

Towards the Launch of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN)

**Women Mediators Networks: From Paper to Practice.
How to strengthen synergies and complementarities for greater
efficiency and impact.**

21 September 2017 h. 11:00 – 13:00
Conference room 7

Concept note

The three peace and security reviews undertaken at the United Nations in 2015, including the Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, highlighted the need to bring the UN's core prevention and peacemaking mandates back to the fore, and acknowledged the critical role women play in these efforts. Building on the reviews, Secretary-General António Guterres has identified prevention as his number one priority, and is strongly committed to women's leadership and gender equality as a vital element of his vision. As part of his new mediation initiative and "surge in diplomacy for peace", the Secretary-General highlighted the need to increase the number of women playing leadership roles in mediation and conflict prevention.

These efforts reaffirm the commitments the Security Council made in eight resolutions on women, peace and security,¹ which all called for the increased participation of women and the inclusion of dedicated gender expertise in mediation and peacemaking processes, and yet remain largely unfulfilled. In the current multilateral space of heightened interest in peace mediation and stronger commitment to increasing women's role in peace processes, international and regional organizations, including the UN, still need to enlarge their pool of high-level envoys and senior mediators, and focus on adding women mediators and deploying them at all levels.

Within this context, the development of networks of women mediators is an important initiative to increase women's participation and leadership in peace processes. Existing networks such as the Initiative on Mediation in the

¹ Security Council resolutions: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

Mediterranean launched by Spain and Morocco in September 2012 (MedMed Initiative), the Nordic Women Mediators Network (NWMN), the African Union-led FemWise-Africa, and the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, are important catalysts to the appointment of more women in mediation and prevention positions.

Women mediators' networks share common aims to increase the number of women involved in peace processes in all track levels, and to facilitate their role as special envoys and mediators. These networks develop platforms to exchange best practices and experiences; provide skills-training and inter-generational mentorship to women and young women; create channels for women's engagement, including at high-level mediation missions; and raise awareness of women's roles in peace processes and preventing conflict. They are also useful opportunities to establish and strengthen contact among women mediators and with key stakeholders and partners, including international and regional organizations. Ultimately, their aim is to contribute to sustainable peace and security.

Networks of women mediators provide new resources to involve women in initiatives to address current and emerging peace and security challenges regionally and beyond. In the Mediterranean region, issues of migration combined with human trafficking, transnational organized crime, rising violent extremism, refugees and growing humanitarian concerns constitute notable peace and security challenges and threats. Engaging with neighboring countries and creating a space to increase women's participation and mediation is therefore crucial to building sustainable peace and stability in the region. In this context, the proposed Mediterranean Women Mediators Network aims to offer greater opportunities for inclusive conflict prevention and resolution. The new network can help pave the way for enhanced women's participation and leadership in regional political and peace processes.

Objectives of the event

As a follow up to the Arria debate on the same initiative held in the UNSC on 24 March this year, and ahead of the launch of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network in Rome, Italy, on 25 and 26 October 2017, the high-level side event aims to facilitate a better understanding of the opportunities, prospects and potential

challenges that networks of women mediators have, to contribute to inclusive and sustainable peacemaking initiatives. Specifically, the side event will seek to:

- Examine the concrete ways women mediators' networks contribute to national, regional and international peace and security by increasing women's effective participation in peace processes;
- Highlight ways Member States, regional organizations, and the UN can benefit from networks of women mediators and enable them fulfill their commitments under UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions;
- Discuss how these networks can strengthen synergies by reinforcing their effectiveness and sustainability through cooperation, mentoring and capacity-building.

Suggested questions for discussion

- Why do we need women mediators and women mediator networks?
- How have women mediator networks contributed to increasing women's participation and leadership in peace processes? What can we learn from existing networks to further increase women mediators' participation at all levels of decision-making and peace processes?
- How can women mediators' networks support multi-track mediation efforts?
- How can we ensure the diversity, representativeness and quality of these networks (selection process, capacity building, mentorship) and overcome potential obstacles in that regard?
- What is the added value of involving both high-level or leading women mediators and women mediation experts in these networks?
- What challenges have networks of women mediators encountered in the design and implementation of their objectives? What lessons learned can be built on in designing future networks and furthering the implementation of existing ones?
- How can we build synergies and cooperation among women mediators' networks and organizations?
- How have Member States and international and regional organizations engaged with and leveraged these networks? How can further synergies and partnerships be built to ensure the usefulness of such networks?
- What roles do the various parts of the UN play in the partnership with these networks? How can these respective efforts be further coordinated and enhanced?

- How can we hold stakeholders accountable for including women mediators in all levels of decision making processes, including high-level processes?

Format

The side-event will take the form of a moderated panel discussion with remarks followed by Q/A.

Participants

The side-event will bring together representatives from Member States and regional organizations including the European Union, the African Union, OSCE. Representatives from the UN Secretariat and relevant agencies will also participate in the event, as well as members of existing networks of women mediators and representatives of civil society organizations including women’s groups and mediation think tanks and research institutions.