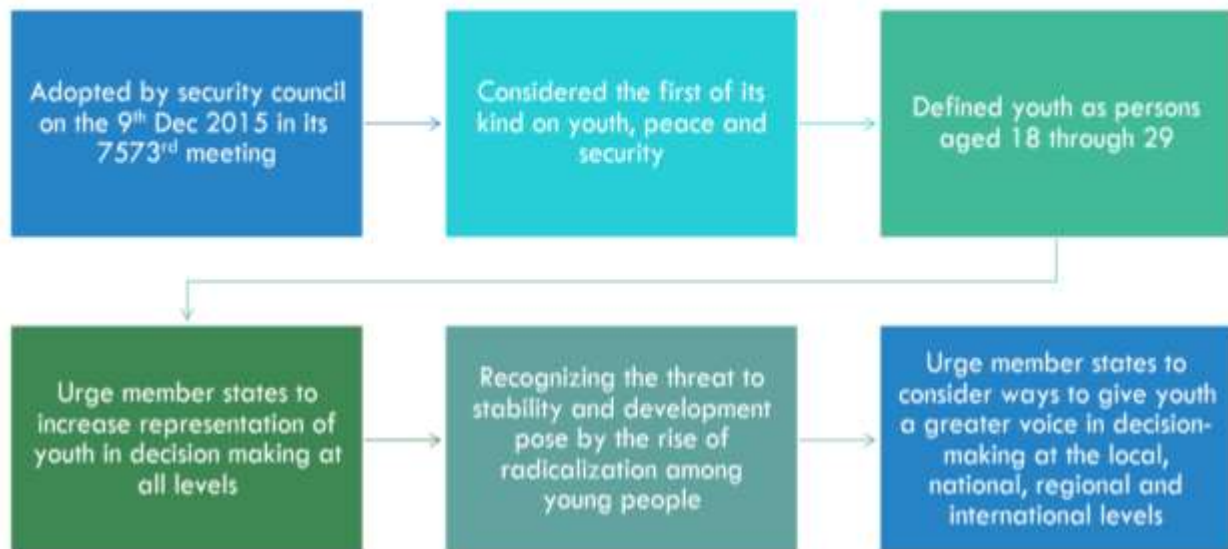
The council urged the SG and
UN bodies to better integrate
gender perspectives into their
work including the addition of
gender targets

The council urged the
departments of political affairs
and peace keeping operations
to ensure that gender analysis
and technical expertise were
included throughout all the
stages of mission

Addressing continuous charges
of sexual exploitation and
abuse by UN peace
keepers(police-troops countries
to provide pre-deployment
training, investigation and if
appropriate prosecution

The council urged states and
the UN to ensure the
participation/leadership of
women's org in devising
strategies to counter terrorism
and violent extremism

RESOLUTION 2250(2015)



RESOLUTION 2467(2019)



COMPLEMENTARY LINKAGE BETWEEN WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AND YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas are complementary and interlinked,

1. Both advocating for historically excluded groups to be included in peace and security processes.
2. Both are critical to achieving comprehensive and inclusive peacebuilding efforts, particularly in the specific intersection of young women who face unique challenges at the intersection of both age and gender
3. Shared origin: The YPS agenda was partly inspired by the successes of the WPS agenda, with its first resolution, UNSCR 2250 (2015), echoing the language of the first WPS resolution, UNSCR 1325 (2000)
1. Focus on inclusion: Both agendas originated from sustained advocacy at the local level, emphasizing the need for inclusive and participatory processes to harness the contributions of both women and youth
2. Addressing intersectionality: The agendas are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are most effective when approached intersection ally. Young women, for example, experience unique challenges that require policies that consider both their age and gender
3. Both agendas aim to increase inclusion in peace processes, but they focus on different demographic groups and forms of exclusion

