

FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Introduction

The **Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC)** is an office of the United Nations Secretariat that supports the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Special Representative serves as the United Nations' spokesperson and political advocate on conflict-related sexual violence. She chairs the United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict and her work is supported by the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Office was established by Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), one in a series of resolutions which recognized the detrimental impact that sexual violence in conflict has on communities and acknowledged that this crime undermines efforts to ensure peace and security and rebuild societies once a conflict has ended.

The Special Representative has established the following three strategic priorities for the mandate: (i) converting cultures of impunity into cultures of justice and accountability through consistent and effective prosecution; (ii) fostering national ownership and leadership for a sustainable, survivor-centered response; and (iii) addressing the root causes of CRSV with structural gender inequality and discrimination, poverty and marginalization as its invisible driver in times of war and peace.¹

The **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)** is the international organization of Parliaments of sovereign States, whose mission is inter alia to promote democratic governance, institutions and values, working with parliaments and parliamentarians to articulate and respond to the needs and aspirations of the people.

The IPU pursues action in the key priority areas of strengthening the institution of parliament; setting standards and guidelines for democratic parliaments; advancing gender equality and respect for women's rights; protecting and promoting human rights; contributing to peace building, conflict prevention and security, promoting youth empowerment and mobilizing parliaments around the Sustainable Development Goals and global development agenda.²

¹ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict: <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/about-us/about-the-office/>

² Inter-Parliamentary Union Strategy 2017-2021. Strong democratic parliaments serving the people. <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/about-ipu/2017-01/strategy-2017-2021>

Purpose of the Framework of Cooperation Agreement

The purpose of this Framework of Cooperation Agreement between the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is to raise awareness among national parliaments about the scourge of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, in particular against women and girls but also against men and boys, used as a tactic of war, terrorism and political repression, and to provide support on the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence.³

As the world marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325, and the 10th anniversary of the Security Council resolution 1888, the SRSG-SVC and the IPU view this Framework of Cooperation Agreement as a critical tool for parliamentary action to address the root causes of sexual violence, including structural gender-based inequality and discrimination, poverty and marginalization.

Within this collaboration, the Office of the SRSG-SVC and the IPU aim to:

- Promote and facilitate the engagement of parliamentarians in addressing conflict-related sexual violence, including within peace building, conflict prevention and security processes at all levels.
- Support national parliaments in building their capacity and in strengthening their action on conflict-related sexual violence in terms of (a) legislation, (b) oversight, (c) budget allocation and (d) advocacy.

The Office of the SRSG-SVC and the IPU recognize the need to work with national parliaments in the spirit of the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments⁴.

The possible areas of cooperation that could serve as a joint work plan, to be regularly reviewed by the Office of the SRSG-SVC and the IPU, are detailed in the Annex.

³ “The term “conflict-related sexual violence” refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. That link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group, which includes terrorist entities; the profile of the victim, who is frequently an actual or perceived member of a political, ethnic or religious minority group or targeted on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; the climate of impunity, which is generally associated with State collapse, cross-border consequences such as displacement or trafficking, and/or violations of a ceasefire agreement. The term also encompasses trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual violence or exploitation, when committed in situations of conflict”. Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (S/2019/280).

⁴ Common Principles for Support to Parliaments (2014).

<https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/strong-parliaments/setting-standards/common-principles-support-parliaments>

Terms and modalities of collaborative activities

In order to support implementation of the Framework Cooperation Agreement, all assistance programs with parliaments will be subject to the availability of sufficient financial and human resources for that purpose and will be conducted in a gender-sensitive manner, in compliance with the Office of the SRSG-SVC and the IPU's programme of work, priority activities, principles, internal rules, regulations, policies, administrative procedures and practices.

The Office of the SRSG-SVC and the IPU commit to promoting and communicating their collaborative activities to relevant audiences in a spirit of collaboration and joint ownership.

The Office of the SRSG-SVC and the IPU will each nominate a focal point to facilitate coordination between them in respect of any matters related to the implementation of the agreed activities.



