



12 March 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you that I will convene a Special Event under the theme, “Political Leadership and Violence Against Women and Girls: Prevention First”, to be held virtually on Tuesday, 23 March 2021, from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

The Special Event reflects advice from my Gender Advisory Group and feedback from Member States on enhancing the relationship between the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women. It will bring together experts and stakeholders to highlight the importance and urgency of action to prevent violence against women and girls and promote women’s participation and leadership in all spheres. The provisional concept note of the event is attached.

Details pertaining to the virtual arrangements for the meeting will be circulated shortly. For further information on the meeting, you may contact Ms. Gail Farngalo, Senior Adviser and Gender Lead in my office (gail.farngalo@un.org).

I look forward to your participation. Meanwhile, please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volkan BOZKIR

All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



SPECIAL EVENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

***POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS:
PREVENTION FIRST***

12:00 – 13:30 (EST) TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2021

(VIRTUAL)

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, progress towards achieving gender equality in decision-making roles has been slow and uneven. Data reveals that although 2021 marks the highest number of countries with women Heads of State and/or Heads of Government, as well as global share of women Ministers, in history yet at 21.9% it is far from equal.

Furthermore, the number of countries with no women in government has increased, and only 13 governments around the world have achieved gender-balance at Ministerial-level.

Among the most serious barriers to women's leadership and full participation is violence against women (VAW) in politics and public life. Gender-based violence (GBV) as well as intimidation, online, psychological, sexual, and physical attacks against women persist.

Gender-based violence constitutes a serious violation of women's human rights which undermines women's ability to fully participate in public life. This impedes progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 5.5 (Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life), and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Violence against women and girls is a society-wide problem, which requires an all-of-society solution, based on prevention.

The Special Event reflects advice from the Advisory Group on Gender Equality, established by the President of the General Assembly in October 2020, as well as feedback from Member States.

This event will bring together experts and stakeholders to highlight the importance and urgency of action to prevent violence against women and girls, and promote women's participation and leadership in all spheres with an aim of enhancing the relationships between the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women.

The panel will discuss how women's leadership can make a difference in times of crises and why prevention of violence against women and gender-based violence must be prioritized.

Guiding Questions

- Why do we need a major shift in our thinking about violence against women and gender-based violence?
- Why should the UN, governments and local authorities invest more in prevention to help protect women and girls?
- How can UN mandates provide for effective prevention?
- What are effective strategies for effective prevention in conflict and post-conflict settings?
- What is the most important connection between gender-based violence, violence against women, and peace and security?
- How can national policies support parliamentarians, journalists and local women leaders?
- What are the existing data gaps, and how can we address them?

PROGRAMME

Opening segment

Opening remarks by **H. E. Mr. Volkan BOZKIR**, President of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Statement by **H. E. Mr. Alie Kabba**, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, President of the UN-Women Executive Board, Member of the Advisory Group on Gender Equality

Interactive panel discussion

Moderator:

Ms. Soon-Young Yoon, UN Representative of the International Alliance of Women, Co-Founder the Feminist and Women's Movement Action Plan (FwMAP), Member of the Advisory Group on Gender Equality

Panellists:

Ms. Krishanti Dhamaraj, Executive Director, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA

Dr. Dubravka Simonovic, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women it's causes and consequences, Member of the Advisory Group on Gender Equality

Ms. Pramila Patten, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union

Ms. Kirthi Jayakumar, Founder, Gender Security Project

Ms. Paivi Kannisto, Chief, Peace and Security Unit, UN-Women

Closing segment

Closing remarks by **H. E. Mr. Volkan BOZKIR**, President of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly