**Peacebuilding Commission Ambassadorial-level Meeting**

**Strengthening the Linkages between Women, Peace and Security agenda and peacebuilding and sustaining peace**

**21 October 2019**

**Chair’s summary**

1. On 22 October 2019, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) at the initiative of Ireland. The meeting, chaired by H.E. Mr. Ion Jinga, Vice-Chair of the PBC, focused on the linkage between the WPS agenda and the peacebuilding and sustaining peace .
2. In his introductory remarks, the Chair highlighted that PBC continues to serve as a platform for Member States to reflect on progress made in implementing the WPS agenda. He added that it was taking place at an opportune moment, ahead of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. He stressed the need to ensure full implementation of the PBC strategy, which should feed into the 2020 Review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. He noted that the meeting would contribute to the upcoming Security Council debate on WPS and called on the PBC members to make specific proposals that could be transmitted to the Security Council.
3. The Secretary-General’s Senior Advisor on Policy, Ms. Ana Maria Menendez, noted with concern that while the United Nations and Member States had adopted and strengthened policies and tools to ensure that women are included in all peace processes and reiterated commitments through numerous statements and resolutions, there remains a major gap in the implementation of WPS agenda. She lamented the fact that women continue to face exclusion from peace processes.and stressed the need to bridge the divide between rhetoric and practice. She urged Member States and the UN to do more to address the root causes of gender inequality. USG Menendez underscored the Secretary-General’s seven-point action plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding as key in expanding access of women to decision-making fora and systematizing gender sensitive analysis and planning. She commended the role of the Peacebuilding Fund Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI) in advancing the WPS agenda thorugh targeted support to women peacebuilders, and called on Member States to follow through with their own commitments.
4. The Assistant Secretary-General of UN Women, Ms. Anita Bahtia, noted the stark contrast between rhetoric on WPS and reality, regretting the fact that this important agenda remains underresourced. She recalled the Secretary-General’s call for all concerned stakeholders to join forces in order to: (i) hold leadership accountable for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda through targeted data collection, joined-up analysis, strategic planning and raised visibility; (ii) enable, facilitate and ensure women’s meaningful participation in political processes; (iii) publicly condemn human rights violations and discrimination and prevent all forms of gender-based violence; (iv) increase women’s participation in peacekeeping missions and national security services; (v) guarantee women’s economic security and access to resources; and (vi) finance the WPS agenda and invest in women peacebuilders. She concluded by reiterating her commitment to build partnerships so as to accelerate implementation of the WPS agenda and demonstrate results by 2020.

1. The Chief Advisor on Peace, Security and Governance of the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations, Dr. Alhaj Sarjoh Bah, presented the AU continental frameworks on WPS, citing the Maputo Protocol on the rights of women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and relevant Communiqués of the Peace and Security Council. Dr Bah informed that the AU aims to accelerate women’s participation in peace processes through action in four areas: (i) helping translate WPS related policy and normative frameworks into concrete action at the national level across the continent (examples include the AU has ensured the 50-50 representation enshrined in the AU Gender Parity Principle in the election of Commissioners at the AU Commission and the adoption of National Action Plans on WPS by 25 AU Members); (ii) developing the AU Continental Results Framework to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the WPS agenda; (iii) supporting countries to raise awareness and develop needed capacities for effective implementation of the WPS agenda, including through the FEMWISE-Africa and the African Women Leaders Network; and (iv) increasing gender-sensitive reporting and ensuring sex-disaggregated data in AUC reports and communications. He added that the 2020 Review of the UN peacebuilding architecture provides a unique opportunity to strengthen partnership with the UN in support of enhanced implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa.
2. A representative of grassroots organization ‘Youth Action Northern Ireland’, Ms. Emma Johnson, shared her experiences and lessons from the 1998 Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, where many young women are still dealing with the lasting impact of conflict. She discussed her organisation’s work to champion for positive change, including through education initiatives, innovative intergenerational support activities, and advocacy for representation of young women in local peacebuilding proceeses. Ms. Johnson told particpants that, despite the multiple and complex challenges that women, especially young women, face today, including norms, stereotypes and stigmas ingrained in the subconscious, in her experience, they have proven their ability to bring about peace. She emphasized three important strengths that women bring into peace processes: Collaboraiton, critical thinking and compassion.
3. The CEO of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilding, Ms. Mavic Cabrera Balleza, shared the findings of her organization's global research on the perspectives of women from local communities and civil society on Sustaining Peace, undertaken with the support of UN Women. According to responses from more than 1,600 people in sixty countries: i) human rights and human security, sustainable development, responsible natural resource management, good governance and a harmonious community relying on non-violent conflict resolution are the foundations of peace; ii) patriarchal culture and societal practices, the political and economic exclusion of women, low levels of education and awareness, among others, prevent women from participating in peace processes and decision-making; and iii) environmental management is inextricably linked to WPS and the achievement of peacebuilding. The study recommended that: i) peacebuilding should focus on long-term changes, such as supporting inclusive and accountable institutions, challenging militarized response to conflict and fostering a “culture of peace”; ii) women need to be actively engaged in building and sustaining peace at both national and local levels; and iii) donor programming should be inclusive and flexible, and provide support to women’s rights organizations, including at the grassroot level.
4. Member States welcomed the presentations and made the following observations:

* They urged the PBC, through its convening and advisory role, to provide a platform for discussion of the WPS agenda with a range of different stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society.
* They commended the PBF for its gender marker on programming.
* They expressed concern for the failure to achieve meaningful participation of women in peace processes.
* They stressed the importance of addressing obstacles in implementing the WPS agenda, such as increasing the numbers of women in peacekeeping missions and national security services, as well as strengthening the women’s economic empowrement.
* They suggested that WPS issues must be at the heart of PBC discussions and field visits.
* They identified the 2020 Review of the peacebuilding architecture as an important opportunity for the PBC to further advance the WPS agenda and to strengthen the PBC.

The Chair adjourned the meeting.