



Ambassadorial-level Virtual Consultation of the Peacebuilding Commission 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture

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

**Friday, 1 May 2020
Written submission by Switzerland**

Switzerland thanks the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for organizing the virtual thematic consultations on Women, Peace and Security in accordance with the alternative procedures for meetings adopted by the PBC. We appreciate the efforts undertaken to ensure that the inputs provided by Member States and briefers on the themes selected for discussion during the informal phase of the review will be properly taken into account.

The COVID-19 crisis is unfolding during a year when we mark the 25th anniversary of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on women’s rights and gender equality and the 20th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. As highlighted by the Secretary-General and echoed by the briefers in their presentations, the pandemic is highlighting and exacerbating existing inequalities, which in turn amplify the pandemic’s impact on the lives of women and girls. Women and girls have to be at the center of the efforts to respond to, recover and “build back better” from COVID-19.

In addition, violent conflict disproportionately affects the health, safety and the human rights of women and girls. We cannot achieve sustainable peace without women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in all levels of decision-making. Gender equality and the human rights of all women and girls are central to international peace and security.

Five aspects are particularly important to Switzerland:

First, gender equality and inclusion are key to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The Seven-Point Action Plan of the Secretary-General on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, as well as the PBCs Gender Strategy, constitute important guidelines with a focus on ensuring an inclusive approach that accounts for women’s perspectives and

specific needs, and promotes gender equality in order to make peacebuilding more effective. Switzerland's bilateral peacebuilding efforts have further shown that local actors are key in designing concrete action. This is for example the case of Mali, where women come together in "peace circles" to play an active role in the dissemination of the peace agreement within their communities and mutually empower their respective efforts. Locally and nationally owned endeavors that include all sectors of society are paramount. Effective implementation of peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts requires addressing lack of inclusion and gender inequality as root causes of conflict.

Second, and more specifically, the **interlinkages between the different areas for gender-responsive peacebuilding**, as indicated in the PBC Gender Strategy, deserve greater attention. In addition to addressing root causes of conflict, it is important to remove barriers to women's meaningful participation such as limited access to resources and economic insecurity. Over the past years, the Burundi-Configuration of the PBC, chaired by Switzerland, has recognized the work of women mediators in Burundi to promote social cohesion and dialogue with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). In addition to mitigating conflict at the community level, the activities of the women mediators are mobilizing women to participate in public life at the communal and provincial levels. When asked about the biggest obstacle to their full participation in peacebuilding processes, these women named poverty. They underscored the need for strengthening women's economic autonomy through revenue-generating activities. The link between the role of women in peacebuilding processes and their socioeconomic situation is a compelling one. Support for the participation of women in peace processes must take a broad approach, which includes livelihoods. The project in Burundi, which is funded through the PBF and supported by UN Women in partnership with UNDP and IOM is a good example of multi-agency cooperation to achieve this goal.

Third, **financing of gender-responsive peacebuilding**, including through the PBF needs to be adequate and transparent. The PBF plays an important and innovative role in engaging and empowering women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We commend the PBF for surpassing the Secretary-General's target of 15 per cent of investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women in peacebuilding, reaching 40 per cent in 2018. We also welcome the PBF's women and youth promotion initiative. It is encouraging to see that an important number of projects are submitted by UN entities together with UN Women, thereby fostering institutional coherence. However, as the PBF is not the sole source of funding for peacebuilding, there is a need for greater accountability and clarity on additional funding to implement the Seven-Point Action Plan of the Secretary-General on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding.

Fourth, **including a gender perspective in analysis and planning is fundamental**. In order to recognize the different challenges and opportunities for gender-responsive peacebuilding on international, national or local level, the systematic inclusion of a gender perspective is necessary. As the PBC highlighted in its advice to the Security Council on the occasion of the Open Debate on Security Council Resolution 1325 last October, the gender dimension is too often considered as an afterthought when it must be an integral part of all conflict analysis and planning that feeds into peacebuilding strategies.

We therefore underline the importance of strengthening the integration of a gender lens and expertise in the analysis, planning, monitoring and reporting mechanisms of UN initiatives and guidance at all levels. It is important that policy and programming informed by gender analysis contribute to the broadening of women's political agency and do not reinforce gender stereotypes.

Fifth, the **Peacebuilding Commission** provides an important platform for women peacebuilders from different regions to bring their experiences to the table and share their expertise. It should continue using its convening and advisory role to promote the full, meaningful and equal participation of women in peacebuilding, including by collecting best practices and by reflecting the insights shared by women peacebuilders in its advice to the Security Council, ECOSOC and the General Assembly. It can support Member States in their efforts to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda and its priorities, in particular by ensuring and promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace processes, as urged by the Security Council in its Resolution 2493 (2019) adopted on 29 October 2019. The PBC is well placed to promote a multidimensional, gender-responsive approach to peacebuilding, including human rights, good governance, justice, rule of law and economic development.