Difference between Women, Peace and Security And Youtyh, Peace And Security

Women, Peace and Security	Youth, peace and Security
While WPS focuses on the role of women and addressing gender-based inequalities, Gender equality and the role of women in peace and security.	YPS emphasizes the positive contributions of youth and addressing age-based discrimination. the participation and roles of young people (ages 18–29) in peace and security
Primarily focuses on women's participation in all aspects of peace processes, from decision-making to security sector reform, and on addressing the gendered impact of	Focuses on the role of young people as agents of peace rather than just victims or threats, and emphasizes their contributions to conflict prevention and resolution Focuses on the role of young people as agents of peace rather than just victims or threats, and emphasizes their contributions to conflict prevention and resolution
Security (WPS) agenda focuses on gender inequality and the unique experiences of women in conflict,	Advancing the YPS agenda can support the participation of young women under existing WPS commitments, but YPS should not be viewed as a sub-component of WPS. Its strategic value lies in its independent focus on youth
Acknowledges that women, including young women, face gender-based discrimination, which can intersect with other forms of marginalization	Explicitly addresses how youth can be at the intersection of both the WPS and YPS agendas, particularly young women who face both age- and gender-based discrimination
On implementation- Has a robust global monitoring framework and many countries have adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) on WP	On implementation- Efforts are ongoing to develop monitoring frameworks, with specific guidelines for implementation by Member States in development

Domestication of the women, peace and Security Resolutions and the Youth, Peace and security Resolutions

Following the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the UN Security Council encouraged Member States to develop government-led National Action Plans (NAPs) or other national strategies which would enable countries to identify their local WPS priorities and assign resources, responsibilities and deadlines for their implementation. A National Action Plan (NAP) is a document that details the actions a government will accomplish, within a given time frame, to meet the obligations put forth in the WPS Agenda. In line with the above, South Sudan developed the first National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 from 2015 to 2020. National review of the Implementation of the expired Action plan in 2021 recognized that the Action plan was not implemented fully due to lack of buy-in across government wide institutions, lack of national budgets toward implementation, incomplete and inadequate coordination mechanisms to enhance implementation. Hence the review proposed development of the Second Action plan with costed budget and ensure it is aligned to South Sudan Vision 40, National development framework, R-ARCSS, 2018 and other sector specific strategies.

The second National Action plan was developed through inclusive and consultative process with stakeholders from 2022 to 2024 align the national frameworks, with proposed strong coordination mechanism at the national and states level, secretariat and the Civil Society independent forum for monitoring and reporting.

Youth, Peace and Security

South Sudan launched its National Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Strategy in May 2025 to integrate young people into peacebuilding, address their unique challenges, and foster their role in decision-making. The strategy, informed by youth consultations and aligned with UN Security Council Resolutions 2250, 2419, and 2535, focuses on six key areas: youth empowerment and participation, education and skills development, economic empowerment, social cohesion and reconciliation, youth health, and gender equality and social inclusion. A key outcome is the legal recognition of state-level Youth Peace Fora as advisory bodies to governor Youth, Peace and Security. This is led by the Ministry of Peacebuilding and the Ministry of Youth & Sports.

REGIONAL NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS

A. Protocol To The African Charter On Human And Peoples Rights On The Rights Of Women In Africa (Maputo Protocol), 2003

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, popularly known as the Maputo Protocol was adopted in 2003 and came into force in 2005. As of late 2025, 46 of the 55 member countries of the African Union have ratified the Maputo Protocol. South Sudan was the 44th country to ratify, doing so in June 2023. Egypt and Morocco have neither signed nor ratified it, while Burundi, Chad, Eritrea, Madagascar, Niger, Somalia, and Sudan have signed but not ratified. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights oversee implementation of the Maputo Protocol. The Maputo Protocol is elaborate in its protection of women and includes all categories of rights drafted from a women's rights perspective.

Policy Implication for South Sudan

- Requires domestication of women's rights commitments into national laws and policies;
- Strengthens protection of women's rights related to political participation, economic empowerment, and protection from violence;
- Provides guidance for legal reforms and institutional accountability.

State Obligations on Domestication & Implementation

States accrue certain key obligations on ratification of the Protocol. While ratification is an imperative first step, domestication is essential to ensure that the promises of the Protocol are realised for women and girls in Africa. The Protocol requires state parties to take legislative, institutional and other measures in implementing its provisions. In doing so, states are called to be cognisant of their obligations to protect, promote and fulfill women's rights (Maputo,2003).

