

Italy – WPS Mediterranean Women Mediators Network - Arria 27 March 2017

NGOWG comments

- Thanks to Italy etc...
- NGOWG welcomes any initiative which aims to increase, strengthen and further institutionalize women's participation in peace processes as well conflict prevention and post conflict rebuilding efforts
- The official peace processes in Yemen are the latest example of women's participation being extremely limited.
- International processes on Yemen are focusing on establishing and maintaining a ceasefire and the sequencing of political and security arrangements but do not capture grassroots voices and local grievances including those of women or detail the development of an inclusive national peace plan
- Despite the UN's efforts to meaningfully include women in the peace process in Kuwait last year, the seven women who participated were unsure about what their role as 'observers' entailed.
- Rather than being involved in the strategic planning process of the 2016 formal peace talks, the few Yemeni women who were able to participate were relegated to unofficial discussions with minimal relevance to the main negotiations on political and security arrangements. If women and others who sit outside the political elite are not actively consulted on issues of substance, their perspective is unlikely to be included, and the resulting agreement (or impasse) will more likely serve the interests of the elite rather than the interests of the wider population. This will reinforce the dynamics that led to conflict in the first place.
- Similarly, the nationwide peace process in Myanmar, underway since 2011, has been wholly male-dominated with women barely visible. At last year's Union Peace Conference, women made up 14% of official participants, and only 9% of the government delegation which sent 7 women out of its 75 member delegation
- In addition to establishing new women's mediators we encourage Member States to:
 - Support local and regional women peacebuilding coalitions already in existence – such as the newly formed East African Women Solidarity Movement for Peace and Security – made of women from Burundi, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya
 - Ensure women are meaningfully represented in conflict party and independent civil society delegations – which represent the diverse ethnic and religious populations
 - Ensure civil society delegations are self-selected by the communities they represent
 - Support women's meaningful participation in donor conferences (including in their preparation and design) to ensure interventions appropriately target the needs of women affected by conflict
 - Increase the protection of women's rights activists and women human rights defenders from the personal risks and threats they may face as a consequence of their increased visibility
 - Provide multi-year core funding and grants sufficient to sustain women's organizations' engagement in local-level peacebuilding

