

CONCEPT NOTE

Ambassadorial-level Consultation of the Peacebuilding Commission

2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture

“Full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding”

Electronic consultation

21 April -1 May 2020

Background and rationale

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has made considerable progress since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. The resolutions recognize women’s pivotal role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The 2010 report of the Secretary-General, as requested by resolution 1889 (2009), contained a Seven-Point Action Plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding. Gender equality and women’s leadership are central ingredients in the two separate reviews of the peace operations and the peacebuilding architecture in 2015. Also, the “global study on the implementation of resolution 1325,” also undertaken in 2015, called for the integration of the gender dimension in all pillars of UN peacebuilding. The resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture of 2016 specifically requested the PBC to mainstream gender in all aspects of its work. The Secretary-General’s reports on peacebuilding and sustaining peace of 2018 and 2019 reiterated the UN’s commitment to the Seven-Point Action Plan to accelerate progress on the participation of women in peacebuilding, including through increased financing for gender-responsive peacebuilding and improved gender-sensitive analysis and planning. The Secretary-General requested a review of the Plan in the light of the reforms in advance of the forthcoming 20th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution.

To help advance the WPS agenda, the PBC adopted a Gender Strategy in 2016 to integrate a gender dimension into the Commission’s country-specific, regional and thematic discussions. The Commission strives to routinely invite women leaders to its meetings and meet with women’s organizations during its country visits. It has held dedicated meetings with a focus on women and peacebuilding, including on challenges and gaps in financing for women-led peacebuilding initiatives, and has submitted its advice to the Security Council. For example, during the 2019 Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, the PBC reiterated its commitment to continue providing a platform for women peacebuilders from different contexts to share their diverse experiences. Concerning financing gender-responsive peacebuilding, the Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund is the only fund that has exceeded the target set by the Secretary-General to commit at least 15% of resources to gender equality and women’s empowerment initiatives. As a principal objective, the Fund has an annual target of 30% of its investment to contribute to gender and women’s empowerment and strong gender- and youth-responsive conflict analysis.

In support of resolution 1325, regional organizations and women’s networks are committing to promote women’s rights, gender equality and the full and meaningful participation of women across all decision-making contexts. Their efforts encourage coherence between regional and national level efforts on conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts, including support for activities to accelerate and monitor the WPS at national and regional levels. The African Union, the European Union, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Economic Community of Central African States have all

adopted regional action plans on WPS to support and accelerate women's participation in and the monitoring of the implementation of peace processes. Through these mechanisms, the UN, working in close collaboration with the African and European Unions, is supporting conflict-affected countries like the Central African Republic and Mali to strengthen women's participation in ongoing peace processes.

The advent of COVID-19 has brought about an unprecedented global health crisis with profound social, economic and political consequences, including relating to international peace and security. It risks reversing decades of progress in the fight against poverty and exacerbating already high levels of inequality within and between countries. More immediately, the pandemic has the potential to worsen the situation in conflict-affected countries, overwhelming already weak and faltering health systems and assailing the most vulnerable: those caught up in conflicts, refugees and others forcibly displaced by violence and persecution, vulnerable population especially women and children.

Pandemic outbreaks could disproportionately affect women and girls in several ways. Women and children in conflict-affected settings are particularly likely to face obstacles accessing health care, livelihoods/education and other critical support. Their needs for protection — including domestic and gender-based violence (GBV) — may increase with the imposition of much needed social distancing measures and movement restrictions. In terms of girls' education, the risk of school drop-out and caregiving burden tends to increase if schools, with the limited remote learning system, are closed for an indefinite period to mitigate the spread of the outbreak as was the case in the Ebola outbreak.

The Peacebuilding Commission convened a meeting on 8 April to discuss the implications of COVID-19 on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and reiterated their commitment to fully support efforts to maintain peace gains in the countries and regions under its consideration.

Objective

The objective of the consultation is to inform the formal phase of the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture and provide input for the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The consultation will offer an opportunity to share good practices; assess progress on recommendations made; and identify priorities where there has been little or uneven progress, to promote women's participation in peacebuilding efforts further and to strengthen the PBC's convening, bridge and advisory role in this area. The Chair's summary will reflect the key recommendations.

Format and Speakers:

Welcome and opening remarks, H.E. Mr. Marc-André Blanchard, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (by recorded statement)

Remarks by:

- Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women (by recorded statement)
- Ms. Euphemia Akos Dzathor, Member, WANEP/Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), Ghana (by recorded statement)

- Ms. Ana Cristina Pino Cabrera, Director, Corporación Centro de Apoyo Popular (CENTRAP), Colombia (by recorded statement)
Ms Tintswalo Makhubele, Secretary-General, South Africa Congress of Non-Profit Organizations (SACONO) (by recorded statement)
- Remarks from Member States.

In accordance with the alternative procedures for meetings adopted by the PBC in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the consultation on Women, Peace and Security will take place as a virtual consultation. Recorded remarks by the Chair and the panelists will be posted on the PBC website (<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/pbc-meetings-2020-review-0/wps-consultation>) on Wednesday, 22 April. All delegations are encouraged to listen to the remarks and submit their written statements responding to the guiding questions below.

Statements should be submitted to the PBSO to the attention of Rebecca Feeley (feeley@un.org) copying Patrice Chiwota (chiwota@un.org) no later than Thursday, 1 May for publication on the PBC website. Due to limited capacities, translation cannot be provided and delegations are invited to submit their remarks in English.

Guiding questions:

1. What elements of the UN peacebuilding architecture help to empower local women peacebuilders?
2. Which priority area of the WPS agenda strengthens women’s participation in peacebuilding? What challenges remain for women on the ground?
3. How effective has the PBC Gender Strategy been to inform, catalyze and support the Commission’s work in support of WPS agenda? What improvements are needed in this regard to also consider COVID-19 impact?
4. What mechanisms best support women’s organizations, including to channel resources and provide political support for women’s peacebuilding work? What challenges or gaps remain?
5. What lessons can be distilled from PBC engagement on WPS in conflict-affected countries to guide the Commission’s future response in countries and regions under its consideration and in its advisory role of the Security Council?