

Peacebuilding Commission

Ambassadorial-level meeting on *Women leadership for Women, Peace and Security agenda and the role of women in the context of climate change in Central Asia*

11 November 2022

Chair's Summary

1. On 11 November 2022, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), H.E. Mr. Muhammad Abdul Muhith, convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting with the Women Leaders' Caucus of Central Asia (CAWLC) and its participating States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss and share experiences on women leadership in the implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda in the Central Asian region with a special focus on the impact of climate change. In his opening remarks, the Chair highlighted the CAWLC's active regional cooperation and public diplomacy on combating the adverse effects of climate change through women's leadership and participation. The Chair welcomed the women leaders of Central Asia to the PBC and appreciated their willingness to share good practices from their region and respective countries in advancing WPS agenda in Central Asia for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
2. **Ms. Natalia Gherman, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Asia and Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA)** thanked the Commission for convening the meeting. The SRSG remarked on the relevance of the meeting being the first on WPS in the context of climate change in the region and stressed the importance of regional cooperation on climate change and the WPS agenda in Central Asia. She welcomed the Caucus to share their experiences with the Commission which not only would further strengthen cooperation on a regional level but also help integrate the insights of the Caucus in the UN system, with a focus on conflict prevention including by mitigating adverse effects of climate change. Ms. Gherman welcomed the political will of the leaders in Central Asia to support WPS as displayed during the WLC Forum in 2021 in Turkmenistan. She also noted the Caucus' advancement of economic empowerment of women in the region through wide spanning networks and partnerships which has inspired the adoption of individual legislation like a WPS National Action Plan in Kazakhstan and the establishment of the National Women Leaders' Caucus in Uzbekistan. She stressed that for a comprehensive development of WPS agenda in the context of climate change, networks and partnerships need to be bolstered by civil society for creating dialogue spaces and innovative policy.
3. **H.E. Ms. Dunyagozel Gulmanova, Chairperson of the Committee on protection of human rights and freedoms of the Halk Maslakhaty of Milli Gengesh of Turkmenistan**, reiterated the commitment of CALWC to promoting cooperation in gender equality and sustainable development and reiterated Turkmenistan's aim to further

contribute to trust-building and cooperation in the region and globally. Ms. Gulmanova called for intensifying the Caucus' work to strengthen regional cooperation and improve socio-economic prospects of women in the region. She noted that global shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbate the impact of adverse effects of climate change on women and girls, especially in socio-economic perspective. As a response to these multidimensional threats to women's security and equal opportunities, she highlighted how Turkmenistan aims to implement relevant international frameworks through national initiatives including an expanded list of adaptation measures sectors such as water and agriculture, soil and land resources, ecosystems and forests, as well as simulation measures for industry, energy and transport sectors. Ms. Gulmanova concluded that socio-economic prospects for women are to be improved through plans to enhance sustainability and technology in the economy.

4. **H.E. Ms. Jamilya Isaeva, Vice-Speaker of Zhogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan**, recognized the vulnerability of the Central Asian region to the adverse effects of climate change and highlighted that not only the region's human security is under threat, but climate change is deepening socio-economic cleavages and gender inequality. She noted that Kyrgyzstan works on the implementation of international climate agreements through national climate plans. Ms. Isaeva shared with the Commission that gendered effects of climate change are specifically pertinent in rural areas that are already struggling with changing landscapes, resource deprivation, natural disasters and socio-economic development. She stressed that the level of representation of women in decision-making processes on climate change needs to be improved by implementing national agendas for gender equality put forth by the Kyrgyz Government. She further emphasized the need for data collection related to gender and climate change for improved gender-sensitive mitigation of adverse effects of climate change.
5. **H.E. Ms. Hilobi Qurbonzoda, Chairman of the Committee of Women's Affairs and family of Tajikistan**, stressed the importance of sharing insights on the linkage of climate, security and gender topics in Central Asia while recalling Tajikistan's political will to engage and cooperate at the national, regional and international level to address these issues. H.E. Ms. Hilobi Qurbonzoda stressed the importance of committing to long and medium-term socio-economic recovery to advance and consolidate women's empowerment to mitigate adverse effects of climate change. She noted that Tajikistan has adopted necessary policies and laws which bolstered the country's institutional capacity to advance women's empowerment. Furthermore, Tajikistan has made improvements in women's representation in political institutions, the civil apparatus and the education sector. Chairman Qurbonzoda shared that the obstacles to the inclusion and empowerment of women in the country are multifaceted; most notably the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorism and extremism and highlighted that Tajikistan aims to include women on their security apparatus to react to these challenges also in a gender responsive manner. Chairman Qurbonzoda stressed that climate change is a global challenge that has been having negative impacts on Central Asia and Tajikistan in particular, leading to insecurity in energy production, destroying socio-economic progress and threatening sustainable and peaceful development. Stressing the urgent need for mitigating the adverse consequences of climate change, such as, land degradation, depletion of and limited access to clean water

