

Speech of Tintswalo Cassandra Makhubele from South Africa for the meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on Women and Peace and Security

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Good afternoon. My name is Tintswalo Cassandra Makhubele and I am Secretary General of the Sacono – South African Congress of Non-profit Organizations. We are a network of NGOs and civil society in South Africa and the continent. Today I will be presenting to you about women's peacebuilding and peace and security priorities in South Africa.

I am indeed delighted to present this to yourselves. Your excellencies and esteemed colleagues, thank you for this opportunity to address you and share with you the perspectives of local women from South Africa on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review, which is taking place in 2020, is an important process for women peacebuilders. We need peace more than anything in the world. It is an opportunity to reflect on what works and what does not work in peacebuilding, and how local women and their perspectives can be better included. On March 2, 2020, I participated in a workshop organized by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, UN Women and the Embassy of Ireland in Pretoria. In this workshop, we discussed our priorities and key recommendations for this process, which I am honored to share with you today.

What does sustainable peace mean to me, as a local peace builder?

Peace is quite fragile but very critical, especially at the local level. Pandemics, such as the current COVID-19 outbreak makes it even more difficult to sustain peace, prevent gender-based violence and protect women and children.

We also need to take urgent action to combat climate change. We cannot build sustainable peace if our natural resources are drained away.

Therefore, while demilitarization is also important, to me, sustaining peace means much more than just silencing the guns.

Women peacebuilders are already taking serious action to address these issues and build sustainable peace. This also includes LGBTQI people, people living with disabilities and even boys and men, whom we need to nurture to change their mindsets.

For example, they are creating awareness campaigns on water conservation to reduce water consumption; they are monitoring elections and advancing efforts to protect human rights. Respect for human rights is a critical element of peacebuilding, especially when it comes to care after the war, management of conflict and sustainability of peace.

South Africa is not a country at conflict, but we still have a long way to build a sustainable peace. During the workshop on March 2, 2020, we identified a number of challenges. These include:

- Lack of coherent and tailored peacebuilding strategies that are meaningful and inclusive. There is a need for better communication and coordination and clearer definition of roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders and actors on peacebuilding.
- As a country, we find it necessary to get technical support and assistance, as well as funding that would enable us to continue our work for peace, which starts from within.
- It is also essential that peacebuilding strategies are long-term and include conflict management training at all levels to reduce relapse, as well as post-conflict care and trauma healing programs.
- **Ultimately, peacebuilding programs and efforts need to be designed to enable transition from the culture of violence to peace. This is a long-term task that requires inclusion of women, youth, LGBTQI, people with disabilities and all other marginalized groups.**

Therefore, I would like to respectfully request the Peacebuilding Commission to bear the following recommendations in mind as you provide inputs into the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review:

- Strengthen strategic partnerships and collaboration between UN Peacebuilding Architecture and local civil society, including women peacebuilders and women-led organizations
- Support exchange of experiences and information between local peacebuilders from different countries, to allow for cross-learning by including them in programs and engagements at regional levels
- Recognize that women's economic inclusion is an important element of peacebuilding and support women's participation in the economy through:
 - Collecting data on women's economic empowerment and inclusion post-conflict
 - Support and capacity-building for women who are victims of violence to join the labour market
 - Improving women's business skills, knowledge, product development and product management.

To conclude, I want to emphasize that women are the future of sustaining peace.

Therefore, we need to make sure that they have capacities, are well coordinated and organized, and are included in economic development.

Thank you very much for this wonderful opportunity. I am delighted to have participated and have represented my country and continent. Thank you.