

**PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

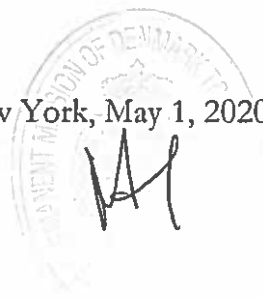
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The Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

As requested in your communication dated 21 April 2020 on *electronic consultation on the 2020 review*, the Permanent Mission of Denmark is pleased to submit Denmark's statement on "*Full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding*".

The Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, May 1, 2020



The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC),
His Excellency Mr. Marc-André Blanchard
The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations
466 Lexington Avenue, 20th floor
New York, NY 10017
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Electronic consultation on the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review

Written statement by Denmark on

The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding

Mr. Chair,

2020 is a pivotal year for the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. Not only are we coming together as member states, civil society and UN institutions to review the UN peacebuilding architecture. This year also marks the beginning of the *Decade of Action* for the 2030 Agenda, the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the 20th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS. During the past 20 years, we - as Member States - have come together on multiple occasions to reiterate the principle that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making is critical for all the work we do across the UN's Three Pillars. But, operationalization and implementation of this principle has been lacking and a lot of work still remains to be done. Denmark therefore welcome this opportunity to reflect on progress made to ensure more resilient peacebuilding outcomes and deliver on the commitments of UNSCR 1325 in concrete peacebuilding settings on the ground.

Speaking to the guiding questions posed in the concept note, we wish to highlight the following three points regarding: (1) continued challenges for women on the ground; (2) implications of COVID-19 for the WPS agenda; and (3) challenges and gaps in supporting women peace organizations, especially at the local level:

1. Despite international commitments and constructive policy developments, including the PBC Gender Strategy, we continue to see less-than-equal participation by women and girls in peacebuilding. COVID-19 risks exacerbating this challenge and it is our responsibility to **ensure that the progress made on implementation of resolution 1325 – albeit not sufficient - does not become a casualty of the pandemic**. As a concrete outcome of the SG's reforms of the peace and security pillar, the peacebuilding architecture has now been integrated with the UN's political work to prevent and mediate conflicts. This opportunity should be seized.
 - (i) The PBC should work more closely with Special Envoys and Special Representative of the Secretary-General, RCs and other UN mediation efforts to identify concrete avenues for embedding enablers for and commitments to women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peacebuilding, as part of the negotiation of peace agreements.
 - (ii) Similarly, women play a unique role regarding priority policy areas for sustaining peace at local, national and regional levels, including social cohesion, stabilization and climate-risk mitigation and adaptation. Regarding the latter, the PBC is uniquely placed to use its platform for

multi-stakeholder engagement on this complex thematic area, which a broad consensus of Member States have established has clear linkages to sustaining peace across the peace-conflict continuum. Close collaboration with the DPPA-UNDP-UNEP Climate-Security mechanism is also essential to begin to address more systematically the triple nexus of women, climate and security.

- (iii) In the twin resolutions on sustaining peace of 2016, the GA and the Security Council recognized that an integrated and coherent approach among relevant political, security and developmental actors, within and outside of the United Nations system, is critical for advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls. The PBC should further cement its convening role for bringing UN and non-UN actors together across the UN's Three Pillars with a view to achieving further progress for women and girls across its work, not least by ensuring women and girls access to and participation in PBC meetings.

2. Similar to other crises and conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic affects women and girls disproportionately. Specifically, alarm has been raised that achievements already made in terms of development, peacebuilding and human rights may be rolled back in light of governments focusing narrowly on the COVID-response and in some cases using it to narrow democratic space. We need to enhance attention to the pandemic's consequences for women and girls - including indigenous women and girls - on a broader scale. As we respond to the COVID-19 crisis, it is as important as ever to take a holistic approach. It is now we need to prove that we are ready to break down the barriers that otherwise stop us from living the notion of the nexus between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding. This requires a common analysis, jointly identified outcomes, and meaningful coordination. All of this should be done with a thorough action oriented gender perspective with inclusion of those whose lives are affected to ensure that solutions - also to this crisis - is anchored in local leadership, including women and girls. The PBC – with its diverse membership, multi-stakeholder platform and advisory role to the GA and the Security Council – can play a unique role this regard.

The different parts of the peacebuilding architecture must each do their part to **ensure that the international community uses the lessons from the ongoing global public health crisis constructively advance the status of women and girls by:**

- (i) Reassessing the unique vulnerabilities experienced by women and girls and what is required to bolster their resilience in the face of crisis and conflict;
- (ii) Collecting experiences of how women are serving in a diversity of roles at the frontline of the response to the current global health emergency and how they are supporting their communities and countries in weathering the storm, not only as care givers and health personnel but also as front line peace actors where international mediation and peacebuilding efforts have

been hampered by restrictions on mobility as well as trusted information sources, and thus essential actors in the fight against disinformation;

- (iii) Ensuring that women and girls – including indigenous women and girls - are included in a meaningful way in all processes: from diagnosis and analysis to the identification of solutions as well as implementation. This is how we ensure that women’s views, interests and perspectives are being included. Specifically, we must ensure women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the effort to build back better. And, as the Secretary-General has noted repeatedly, this requires us to do so in a sustainable, green and conflict-sensitive manner. In short, we must see the rebuilding effort as a global peacebuilding effort, in which we cannot afford to exclude women.
3. As previously stated, women’s and girls’ full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making is critical for our ability to achieve shared global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the protection and promotion of Human Rights, and the Paris Agreement, all of which are essential for preventing conflict and building peace. One concrete obstacle facing women and girls is their unequal share of resources and access to finance. There is a need to **strengthen strategic partnerships and collaboration between the Peacebuilding Architecture and local peace actors - both formal and informal** - and to ensure access to predictable, adequate and targeted resources for these actors. Many local peace actors, women in particular, are under pressure now, as they are losing funding due to difficulties in implementing their originally planned activities and limited capacity to adapt fast enough to the new reality to benefit from new funding modalities. Additionally, many of them are under pressure from shrinking democratic space. The challenge is even greater when it comes to reaching informal civil society actors. The PBF should review its administration and finance rules and requirements to see how it can better support informal civil society actors, with a particular focus on local women peacebuilders, e.g. by working through intermediary actors.

As the COVID-19 crisis has taught us, outreach and network building only become more challenging once the crisis hits or conflict erupts. Effective conflict prevention and disaster risk reduction requires *early* multi-stakeholder engagement, including with women and girls. The UN, Member States as well as partners such as the IFIs must therefore be proactive in identifying, engaging and partnering with key women peacebuilders, women peace activists and women human rights defenders in each specific context – long before the crisis hits. The new normal with local peace actors often briefing the PBC in New York is welcome and should be sustained, with due regard to gender inclusion – but also striving for diversity among the women, who are invited to speak. Finally, the PBC – with its diverse membership, multi-stakeholder platform and advisory role to the GA and the Security Council – can play a unique role in genuinely operationalizing the principle of local ownership, and how women’s full, equal and meaningful participation can be incorporated in this regard.

In closing, we wish to underscore that the year 2020 calls for strong leadership and support for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. We cannot afford to leave women excluded from decision-making processes that determine their future. This is crucial – not only to respect the rights of women and girls - but also to ensure the best outcomes. It is a well-proven fact that women’s full, equal and meaningful participation ensures longer-lasting and more sustainable peace.

Thank you.