

Virtual Peacebuilding Commission Ambassadorial-level Meeting

Consultation on the 2020 Review: Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation of Women in Peacebuilding

April 2020

Chair's summary

1. On 21 April 2020, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) launched an Ambassadorial-level electronic consultation on the *“Full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding”*. The consultation was chaired by H.E. Mr. Marc-André Blanchard, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and was open to all UN Member States as part of the informal phase of the 2020 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture, which will feed into the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. UN Women and civil society representatives from Colombia, Ghana and South Africa delivered remarks.
2. The consultation, originally planned to be held on 16 March at UNHQ, was delayed and shifted to a virtual format to accommodate restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of UN Headquarters. Video statements by the Chair and briefers were recorded and uploaded online, and Member States were invited to submit written statements in response to the concept note, guiding questions, and briefings over the course of the following week.
3. The Chair noted that the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture coincides with the 20th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, an important time to reflect on the status of implementation of global commitments under the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda as it pertains to peacebuilding. He emphasised that, as we marshal to a global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women is more important than ever. In that regard, he stressed the relevance of the PBC gender strategy adopted in 2016, which aims to mainstream gender in all aspects of its work, including by further promoting women's participation in peacebuilding initiatives, and committed increased support from the Commission in empowering women peacebuilders.
4. Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director, explained that the COVID-19 crisis exposes inequalities and exacerbates challenges facing women, therefore threatening to reverse progress in the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. She warned that domestic violence, conflict related sexual violence, trafficking of girls, early marriage, sexual harassment, and exploitation and abuse all spike in times of emergencies. She noted that a critical lesson learned from the Ebola crisis was that women's participation and leadership is essential for reversing the impact of an epidemic. She highlighted the need to engage women in conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution efforts in response to the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. She recalled the six areas that the Secretary-General had outlined in 2019 for addressing women, peace and security related challenges, noting that these have become even more essential for sustaining peace in the context of COVID-19: (i) Ensure protection of and engagement with women human rights defenders, civil society organisations, activists and youth in reshaping the world after the pandemic; (ii) Increase in the number of women in uniform in peacekeeping and national security service; (iii) Ensure predictable, targeted and adequate financing for women peacebuilders; (iv)

Promote women's economic security and access to resources and decision making that is related to peacebuilding and post-conflict planning – which, she added, now has to include interventions that are linked to surviving COVID-19 and its aftermath; (v) Ensure that peacebuilding strategies build on gender analysis and data (vi) Ensure women's inclusion in peace processes and negotiations. Finally, she encouraged the PBC to continue to listen to, consult with and support women peacebuilders and reiterated the commitment of UN Women to support these efforts.

5. Ms. Euphemia Akos Dzathor, member of WANEP/Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), Ghana, outlined efforts of her organization aimed at integrating gender perspectives in peacebuilding work and at building the capacity of women practitioners. Through community mobilization and other innovative methods, WIPNET is helping grassroots women peacebuilders across West Africa to amplify their voices and channel their needs and concerns into formal and informal peacebuilding processes in West Africa. She emphasised the importance of building the skills and capacities of grassroots women peacebuilders. She also stressed the need to protect women activists and human rights defenders and, in that regard, noted the effective use of community radio for awareness raising. In collaboration with ECOWAS and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC), WIPNET supports the development, implementation and monitoring of National Action Plans (NAPs) on women, peace and security. It also encourages sharing and replication of good practices for women, peace and security, such as the innovative "Peace Hut" in Liberia, which supports local peacebuilding efforts. Ms. Dzathor called for i) support for women organizations; ii) establishment of an annual shadow report on the implementation of resolution 1325; and iii) more systematic documentation and dissemination of women's experiences in community peacebuilding.
6. Ms. Tintswalo Makhubele, Secretary-General, South Africa Congress of Non-Profit Organizations (SACONO) presented the work of SACONO to build peace, address root causes of violence, and support victims of violence in local communities in South Africa. Echoing a message highlighted during a consultation organized in March 2020 by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, UN Women and the Embassy of Ireland in Pretoria, she stressed the need to better reflect the perspectives of local women in implementing the WPS agenda, noting that the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture offers another opportunity to reinforce this message. She stressed the adverse impact of COVID-19 in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, which complicates efforts to sustain peace, prevent gender-based violence and protect women and children. She encouraged stronger collaboration between local civil society actors and the UN peacebuilding architecture and stressed that women's economic inclusion should be front and centre in sustaining peace efforts.
7. Ms. Ana Cristina Pino Cabrera, Director, Corporación Centro de Apoyo Popular (CENTRAP), Colombia outlined CENTRAP's work to protect women's human rights and strengthen the organizational capacity of women in local communities. She showcased a joint project with UN Women that supports the participation of women and youth in the management of socio-environmental conflicts and the prevention of armed conflict. Ms. Cabrera reflected perspectives presented by women peacebuilders and humanitarians during a Global Women's Forum for Peace and Humanitarian Action, organized in February 2020 in Vienna by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) together with the Austrian Development Cooperation and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP). She stressed the importance of protecting the economic rights of women and emphasized the need

to promote women's political empowerment and inclusion. She called for (i) prioritisation of women's economic empowerment as part of peacebuilding efforts; (ii) Improvement of women's access to digital connectivity and technology; (iii) protection of the rights of poor and vulnerable women; (iv) adoption of gender sensitive approaches in the implementation of peace agreements; (v) protection of and support for human rights defenders; and (vi) Promotion of gender equality at all levels, starting from the education system.

