

Intervention by Norway - peacebuilding architecture - on full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding. Submitted 30 April 2020.

Twice since the Covid 19 was firmly set on our agenda, the UN Secretary General has issued calls; a call for global ceasefire and a call to end gender-based violence. These calls demonstrate what we as members of the Peacebuilding Commission know all too well: 1) That it is hard to heal and mend while destruction is ongoing. 2) Violence against women undermines peace and effective action. It is not only a matter of stopping the abuse, but also about removing barriers for women's full, equal and meaningful participation.

Covid 19 challenges us in some new ways. Meetings like this one still takes place, but in an unusual format. Access to internet and high-tech equipment is a real challenge, especially in remote and conflict-ridden areas. Language barriers become even more apparent, as simultaneous translation proves harder to do virtually. This again has implications for power relations. Informal exchange in the fringes of official negotiations is hard to do. Nudging, networking and influencing must happen in new ways. Our inclusion mechanisms need adjustments when people do not meet physically. Moreover, the monitoring of the pandemic might be misused, threatening women peacebuilders and human rights defenders.

These challenges have a new wrapping, but the essence is the same: How do we enable real meetings? How do we level the playing field? How do we ensure that people are safe and able to do their work under difficult and dangerous circumstances? Inclusion has always required creativity and solid commitment.

The Peacebuilding Commission should use its convening power to highlight the relationship between the inclusion of women in peacebuilding and political processes with the broader development and security policies, and make actionable recommendations. The Peacebuilding Fund has developed good practices to showcase and draw lessons from. Women, peace and security is high on the agenda, integrated in plans and procedures and reflected in a commendable way in the allocation of funds, even outperforming the fund's original target in the previous strategic phase (2017-19). Therefore, Norway has high expectations as we move forward, and recommends focus on the following:

- 1) **The PBC should utilize its advisory role to the UN Security Council to strengthen the overall Women, Peace and Security Agenda.** This includes inviting women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders to brief the Council on country situations and bringing a gendered humanitarian-development-peace-nexus lens into the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council mission mandates and operations. The PBC should advocate the establishment and inclusion of gender indicators in mandates and operations to better inform UN Security Council decisions and overall UN peacebuilding efforts;
- 2) **The PBC should continue and strengthen its cooperation with women organizations on conflict analysis and dialogue and confidence building measures,** e.g. by ensuring

that they are included in the agenda for country visits. It should explore cooperation with regional networks of women mediators, encourage the sharing of best practice and support regional approaches, as many conflicts have cross-border implications and can only be solved by combining and integrating local and regional efforts;

- 3) **The PBC should work to ensure that country programs implement the women, peace and security agenda.** It cannot be delegated to this forum or to UN Women. In order to see substantial gains on the ground, the UN Resident Coordinator and Country Teams must ensure that women's participation and rights are prioritized across country programs reflected in the allocation of human and financial resources. The success of the women, peace and security agenda is dependent on a successful implementation of the Secretary General's reform agenda at country level.
- 4) **The PBC should work to strengthen national ownership and local buy-in.** Kirgistan is a good example, where national leadership was decisive for the Peacebuilding Fund's women, peace and security programs' success. We need to mobilize parliamentarians for the cause, which is why Norway has supported UNDP's work to this end since the beginning.
- 5) **Civil society and women's groups must be able to take part.** This means continuing to support them financially and engage them strategically. The Peacebuilding Fund, The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund are three great funding channels for local civil society that Norway is pleased to support. We also need the broader mechanisms, such as the new COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund, to reflect these priorities and partnerships.
- 6) **Norway commends the PBF on exceeding its target for committing resources to gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives, encourages the Fund to continue this trend and set even more ambitious targets.** More stable and predictable funding for women's peacebuilding initiatives are necessary, and women organizations and peacebuilders will need our support in the long term. Persons facing multiple vulnerabilities, including disabilities and marginalization, IDPs/refugees should get particular attention, to ensure an integrated conflict- and gender-sensitive response to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
- 7) **The PBC must work to secure a safe and enabling environment for women peacebuilders and human rights defenders.** This is key in order to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. The Stand by Women Peacebuilders Campaign highlights key concerns and opportunities. Work related to women human rights defenders is a good platform. More needs to be done, and we encourage the PBC to follow up.
- 8) **The commitment to inclusion cannot be interrupted by Covid 19.** Conflicts and crises do not lessen the need for women's participation. On the contrary. Therefore, we challenge the Commission to lead the way in creative commitment.

Thank you.