

**Written Statement by H.E. Amrit Bahadur Rai, Permanent
Representative of Nepal to the UN, at Ambassadorial-level Consultation of the
Peacebuilding Commission on 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture
on the theme**

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

Electronic Consultation

1 May 2020

Mr. Chair,

Over the years, women’s position as the ‘silent bearer’ of the disproportionate pain of conflict has changed into a ‘force multiplier’ to promote peace and security in conflict-affected societies. Women can play a role of ‘change agent’ by offering valuable and innovative perspectives to build and sustain peace in the society. Their leadership role in conflict prevention, active engagement in peace negotiations, compassionate protection of the civilians as peacekeepers, among others, cannot be overemphasized.

It is evident that the conflict-affected countries will have to bear the severe consequences of the COVID pandemic. They lack both capacities and resources to tackle this invisible enemy. Already weak State capacities have been overstretched due to the increasing necessity to provide health services to the affected people and relief materials to the poor ones whose economic activities have been disrupted by lockdowns.

The poorest and most vulnerable groups of people including women, children, people with disabilities, and low-wage labourers are the hardest hit by the pandemic. Moreover, anti-social elements and criminals may use the situation to extort the vulnerable groups. In this regard, the protection of the vulnerable groups including the women and children is much needed than ever given the reported increase in the incidence of violence against them.

Mr. Chair,

Based on its national experience of successfully steering the ‘unique and home-grown’ peace process, Nepal would like to make the following points for enhancing the engagement of women in peacebuilding:

1. *Women’s participation should be constitutionally guaranteed.* Nepal’s Constitution requires that the President and Vice-President of the country should represent different gender or communities. Similarly, either Speaker or Deputy Speaker of the Lower House and Chair or Vice-Chair of the upper house must be a woman. Moreover, there is a constitutional guarantee of allocating 40% of the leadership position at the local level to women. The Constitution has created an independent and powerful National Women’s Commission to monitor and safeguard the rights and interests of women.
2. *The Inclusion policy should be adopted to increase women’s participation in the government machinery.* Nepal has adopted an inclusion policy to allocate 33% of the positions under reservation in government services, including in security forces, to women. Free legal services are provided to female victims of violence. Moreover, Rehabilitation Centres are established for rescue, relief, psychosocial counselling, and legal redress.
3. *The capacity of the women should also be strengthened, and they should be provided fair space at all political negotiations.* Nepal made explicit efforts to localize National Action Plan of the 1325 resolution with Localization Guidelines. It also made the mandatory provision of 33% women’s representation in Local Peace Committees.
4. *The ownership of the countries and the support of the international community to strengthen the capacities of conflict-affected countries are crucial.* There is no substitute for the engagement of the domestic actors in peace process. During Nepal's peace process, around 2800 Local Peace Committees were established at the local level to promote peace and harmony.
5. *Adequate resources and programs should be allocated/designed to achieve the goals related to women.* Nepal has a provision of the Gender Responsive Budget, which has now reached over 38% of the total budget. Nepal is also institutionalizing the gender-responsive budgeting at the provincial and local levels. Similarly, the President Women Upliftment Programme that works for

the social and economic uplifting of poor and excluded women is being implemented across the country.

To conclude Nepal would like to reiterate that sustainable peace and development cannot be attained in the absence of full, equal and meaningful participation of women. In order to achieve inclusive peace and security, we need gender equality and substantive engagements of women.

Thank you very much.