

CONCEPT NOTE

Side-event at the High-Level Thematic Debate on UN, Peace and Security

Wednesday 11th May 2016 at 3.00 pm - 5.00 pm

Venue: UN Headquarters, Conference Room 6

Women & Mediation: Experiences in Ensuring Wider Participation of Women in Peace Processes

Objective and format

This year means a shift to the implementation phase of the three UN security related reviews. Increased focus on mediation as well as women, peace and security has been emphasized in all three reports. To ensure lasting peace, there is a clear need to have more women participating in peace processes. To promote this, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, together with partner countries and operational partners of the Nordic Women Mediators' Network will host a High-Level Side Event on Wednesday 11th May, on the sidelines of the High Level Thematic debate of the UN Peace and Security. The aim is to identify gaps and ways forward while discussing experiences in ensuring wider participation of women in peace processes.

The side-event offers a forum for experience-sharing and gathering lessons learned. The event will feature Ministers and senior UN officials, and during the panel discussion representatives from the Philippines, and South Africa as well as members of the Nordic Women Mediators' Network will share insights and experiences from peace processes. The panel will address the successes and challenges of increasing women's influence and meaningful participation in peace processes, what the outcomes could be and what can be globally learned from them.

Key questions:

- Building on experience and existing bodies and networks, how could women's influence and meaningful participation in peace processes be increased?
- What are the main challenges in nominating female mediator or including female mediation experts in the mediation team? How could this be overcome?
- What kind of thematic experience and knowledge should all mediation experts have so that they would bring added value to the negotiation team? Do mediators have those skills today?
- How can mediators bring more women to peace processes?

Background

While important gains have been made in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325), formal peace and mediation processes have lagged behind in effectively engaging and meaningfully involving women, whether as negotiators' representing parties to a conflict or as members of the teams facilitating peace processes. The UN Security Council has on a number of occasions expressed concern at the persistent obstacles to women's full involvement in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Special attention has been drawn to the constant under-representation of women in formal peace processes.

A study done by the UN of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 found that only two percent of chief mediators, nine percent of negotiators, and four percent of signatories were women (UN Women 2012). Women's absence at the peace table generally translates into their absence in subsequent peace agreements.