



**Statement by H. E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the Electronic consultation on the 2020 review: Full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding**

**Friday, 01 May 2020**

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**Mr. Chair,**

I thank you for convening this electronic consultation. Let me also take this opportunity to convey my deep appreciation to the panelists for sharing their perspectives and concrete recommendations for advancing WPS agenda in the field of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

**Mr. Chair,**

Bangladesh is one of the earliest proponents of WPS agenda having played a lead role in the adoption of the landmark Resolution 1325 during our membership in the Security Council. As a part of our continued commitment to this agenda, we adopted our first National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS in November 2019. The NAP institutionalizes our continued efforts towards ensuring women's greater role in preventing violent extremism and gender discrimination as well as in humanitarian assistance and disaster management in our national context. As a part of our larger commitment to maintenance of international peace and security, the NAP also puts emphasis on women's participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding contexts. It comes as a fitting recognition of our women's active and meaningful role in our pursuit of creating a peaceful, just, developed, and equitable society.

As one of the major T/PCCs, we have often shared with others our national experience of encouraging women's participation in our uniformed forces. We have been able to do so through specific statutory provisions, affirmative actions, and other incentives. We have been deploying female peacekeepers since 2007 often in difficult mission settings. The deployment of our first all-women Formed Police Unit in Haiti in 2010 was a significant step forward. We were the first country to deploy a woman military contingent commander in UN history in Cote d'Ivoire in 2016. In conflict and humanitarian settings in UN missions, our women peacekeepers have been playing decisive role in addressing the special needs of women and children of the host countries. We are working on further increasing the number of our female peacekeepers. And it is from this commitment that we joined Ireland to launch the A4P WPS Champions in March 2020. We are also working closely with Canada and other



partners in the steering committee of the Elsie initiative to remove barriers for recruitment, retention and career progress of women peacekeepers.

**Mr. Chair,**

Bangladesh welcomed the adoption of the Peacebuilding Commission's Gender Strategy in 2016 and remains particularly supportive of any initiative to further strengthen women's participation and leadership in this year's review of the peacebuilding architecture. In 2017, Bangladesh along with Canada acted as focal points for the implementation of the PBC Gender Strategy. We appreciate the peacebuilding Fund's annual target of 30% investment to gender and women's empowerment. We acknowledge the recent trend in enhancing women's representation in various peace negotiations, and in increasing gender-specific provisions in peace agreements. Yet, there remain many formidable challenges in implementation of the WPS agenda across all pillars. We would like to share some specific points in this regard:

**First,** the cycles of deeply entrenched gender stereotypes across societies and cultures that disproportionately undermine women's ability to contribute to the peace process must be broken. The needs and experiences of women from all strata of a society including the most marginalized ones have to be taken into due consideration. In turn, this may help identifying potential drivers of conflicts and violent extremism.

**Second,** women need appropriate platforms to convene and collectively advance their cause and work. PBC can support partnerships and networking among women organizations for sharing good practices and capacity building. For doing that PBC can encourage a whole-of-society approach involving political leaders, private sector, civil society, media, and women role models.

**Third,** PBC has to enhance its advocacy, bridging and convening role for ensuring a considered and responsive approach to the gender aspects of transitions for women and girls. Accountability and justice for conflict-related sexual violence has to be ensured. In cases where the State concerned is unwilling or unable to ensure justice, the international community should take responsibility.

**Fourth,** quality, up-to-date gender data will continue to be critical for advancing WPS agenda. A sound database can help map the gains and gaps in reaching out women and girls in a society and design policy interventions accordingly. It is important that national



planning, budgeting, monitoring and auditing institutions are equipped with the right, cost-effective tools to generate and process gender-sensitive data. PBC can help in this regard.

**Fifth**, as an intergovernmental advisory body, PBC can play a catalytic role to advance coordinated, steadfast, and action-oriented ideas to implement WPS agenda across all the pillars of the UN.

**Sixth**, the importance of education, training, and national capacity building through meaningful partnerships cannot be overemphasized. UN agencies and other international partners need to support Governments to forge ahead with women's development and empowerment efforts. To make it happen, capacities of UN Women's country office and UN Country Teams must also be enhanced.

**Seventh**, gender considerations are to be made an integral part of mission's drawdown and transition. Peacekeeping mission's capacity to address gender dimension is often the victim of budget cut which should not be allowed to happen.

**Eighth**, increased, sustained and coordinated mobilization of finances, including through earmarking, are critical for giving real effect to the women, peace and security agenda in its various dimensions.

**Finally**, the COVID 19 pandemic has once again brought to the fore the resilience of women to tackle crisis and calamities. Women now constitute about seventy percent of the global healthcare workforce. They are also traditional caregivers in family settings. Yet their voices and experiences about this pandemic are not being given adequate attention. The pandemic has disrupted work of many women organizations working for WPS and YPS agendas. The digital divide is preventing women peacebuilders from participating in virtual meetings resulting in more exclusion from peace negotiations than in normal time. This needs to be addressed. We need to invest more on gender-disaggregated data and analysis to better understand the multidimensional consequences of COVID-19. This will not only help us in our response and recovery from the current crisis but also in tackling future such pandemics.

We hope that the momentous occasions of 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WPS agenda and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action would help build fresh momentum to ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding.

I thank you.