WHERE WE STAND:
Afghanistan saw the first policewoman 1967 however, due to a prolonged civil war and Taliban repression, Afghanistan again had to start from scratch. Currently women make only 2 per cent of the police force in Afghanistan.
Over the past fifteen years, the Afghan government and international community have worked hard to rebuild the state institutions, including the Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Army (ANA). The government has launched several initiatives to recruit women into the ANP and ANA, resulting – initially – in a gradual rise in their numbers. In 2005, the ANP recruited 180 women out of 53,400 personnel. In July 2013, 1,551 policewomen were serving out of 157,000 (less than 1 per cent) showing that women continue to represent only a very small proportion of the police forces of the country. According to the plan of the Ministry of Interior, the number of female police was expected to increase to 5,000 in 2015, but the focus on fighting the insurgency has prevented sufficient resources and attention going towards the female police. The most recent statistics of June 2016 show that only 2,879 out of 157,000 (1.8 per cent) are female in the Afghan National Police. Furthermore, there are 1153 women serving in Afghanistan National Army.

HOW WE REACHED THIS POINT:
By the end of the Taliban regime in 2001, there was not a single female in Afghan security forces. Since then, national and international efforts have joined forces to put inclusive security on the map and advocate for more women in the security forces. Between the Afghan Interim Administration and the National Unity Government, the following progress has been made:
Taken together, these actions have laid the foundations for the normative framework on which to build inclusive security in coming years. In addition, national CSOs have played an active and crucial role in advocating for the meaningful participation of women in ANP, continuously lobbying relevant government and international institutions around the need for more capacity building, awareness raising programs, and social media campaigns to change the perception of the community towards female police officers. For example, during the past four years the Women and Peace Studies Organization (WPSO, formerly known as RIWPS) carried out numerous activities that supported the recruitment of women in the security sector, including the following:

- Approval of a new Afghan Constitution in January 2004 that guarantees equal rights of Afghan citizens, including women and men.
- Inclusion of gender provisions within new laws such as the Police Personnel Law, Police Law.
- Adoption of an anti – Harassment Code of Conduct by the Ministry of Interior Affairs;
- Adoption of Female Police Gender Integration Strategy Plan by the Ministry of Interior Affairs;
- Adoption of a National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 for Women, Peace and Security. (June 2015)

- Organizing community dialogues in Kabul and various provinces, engaging government institutions and citizens with the aim to increase community support for the recruitment of women in police and army;
- Producing and broadcasting radio dramas in both Dari and Pashto languages about the role, importance and participation of female officers in the national police (through Sallam Watandar and its 67 local radio stations, Radio BBC and its 38 provincial & district channels with an estimated reach of over 24million Afghans in 34 provinces;
WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED:
Despite the advances of the normative framework and the awareness raised, the Afghan government still has a long way to go to achieve gender equality and effectively work towards women’s meaningful inclusion in the security sector. Together with international organizations and national civil society, the Afghan government needs to step up its efforts to accomplish the objectives laid out in current strategic plans. The Afghan government needs to show that this is not a donor-driven agenda, but a key priority of a domestic political agenda, driven by the legitimate demands of an increasing amount of women and their communities.

The first step is to finally boost the numbers of female police officers to the target numbers. But numbers aren’t enough. Women must be protected, educated, trained and actively engaged in security sector reform processes, while – at the same time – general awareness and community support should be further enhanced, to make sure there is enough grassroots support to enable changes to be structural and sustainable.
OUR CORE OBJECTIVE:
Our core objective is that women from all walks of life should be included in the security policies and strategies to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of security institutions. In terms of quantity, representation and presence of women in the security sector, some progress has initially been made, in particular in the MoI, but this process has now stalled. In addition, when it comes to quality, and important enabling factors such as training and protection, much less has been achieved. Much more needs to be done to ensure effective participation and a meaningful inclusion of women that allows women to demonstrate their added value in key positions within either the line ministries or in operational roles.

As a civil society organization working with women in the security sector, WPSO recommends the following:

TO THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT:
- Implement the Female Police Gender Integration Strategy Plan, to recruit additional officers and retain the current female police;
- Provide adequate facilities to women during training and service, such as separate changing rooms, special place for female police travelling from Provinces to Kabul for attending conferences and workshops, and monitor the use of these facilities (by women only);
- Ensure equal access to professional training and opportunities for women, and expand improved gender and rights training for all personnel, especially to male colleagues;
- Develop and implement large-scale recruitment, and start information campaigns with all relevant government and non-governmental entities such as the Ministries of Education; Hajj and Religious Affairs; Higher Education, the media, religious scholars and CSOs.
- Provide a safe and secure working environment, such as separated offices, shuddered checking points for female police, township, transportation and changing rooms for female police;
WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED:

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TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

Ensure that the funding being committed at WARSAW security summit has a clear allocation for support to women in police and women in Army.

Intensifying efforts to help Afghanistan budget and implement its first National Action plan for UNSCR 1325, which has been launched by the Afghan government in June 2015 and aims to boost both inclusive security and inclusive peace building.

Reform the tashkeel (organizational structure related to the staffing of the Ministry of Interior). Reforms should include developing clear recruitment policies and specific job descriptions, reserving more positions (including senior roles) for women, and identifying more departments and units where they can work – including in Family Response Units (FRUs), recruitment, intelligence, the Passport Department, Medical Department, Criminal Investigation Department and Counter Narcotics. Independent appointment and review boards, including men, women and civil society representatives, should be created;

Appoint educated and trained women at provincial level with adequate incentives;

Strengthen FRUs. Police chiefs can support this process by ensuring FRUs always include trained and educated female personnel, recruiting graduates of Sharia law to serve as legal advisors. FRUs must use office space provided by donors for that purpose, or be given specific areas of police stations (with separate entrances), with access to computers, video cameras, and transport to help FRU staff serve local communities;

Allocate specific continued funding to recruit, retain and promote females in police and army.
Increasing general support to Afghan civil society organizations, especially women organizations, to continue their advocacy for women’s right, human rights and rule of law. Including specific support to organization that are working as critical but constructive civil society partners monitoring the Afghan National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325.

Supporting the implementation of Female Police Integration Strategy and providing support to projects and plans that can address the major challenges faced by female police.