



## 55<sup>TH</sup> COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

“Strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all”

The United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD),  
in partnership with Club de Madrid,  
cordially invites you to attend a high-level panel discussion:

### WOMEN AGENTS OF CHANGE IN BUILDING SHARED SOCIETIES

**THURSDAY, 2 February 2017**  
**13:15-14:15 – Conference Room 12**  
**United Nations Headquarters**  
**New York, NY**



#### President Roza Otunbayeva

President of the Kyrgyz Republic (2010-2011),  
Club de Madrid Member

#### Daniela Bas

Director, Division for Social Policy and  
Development, UNDESA

#### Clem McCartney

Policy and Content Coordinator, Shared  
Societies Project, Club de Madrid

#### Beatrice Duncan

Justice and Constitutional Advisor,  
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#### Elenor Blomstrom

Co-Director and Head of Office, WEDO

#### Hajar Al-Kuhtany

Member of the Club de Madrid Working  
Group on Women and Shared Societies,  
Director, International Forum for Islamic  
Dialogue



For more information, please visit <http://bit.ly/csocd55>





## Topic: WOMEN AGENTS OF CHANGE IN BUILDING SHARED SOCIETIES

**Format:** The session will take the form of a round table with 4 speakers followed by questions and discussions.

### Concept

It is well known that women are differentially and negatively impacted upon compared to men by tensions related to identity - the greater the tension, the greater the negative impact. Women in the weaker and more disadvantaged sections of society face greater difficulties and as such are doubly discriminated against – by their gender and their identity group – but women from more powerful identity groups may also be disadvantaged by the inter-group tension. Some women also face other forms of disadvantage on grounds of disability, age, isolated location, etc. This can be termed “multiple discrimination”.

In spite of the difficulties they face, women can often play a key role in the process of overcoming intergroup tensions with their many negative consequences including poverty and social deprivation, and in doing so, contribute to overcoming the disempowerment of women. They have particular strengths and opportunities which are often underutilised. One way in which this has been recognised is Security Council Resolution 1325 on women’s participation in negotiations, and there are important examples of this happening. The Beijing Platform for Action, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and, more recently, Agenda 2030 are also relevant, and it was an important theme in the Recommendations of the Forum on Minority issues at its Fourth Session: Guaranteeing the rights of minority women and girls (29 and 30 November 2011).

In 2013, the Club de Madrid, through its Shared Societies Project, organised a working group on this theme<sup>1</sup> which analysed how this situation comes about and suggested ways of moving forward. But the forces which have led to the marginalization of women, including entrenched attitudes to gender and others more directly related to ethnic relations, have also meant that there is little urgency to redress the situation and recognize the contribution of women in overcoming divisions and building Shared Societies.

This side event will review the analysis of the working group and explore how this perspective can be incorporated into the strategies of institutions, both governmental and non-governmental.

### Discussion Questions

- Is it accepted that women can and do play important roles in overcoming inter-group divisions and contributing to sustainable development and sustainable peace?
- What are the particular advantages that women have in this role and what approaches facilitates them to play this role?
- What are the obstacles which limit the opportunities for women to play this role and how can they be overcome?
- Does the outcome document of the Working Group on Women and Share Societies make a useful contribution to understanding these issues and, if that is the case, in what additional ways can it be used further?
- How can this perspective be used to “assist Member States, United Nations bodies and entities, civil society and other stakeholders to coordinate and enhance their efforts in implementing the SDGs and achieving sustainable peace?
- What positive steps can be taken to ensure that women can actively contribute to future peace building and community building efforts?