and sanitation facilities, electricity availability, as well as frequent natural disasters, she called for the preservation of the natural capital of the region.

6. **H.E. Ms Aigul Kuspan, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security of Mazhilis of Parliament of Kazakhstan**, commended the international and regional cooperation of the CALWC, UNRCCA, UN Women and UNDP on strengthening the WPS agenda and respective national actions plans in the Caucus countries. She stated that despite the multidimensional threats posed by adverse effects of climate change to women in Central Asia they continue to be active agents in mitigation and adaption. She noted that such good practices need to be duly recognized and supported.
7. **Ms. Zamira Naimanbaeva, Civil Society Representative from Kyrgyzstan**, stressed women's contribution to non-governmental organizations in Kyrgyzstan. She highlighted that the adverse effects of climate change are contemporary and are a threat to women's and girl's security, particularly for inhabitants of rural areas. Ms. Naimanbaeva stated that the low representation of women in decision-making processes and prescribed traditional gender roles within the women's communities increases their vulnerability. On the implementation of significant international policies, she urged for the removal of barriers to women's participation and leadership in climate change discourses through addressing gender inequality and discrimination. Ms. Naimanbaeva cited the lack of understanding of the interlinked impact of climate change and gender inequality in local communities and insufficient disaggregated data as significant obstacles to pursuing gender-sensitive climate policies in the region.
8. **Ms. Alla Kuvatova, Associate Professor of the Department of Domestic and International Journalism, Russian, Tajik (Slavic) University**, thanked for the opportunity to speak to the Commission and highlighted the urgent need for Tajikistan to put adaptability at the forefront of its climate measures as the country is highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. She noted that gender mainstreaming should be a core component of the country's adaptability strategy. Ms. Kuvatova cited water management in particular as impacting gender equality calling for governance structures at all levels to be involved in gender-sensitive water management through holding dialogue with civil society. In this regard she acknowledged the important role of Women's Water Forums in Tajikistan to foster such dialogues.
9. **Ms. Makhabbat Yespenova, Executive Director of "KAMEDA" public foundation**, stressed the importance of the meeting since Central Asian countries are highly vulnerable to climate change. Ms. Yespenova, on behalf of the Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan called for revising and strengthening national and regional climate commitments in accordance with the recommendations made at the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 27). She asked to include gender and climate criteria into public planning, budgeting, and procurement systems to reduce overall CO2 emissions, urged for renewable energy and energy conservation legislation including at the local levels. and addressing issues of lack of accountability and insufficient funds. In the context of Kazakhstan's second voluntary national review on the Sustainable Developments Goals, Ms. Yespenova stressed the need to enhance capacities to study the linkage of gender issues and climate

change and to audit government programs with the aim to reduce burdens related to climate change. Ms. Yespenova further highlighted the necessity for increased efforts to improve socio-economic prospects of rural communities by the utilization of local resources particularly.