The civil society representatives from Colombia and South Africa, with support from the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) and UN Women, conducted a series of in-country consultations on women, peace and security, and the Peacebuilding Architecture Review, the outcomes of which informed their contributions to the PBC-convened consultation.

8. Thirty-five Member States submitted written inputs to the consultation with the following observations and recommendations:

- They commended the role of PBC in advancing the WPS agenda, including by supporting women's leadership role in peacebuilding and by working closely with regional and sub-regional organizations.
- They welcomed the recommendations presented by UN Women and the civil society representatives during the meeting and suggested that these should be taken into consideration during the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture.
- They expressed concern about the gender-specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which further jeopardises the WPS agenda. They mentioned in particular the increased violence against women and girls around the world, which is further exacerbated in conflict-affected contexts. They called for a gender-sensitive lens in response and recovery plans, which should give due consideration to the protection of women's rights and to women's empowerment.
- They shared experiences in the implementation of WPS National Action Plans (NAPs) and acknowledged the potential of these plans to promote coherent and coordinated government policies in support of women's empowerment and participation in political processes, peacebuilding initiatives and decision-making. They encouraged systematic monitoring of the implementation of NAPs globally.
- They shared experiences in enhancing the participation of women in peacekeeping, including through the deployment of all-women police and military units, and support for the Elsie Initiative aimed at improving the recruitment, retention and career progress of women peacekeepers.
- They welcomed the development of regional networks of women mediators, while noting that persistent structural barriers to women's participation in peace processes contribute to very low levels of women's participation as mediators, negotiators, and consulted groups in peace processes.
- They stressed the importance of supporting the crucial work of local women peacebuilders through strategic partnerships and greater collaboration between the UN peacebuilding architecture and local civil society actors, while calling for greater measures to protect women peacebuilders from political threats.
- They highlighted and welcomed efforts by regional and sub-regional organizations to develop policy frameworks and integrated action plans to support implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

- Noting the multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination that women from vulnerable groups in society face, they called for intersectional and disaggregated analysis to understand the barriers to women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation in peacebuilding.
- Noting the importance of the socioeconomic dimensions of peacebuilding, they called for due attention to be paid to women’s economic empowerment and livelihoods in broader peacebuilding efforts.
- They called for increased funding in support of the work of women-led peacebuilding organizations, and in that regard welcomed the recent decision by the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund to establish a Rapid Response Window for women peacebuilders and the increased allocations for gender-responsive projects in peacebuilding contexts contained in the PBF Strategic Plan for 2020-2024. They commended the PBF for consistently meeting and achieving the Secretary-General’s targets for financing programming with a strong gender lens.
- They noted the importance of ensuring that due attention is paid to the gender dimensions of peacekeeping transitions, including through retaining gender capabilities during drawdown of UN peacekeeping operations and in UN Country Teams during transitions.
- They suggested the following actions to further strengthen the work of the PBC in support of WPS:
 - The Commission should continue to empower women peacebuilders, including by offering them a platform to share experiences and seek international support, and following up on recommendations that they make to the PBC.
 - The PBC should ensure a whole-of-society approach in its WPS deliberations by engaging with and supporting the relevant efforts of political leaders, government, private sector, civil society and media representatives as well as women role models and women’s organizations, including those from marginalized groups.
 - The PBC platform should help mobilize resources in support of development, implementation and monitoring of NAPs implementation.
 - The PBC should encourage and support efforts that aim to protect women human rights defenders and enhance women’s role in political and socio-economic processes, and peacebuilding initiatives. It should also take steps to mitigate the risk of reprisal against women peacebuilders and human rights defenders with whom it engages.
 - The Commission should advocate for systematic tracking of progress in the implementation of 1325 and subsequent resolutions, based on evidence and data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant parameters.
 - The PBC should continue to advocate for gender dimensions to be an integral part of conflict analysis and planning undertaken by the UN system.
 - The PBC should continue to monitor progress and increase collective accountability for the implementation of its gender strategy, including by holding annual thematic consultations on the implementation of peacebuilding elements of the WPS agenda, developing metrics to more systematically track its implementation, and regularly reporting on its progress in incorporating the gender dimensions of peacebuilding in all of its meetings and products.
 - The PBC should enhance complementarity in its efforts to support the women, peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas.
 - The PBC should advocate for gender-responsive strategies, policies and approaches in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts in fragile and peacebuilding contexts.

- The PBC should continue to provide gender-sensitive analysis and advice to UN Security Council, on all issues under its consideration, so as to strengthen efforts to implement the WPS Agenda.
