

Madame President,

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to offer the Commission's observations and advice on women's economic inclusion and participation in peacebuilding contexts, based on its work and engagements.

Since 2016, the Commission's work has been guided by a gender strategy to ensure a more systematic integration of gender issues in its work. In 2021, the PBC adopted an action plan with specific indicators and action areas to monitor its progress in implementing the strategy.

The Commission supports national efforts to promote women's economic empowerment, and advocates for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in socioeconomic development with a view to strengthening peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Commission also regularly invites women peacebuilders¹ to better integrate their perspectives and recommendations in its thematic and country engagements. In 2021, half of PBC meetings included briefings from women peacebuilders who were either representing civil society organizations or were local business leaders. In 2020, 70% of briefers from the private sector were women CEOs, providing testimonies and examples of how local business can play a critical role in empowering women.

In Colombia, for example, Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund promoted innovative finance initiatives to leverage additional investments for peace. The PBF funded projects in conflict affected areas improved the socioeconomic condition of women, ex-combatants and victims of conflict and thus helped advance sustainable development, economic resilience and social cohesion.

Based on the discussions at the Commission and its engagement with women peacebuilders and leaders on the ground, the Commission wishes to underscore the following:

¹ "Women peacebuilders", as defined in the Peacebuilding Commission's gender strategy, means women representatives from civil society organizations, the private sector, academia or think tanks and women independent experts who lead and contribute to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in countries and regions considered by the Commission.

- First: The importance of economic stability and growth in conflict-affected settings for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The promotion of women's economic inclusion and participation for peacebuilding and sustaining peace are far under-developed. Women's empowerment and the elimination of poverty are key priorities.
- Second: Additional measures to increase role of women in social and economic development in many conflict-related settings should be taken. Measures are needed to strengthen women's economic capacity and to expand women's access to opportunities, education, financial and material resources, markets and modern technology.
- Third: The socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities of women. Many women lost their livelihood and income resulting in their reduced ability to contribute effectively to peacebuilding. This needs to be factored while developing and implementing COVID-19 recovery plans and adequate support should be provided to create livelihood opportunities for women including through skill development.
- Fourth, noting the importance of ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace, it is critical that women and youth peacebuilders and their organisations are sufficiently financed, and that women entrepreneurs are empowered to be the agents of change in conflict-affected settings.
- Fifth: In many conflict-affected settings, such as the Great Lakes Region, the role of women as entrepreneurs is catalytic for regional economic growth. It is therefore important to improve the business climate, tax regimes and trade policies to achieve the full potential of small and medium-size women-led businesses.
- Sixth: The COVID-19 pandemic and instabilities have pushed more and more women and girls into extreme poverty, highlighting the importance of accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through scaling up efforts of poverty eradication for women, and supporting women entrepreneurs.
- Finally: Enhanced partnerships and cooperation with international and regional financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the African

Development Bank, are critically important in ensuring women's economic inclusion in conflict affected countries.

Thank you.