10. **Ms. Akjemal Durdyeva, Head of the Women's Union and the National Center of Trade Unions of Turkmenistan**, reiterated the importance of addressing adverse effects of climate change in Central Asia through a gender sensitive approach. She stressed the importance of direct mitigation and preventive measures in the context of natural disasters and the improvement of the socio-economic inclusion of women. Ms. Durdyeva noted the advancement of the WPS agenda in Central Asia and measures to address adverse effects of climate change and stressed that further advancement can be achieved by promoting women inclusive green economies. She also stressed the strong impact that civil society organisations have on promoting a gendered approach to mitigating climate and assuring the security of women and girls.

11. **Ms. Awa Dabo, Director and Deputy Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)**, thanked the women leaders of the CAWLC and the civil society representatives for their insights and experiences in women leadership within the implementation of the WPS agenda, and tackling adverse effects of climate change and the challenges that it poses to social cohesion and sustaining peace in Central Asia. The Deputy Head of the PBSO recognized the interlinkage of adverse effects of climate change and sustainable peacebuilding as well as their impact on women's security. Ms. Dabo highlighted a growing share of the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) supporting climate security focused projects. Overall, since 2017, 93% of the PBF's climate security related projects met or exceeded a target of 30% dedication to gender-sensitive programming. PBSO Deputy Head Dabo noted the office has commissioned an independent Thematic Review on Climate Security due to be published in April 2023. Ms. Dabo stated that since 2010, PBSO gender-sensitive programming in Central Asia is amounting to a total of US\$51.5 million in funding for national peacebuilding priorities in Kyrgyzstan. PBSO has supported projects in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and cross-border in the Tajik-Kyrgyz border lands promoting youth participation in local decision-making, shaping socio-economic perspectives, addressing the needs of migrant women and girls, as well as promoting equality in decision-making locally and in economic rights. The Deputy Head of PBSO once again offered the offices collaboration to the Governments of Central Asia and to civil society to tackle emerging fields of work like climate change.

12. Member states welcomed the briefings and expressed their support for developing a way forward with the lessons learned in the Member State's interventions:

- They recognized the threat that climate change poses to the security of women and girls and the implementation of the WPS agenda as an entry point to the mitigation of these threats.
- They recognized the increased risk of violence and socio-economic tensions that may be caused by adverse effects of climate change and welcome the mitigating

effect of regional cooperation through networks like the CALWC and its coordination with multilateral institutions and civil society.

- They commended the PBC as an essential organ of the UN system's peacebuilding architecture by providing a dialogue-based platform sharing lessons learned and exchanging experiences on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
 - They commended the geographical expansion of engagement of the PBC and specifically through thematic engagements like the meeting on WPS in the context of climate change in Central Asia.
 - They noted how the PBC can serve as a platform to enhance links between multilateral institutions like UNRCCS, UNDP and UN Women, national institutions, networks like the CALWCs and civil society to connect actors aiming to mitigate adverse effects of climate change.
 - The Commission welcomed the engagement of the CAWLC in its effort to bolster the support of regional women associations and networks, with a view to advancing women political, social and economic participation in Central Asia and encouraged the CALWC to continue its efforts to create more opportunities for women in the region.
 - They highlighted the opportunities that women's organizations present at the regional, national and grassroots level for integrated climate responses within the framework of national ownership enhancing practical skills through socio-economic development and education and encouraged multistakeholder collaboration among the Central Asian countries in this regard.
 - They noted the role of stable and safe border management in Central Asia as vulnerable groups close to borders are often hard to reach and directly impacted by adverse effects of climate change while also preventive measure addressing climate change can help ease tensions between countries.
 - They expressed willingness to further enhance its engagement with the Central Asian Region to support the implementation of the peacebuilding priorities of the region.
13. The Chair commended the work of the UNRCCA and the CALWC in raising awareness on the adverse effects of climate change on women and advancing women's leadership in combating those through various preventive measures at the national and regional level. He expressed his deep appreciation to the participating women leaders for sharing their work with the Commission and reiterated the commitment of the Commission to further utilize its platform to exchange knowledge, practices and ideas for advancing women peace and security agenda in diverse contexts and geographical settings.