

## Concept Note

### **Women for Peace: Recognizing Women's Role in Peacebuilding**

#### **74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly side-event**

New York, September 26, 2019, at 1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Conference Room 5, United Nations Plaza, New York City

#### **I. Summary**

A side-event on “Women for Peace: Recognizing Women's Role in Peacebuilding” will be held on the margins of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, on September 26, 2019 at 1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. in New York City.

The event will consist of a presentation of the publication on “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: A Guide to Best Practices” and a panel discussion on the importance of women's meaningful participation in peace processes and political agreements. The side-event will be an opportunity to discuss the significant role that women play in building and sustaining peace.

The event will be organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies (PSCD) in the framework of the “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace” project, kindly funded by the Republic of Korea.

#### **II. Context and Background**

Advancing women's political participation has been a key focus of the international agenda since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the UN General Assembly in 1979. Advancing women's participation specifically in peacebuilding became part of the agenda in 2000 with the UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and has been reemphasized in numerous international resolutions and agreements since, most particularly UNSCR 1889 (2009) and 2122 (2013).

This commitment to advancing women's participation in peacebuilding is strongly supported by research. Evidence shows that peacebuilding and reconciliation processes have higher rates of success, and more likely to last, when women are meaningfully involved. A study of 40 peace processes in 35 countries over three decades showed that when women's groups were able to effectively influence a peace process, an agreement was almost always reached. Additionally, an analysis of 182 peace agreements signed between 1989 and 2011 showed that a peace agreement is 20% more likely to last at least 2 years and 35% more likely to last at least 15 years if women are guaranteed meaningful participation.

Additionally, the policy brief on Gender Equality and Violent Extremism, developed by Institute for Security Studies (ISS), under the Democracy and Security Dialogue initiative of the Community of Democracies, states that “an increase in female empowerment and gender

equality has a positive effect on the success, impact, and sustainability of peacebuilding and conflict prevention programming”.

A UN Women review in 2012 found that, of 31 major peace processes conducted since 1992, only 4% of signatories to peace agreements, 2.4% of chief mediators, 3.7% of witnesses or observers to peace negotiations and 9% of negotiation team members were women. These figures are inflated by the unprecedentedly high participation of women (33% female signatories) during the 2011 negotiations in Oslo regarding the Philippines. Without this, the average drops to 3% female signatories, and 7% female negotiators.

It is clear from these progress reports that far more needs to be done to advance women’s participation in sustaining peace and to track the achievements of women and women’s organizations in contributing to peacebuilding -- not merely to uphold international commitments, but to enhance both international security and the security of women.

### **III. Publication**

Despite the large amount of research pointing to the importance of including women in peacebuilding and the array of international resolutions and commitments to this goal, progress has been limited. In 2015, in preparation for a High-Level review on progress towards the achievement of the goals of UNSCR 1325 on its 15th anniversary, the UN commissioned a global study which stated that:

*The most challenging gap that remains concerns the participation of women in peace processes and post-conflict political transitions, even as empirical evidence reveals a strong connection between the inclusion of women in peace processes and more durable and sustainable peace.*

In identifying and compiling a set of good practices, the PSCD aims to present to the international community a consolidated approach, based on first-hand accounts and case studies on how to successfully engage women in activities and strategies aimed at sustaining peace.

### **IV. Side-event**

The event will consist of a presentation of the publication and a panel discussion on the importance of women’s meaningful participation in peace processes and political agreements.

The side-event will serve as an opportunity to discuss the findings of the publication. Tentative points of discussion may include:

- Women’s engagement in sustaining peace within political bodies, e.g. via the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda by parliament;
- Women’s involvement in post-conflict resolution processes, e.g. peace talks, transitional justice, mediation.
- Further recommendations and areas of future research on engagement of women in sustaining peace.

## V. Tentative Program

- 5 min Opening remarks by the Secretary General of the Community of Democracies
- 5 min Welcoming remarks by a high-level representative of the Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 10 min Presentation of Publication on “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: A Guide to Best Practices”
- 40 min Panel Discussion
- Panelists (TBC):
- Dr. Kathleen Kuehnast, Director of Gender Policy and Strategy, U.S. Institute of Peace
  - Dr. Abigail Ruane, Director of the PeaceWomen Programme, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
  - Ms. Lynrose Jane D. Genon, Young Women+ for Peace and Leadership, Philippines
- 15 min Q&A