Secretary General
Inter-Parliamentary Union

Name: Mr. Martin Chungong

18 June 2021



United Nations Special Representative
of the Secretary-General
on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Name: Ms. Pramila Patten

18 June 2021

Annex - Areas of Cooperation

Recognizing their common objectives to protect and promote the rights of all persons affected by, or at risk of, conflict-related sexual violence, and noting the obstacles to the investigation and prosecution encountered by investigators, prosecutors and victim representatives in national jurisdictions in bringing justice for conflict-related sexual violence crimes, the Office of the SRSG-SVC and the IPU will collaborate in areas of mutual interest and engagement, where possible and appropriate, through :

1. Promoting the adoption, review and implementation of national legislation to promote and protect the rights of women, girls, men and boys affected by, or at risk of, conflict-related sexual violence, in line with international standards and Member States obligations under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions (particularly Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2331 (2016) and 2467 (2019));
2. Providing technical support to national parliaments in drafting new domestic legislation and/or reviewing substantive legal provisions and rules of procedure with the aim of overcoming all obstacles in ensuring accountability for conflict-related sexual violence by incorporating into their domestic legal systems the highest standards relating to sexual violence, such as sexual violence as an act of genocide and/or an act of terrorism, and ensuring that they are applicable to common law, civil law and hybrid systems and adaptable for use in informal and customary justice contexts;
3. Raise awareness of national parliaments on the importance of empowering survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and other grave crimes through a survivor-centered justice- which involves and includes survivors; empowers rather than sacrifices them; considers their needs as a core consideration rather than an afterthought; uplifts them rather than further victimizing them; paves the path for other victims to come forward; and a justice which is accessible, tangible, visible, and transformative.
4. Exchanging information regarding countries covered by the Office of the SRSG-SVC and the IPU, including countries with which the SRSG-SVC has signed Joint Communiqués and Frameworks of Cooperation on conflict-related sexual violence. This exchange of information could include elements such as:
 - Good practices in terms of legislative or other measures relevant to the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence, including those facilitating or impeding the implementation of the Conflict-related Sexual Violence and the Women, Peace and Security agendas;
 - Requests for assistance to adopt, review or implement legislation, to ensure that efforts undertaken by the Office of the SRSG-SVC and IPU are mutually reinforcing;
 - Resource mobilization efforts to generate financial support for the full and effective implementation of commitments at the national level.

5. Cooperating in the promotion of the Conflict-related Sexual Violence and the Women, Peace and Security agendas through the conduct of joint research and advocacy in the framework of actions to support:
 - The review of conflict-related sexual violence legislation, including the incorporation, amendment and implementation of legislation on:
 - serious international crimes (including war crimes, crimes against humanity, torture and genocide); transnational crimes (including trafficking in persons and acts of terrorism); and grave domestic crimes (including rape and other forms of sexual violence);
 - the holistic protection, support, and provision of the full range of comprehensive services to survivors of sexual violence, their families and communities, including children conceived through acts of sexual violence, through legislation, inter alia, on reparations, victim and witness protection; and
 - the prohibition of amnesties for perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence regardless of their rank or political affiliation.
 - The protection from violence and reprisals against members of parliament and other public officials, as well as human rights defenders, for their work in the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence;
 - The inclusion of sexual and gender-based violence considerations as an integral part of peace and political processes including through the promotion of women's full and meaningful participation; and
 - Ensuring that survivors of sexual violence are not left behind, including through their full and meaningful participation in discussions regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goals 5 and 16.
6. Using various platforms available within the United Nations, such as the annual Security Council Open Debate on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (19 June), or Arria formula meetings, to raise awareness on the role of national parliaments in the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence.
7. Sharing of calendars of relevant activities, initiatives or strategies pertinent to the areas of cooperation herein identified.

The above list is not exhaustive and should not be taken to exclude or replace other forms of cooperation between the Office of the SRSG-SVC and IPU on other issues of common interest.