Republic of South Sudan State advocacy on the ratification started in 2014/2015 led by the ministry in collaboration with Steward women. Series of Consultations were conducted with Ministries of Gender, Justice and Foreign Affairs on the ratification process, and with Women rights Organizations. in 2016, 2017 and 2018 and strong advocacy of women –led, Women's right and CSOs advocacy intensified in the country. The first instrument was tabled to the parliament and lost during the relocation and renovation of the parliament. As a result, a strong advocacy was initiated by the Ministry of Gender in collaboration with the Women Rights Organization joined by the African Union delegation from the Women, Gender and Children's Department to create another momentum for the ratification. The office of the Vice President for Gender and Youth Cluster took up the advocacy to ensure the parliament searched for the missing instruments under the leadership of Hon. Jemma Nunu Kumba, Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Parliament. Hon. Kumba exerted a lot of efforts and was able to retrieve the lost instrument which

was submitted to the Office of the President for Assent. On 24 February 2023, the President of the Republic of South Sudan, His Excellency President Kiir, signed Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa (Maputo protocol) including International the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities, 2006

South Sudan roadmap for national consultations, on the development of national action plan for implementation and domestication of Maputo protocol

The Objectives of this Roadmap are:

- i. Support the implementation the Maputo Protocol and implementation of the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW, through the domestication of some of the articles of the Maputo Protocol
- ii. Pull resources to a Pool Funds to support different elements of the implementation of the activities outlined in the roadmap.
- iii. Guide Communications between the line ministry and other stakeholders regarding the implementation and domestications of the articles of the Maputo Protocol as in the roadmap.

In July, 2025 the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social welfare in collaboration with Global survivor voice in South Sudan with financial support from Lutheran World Federations convene a national Consultation on the development of the National Action Plan on implementation of Maputo protocol with Sixty Four(64) women Rights, Women -led, Youth ,Organizations of persons with disabilities, Child rights and Society Organizations defining state obligations and reporting procedure and a joint communique issued to Fastrack the finalization of the National plan and mobilize support. Currently, state consultations have been launched in November 2025, and team of Ministry staff and global survivor are carrying out consultations in Torit, Eastern Equatoria state. The state consultations will inform the finalization of the National Action plan for implementation of the Maputo protocol,

B. African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want

Agenda 2063 is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under pan -Africanism and African Renaissance. African Union Agenda 2063, founded in 2013, envisages that goals and

developments should be achieved in the next 50 years, and includes aspirations for, among others, women to reach improved levels of equality and empowerment in all available spheres.

C. African Union Commitments to Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The African Union Commission adopted various norms and standard-setting frameworks related to the WPS Agenda, including the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, which reaffirms African leaders' commitment to expand and accelerate efforts to promote gender equality, and their determination to address issues of concern to the women and girls of the continent. The Declaration is also a commitment by African leaders to protect the rights of women, girls and children, as enshrined in the Maputo Protocol (Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Agenda 2063 (in which Aspiration 6 recognizes explicitly the centrality of women in Africa's development) advance the WPS Agenda. The AU Assembly decided to declare 2010–2020 the 'African Women's Decade' to accelerate the implementation of agreed global and regional commitments to gender equality and women empowerment.

A. The African Union's WPS commitments are implemented through several departments and offices. These include the Women, Gender Development Directorate, under the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission, and the Women, Gender, Peace and Security Programme (2015–2020), under the Department of Peace and Security. Under the Agenda 2063 flagship, 'Silencing the Guns by 2020', the AU through the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security (OSE-WPS) advocates for women's meaningful participation and leadership in efforts towards promoting peace, enhancing good governance and democracy, respect for human rights, and justice and the rule of law. Government committed themselves to report annually on progress made in gender mainstreaming, and to support and champion all issues raised in the Declaration, both at the national and regional levels. The African Union Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment 2018-2028. The strategy sets forth a plan to realise Aspiration 6 of the African Union's Agenda 2063: "An Africa where development is people driven, relying upon the potential offered by people, especially its women and youth and caring for children," the principles enshrined in Article 4 (I) of the African Union's Constitutive Act - 'the promotion of gender equality as well as other key continental and global commitment. South Sudan as a member state committed itself to the implementation of the African Union's Women, Peace and Security Commitments through provision of annual WPS reports using the continental Result framework from 2018-2025. The Country also reports annually on Solemn declaration on

gender Equality in Africa from 2017 to 2025.

South Sudan Commitment on Women, Peace and Security within the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Action Plans

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are instrumental for implementing, financing, monitoring and evaluating Agenda 2063 and its flagship programmes. RECs are critical building blocks for economic integration in Africa and are also instrumental for collaborations in ensuring peace and stability in their respective regions. RECs have a central position – they work with national governments and key stakeholders within their regions and the African Union Commission (AUC) to raise the standard of living for women¹⁰ and implement the WPS Agenda.

South Sudan is a Member of IGAD and IGAD Regional Action plans sets out priorities for Women, Peace and security in the IGAD region. The Country has since 2014 been member of the IGAD women's forum for peace and has been reporting on the implementation of IGAD Regional Action plans. South Sudan is also a member of the East African Community (EAC) another REC in the Eastern part of Africa. The EAC regional Action Plan articulate EAC's commitment to implementing UNSCR 1325 and the broader women, peace and security agenda, provide a regional policy and programmatic framework that compliments and supports national efforts on women, peace and security (EAC, 2015-2019). Implementation process is led by the EAC Secretariat, the Department of Peace and Security and the Gender Unit. A focal point in EAC Peace department is established to coordinate peace issues. Hence, Republic of South Sudan ensures reporting to this bloc on Women, Peace and Security.

The Great Lakes region is another regional bloc to which South Sudan is a member. The International Conference of the Great Lakes Region Action Plan on WPS (2021-2024) is a framework that guides Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Delivery of the 2021-2024 ICGLR RAP is the responsibility of the ICGLR Secretariat. The RAP is domiciled at the ICGLR Gender Directorate as the gender technical arm and based on its mandate to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, political and electoral processes. South Sudan is represented by a director general of Gender as a country focal person on WPS and reports annually to the ICGLR on Women, Peace and Security through the logical Framework and on the Gender Barometer. The ICGLR has established a network of focal points on Women, peace and Security represented by government representatives, ICGLR national coordinators, representation from the ICGLR Women and the Youth forum and Civil Society. The network serves as a coordination and consultative organ on the national level implementation of the ICGR RAP. It

also supports the provision of data for monitoring and reporting on the WPS agenda broadly and on RAP specifically.

Policy Implication for South Sudan

- Strengthens regional accountability and reporting obligations;
- Promotes alignment of national gender policies with continental commitments;
- Creates opportunities for regional cooperation, financing, and knowledge exchange.

CONCLUSION

Global and regional normative frameworks have provided an important foundation for advancing gender equality, women's empowerment, and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in South Sudan. Instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions, the Maputo Protocol, and African Union and regional commitments provide clear standards for protecting women's rights and ensuring their meaningful participation in peace and development processes.

South Sudan has demonstrated commitment to these frameworks through ratification, reporting mechanisms, development of national strategies, and participation in regional accountability processes. The development of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, engagement in CEDAW reporting, and efforts to domesticate regional commitments demonstrate progress toward aligning national priorities with international obligations.

However, the existence of normative commitments alone does not guarantee transformative change. Significant gaps remain between international commitments and practical implementation, particularly in areas of financing, institutional coordination, legal enforcement, data availability, and accountability. Women continue to face barriers that limit their full participation in decision-making, peace processes, economic opportunities, and access to justice.

Moving forward, South Sudan's ability to achieve meaningful gender equality and sustainable peace will depend on strengthening implementation mechanisms, ensuring adequate financing for gender commitments, integrating gender-responsive approaches into national planning and budgeting, and improving coordination among government institutions, civil society, development partners, and communities.

Ultimately, these frameworks should not be viewed only as international obligations but as strategic tools for building inclusive governance, preventing conflict, and supporting sustainable national development. Translating

commitments into action remains essential to ensuring that women and girls in South Sudan fully contribute to and benefit from peace, security, and development.

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