



**Ambassadorial-level Consultation of the Peacebuilding Commission  
2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture**  
“Full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding”  
Electronic consultation  
21 April -1 May 2020

**National Statement on behalf of Sweden**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Sweden welcomes this opportunity to discuss the participation of women in peacebuilding, and how the UN peacebuilding architecture can be a vehicle to support this. This discussion is particularly critical at this time, as we have already seen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls, and other vulnerable groups. We align ourselves with the statement prepared by the European Union.

We thank our briefers for their important contributions, which demonstrate the crucial work that women peacebuilders at local levels are doing and how their work contributes to sustaining peace. We thank Ms. Euphemia Akos Dzathor for describing the contributions of the Peace Huts in Liberia, and we welcome that this is spreading to other countries. As mentioned by Ms. Tintswalo Cassandra Makhubele, the impact of climate change and the respect for human rights are integral parts in peacebuilding. Further, as described by Ms. Ana Cristina Pino Cabrera, women’s political and economic empowerment and inclusion are prerequisites for achieving sustainable peace. As emphasised by the Executive Director of UN Women, it is essential to address the effects of COVID-19 in conflict contexts, as the consequences will otherwise be irreversible.

Through our Feminist Foreign Policy, this issue is a top priority for Sweden. We would like to highlight the following ways in which the UN peacebuilding architecture can help empower women peacebuilders:

- First, we underscore the importance of **supporting the crucial work of women’s organisations and local peacebuilders and of implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda on the ground.** We heard from our briefers how structural barriers

force Civil Society Organisations to work on the periphery and that gaps between legislation and implementation remain. Conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts are taking place every day on the ground, and instead of duplicating efforts, we - as policymakers - must support existing efforts. Not only does this mean support through flexible funding and strengthening connections between local, regional, and global levels. It also entails ensuring that women and girls have access to their full scope of rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and that responsibilities are clearly defined for ensuring accountability. In the **Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire**, support to local women peacebuilders is essential for ensuring a sustainable and inclusive outcome.

- **Second, WPS-related work is needed in all contexts and must be integrated in all peacebuilding efforts.** While we are very pleased to see that over the years, the UN's peacebuilding architecture has increasingly adopted a holistic - "hinge" - approach to peace and security, more needs to be done to fully implement the WPS Agenda. While conflicts exacerbate gender inequalities, the inequalities did not start out of nowhere. A WPS approach must thus be present in all contexts – in conflict, post-conflict, as well as non-conflict contexts. The UN system at large, and the PBC as a platform, can share best practices from different country contexts to inform WPS efforts worldwide. This could in turn inform the implementation of WPS National Action Plans. We hope that the WPS agenda will be properly included throughout the review of the peacebuilding architecture, and we look forward to the update of the Secretary-General's Seven Point Action Plan.
- **Third, integration of the PBC Gender Strategy throughout the work of the PBC and the country specific configurations.** The strategy, the first of its kind adopted by a UN inter-governmental body, was a commitment by the PBC to work towards promoting gender equality and the full implementation of the WPS agenda. While we have seen some progress, we all need to work harder to ensure the strategy is integrated throughout PBC's work. Gender-sensitive analysis and disaggregated data, as well as civil society and women peacebuilder participation, must remain central in all of PBC's work, and it must go beyond a "box-ticking exercise". This requires ensuring that the information provided by briefers and the gender-sensitive data and analyses are acted upon and

followed up. For example, the PBC could invite previous civil society briefers to follow up on recommendations. As chair of the PBC Liberia configuration, Sweden continuously works towards ensuring that a gender perspective is integrated in the work of the configuration, including by inviting women's organisations to our meetings as well as ensuring that meetings with women led civil society organisations are always a key part of the Chair's visits. The importance of a gender perspective in Liberia during the COVID-19 pandemic was particularly highlighted by participants in the configuration meeting on 15 April 2020, and efforts are underway to follow up with relevant actors in Liberia, such as government representatives as well as local civil society organisations.

Throughout history, we have seen WPS and gender issues being pushed aside in times of crisis and conflict, with the excuse that it is not as "urgent". We have also seen that gender equality is treated as an add on. However, as the COVID-19 crisis is reminding us today, it is precisely in these contexts that women's participation and gender equality must remain at the centre. This is needed in order to deliver an inclusive response and ensure that the long-term recovery does not mean a return to exclusion. Thank you.