

**Ambassadorial-level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on
Strengthening Linkages between Women, Peace and Security
and Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace**

2 October 2020

Chair's Summary

1. On 2 October, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held a virtual Ambassadorial-level meeting on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The meeting was convened by H.E Mr. Bob Rae, Chair of the PBC, who was accompanied by Canada's Ambassador for women, peace and security, Ms. Jacqueline O'Neill. In his opening remarks, the Chair informed that the purpose of the meeting was to consider concrete recommendations for the effective implementation of the PBC Gender Strategy, adopted in 2016. A review report on the implementation of the strategy¹, prepared by PBSO/DPPA and UN Women at the request of PBC members and with support from an independent expert, served as input to the discussion.
2. The Under-Secretary General (USG) for Peacebuilding and Political Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, acknowledged progress made since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 towards achieving meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes, while also noting that women's contributions remained outside the mainstream of formal efforts, and were too frequently undervalued. The USG highlighted recent initiatives to strengthen the gender responsiveness of UN peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts, including the launch of a new DPPA WPS policy and the updated Seven-Point Action plan of the Secretary-General on gender-responsive peacebuilding. She informed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, through use of digital tools, DPPA ensured that women's voices were included and amplified in virtual conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities and COVID-19 response planning and decision-making processes. She commended the PBC for its efforts to reduce the gap between the normative aspirations and implementation of the WPS agenda, including through its Gender Strategy. The USG stressed the need for dedicated funding for gender responsive peacebuilding, highlighting the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has allocated 40% and the DPPA Multi-Year Appeal has allocated 17% for that purpose. USG DiCarlo noted that the PBC serves as an important ally and advocate for the implementation of the WPS agenda and encouraged all members of the Commission to remain committed to the full implementation of the gender strategy.
3. The Deputy-Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Anita Bhatia, highlighted the importance of the PBC gender strategy in support of the WPS agenda, and reiterated continuous UN Women support for its successful implementation. She commended the long-standing partnership between UN Women and PBSO/DPPA and the outstanding contributions of the SG's Peacebuilding Fund for the promotion of gender equality. Ms. Bhatia however noted that the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges to the WPS agenda, exacerbating inequalities, particularly in three areas of health, income and security. Referencing data from

¹ Link to the PBSO-UN Women Review Report: <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/review-report-abc-gender-strategy-implementation>

the new COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker launched jointly with UNDP in September 2020, she informed that only one-fifth of the stimulus packages introduced by States to mitigate the impact of the pandemic contain gender elements. Dwindling economic resources have also disrupted the work of women peacebuilders and rights groups at the forefront of peacebuilding and conflict prevention and resolution. Ms. Bhatia questioned the stark contrast between military spending and investments in social protection systems, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. She called for global co-operation on this agenda, particularly to bring the international financial institutions (IFIs) to the table and leverage their investments. She stressed the need to make it a policy priority for women to have a seat at the table in fragile and conflict affected states.

4. The African Union (AU) Permanent Observer to the UN, H.E. Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, noted that in addition to the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and the 20th anniversary of SCR 1325 (2000), 2020 is also the year of the AU Silencing the Guns initiative. She noted that the review of the PBC Gender Strategy implementation coincides with the 2020 review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, offering an important opportunity to take stock of how the international community has translated WPS commitments into impactful actions, and to discuss recommendations on the way forward. She highlighted steps taken by the AU to embed the WPS agenda in its instruments, such as the Moputo Protocols and the AU Peace and Security architecture. She also noted that on 22nd September, the AUPSC adopted a common position on peacebuilding to guide the African States during the formal phase of the Peacebuilding Architecture Review, identifying WPS as a key priority. Recognizing the resilience displayed by women, despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Mohammed stressed that the WPS agenda should be an integral part of AU and UN efforts in support of sustaining peace.
5. The Head of Programs of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) – Nigeria, Ms. Patience Ikpeh Obaulo, presented the work of WANEP across 15 countries of West Africa, with emphasis on activities in Nigeria, where WANEP provided an organized platform for collaborative peacebuilding by indigenous non-governmental organizations. She explained that Nigeria has witnessed a surge in conflict, threatening its political stability, human security and development, and regretted the fact that women’s role in prevention and peacebuilding initiatives has been underutilized and undermined. WANEP-Nigeria, through implementation of the Women in Peacebuilding (WIPNET) program, supported a gender-based peacebuilding intervention in communities focused on promoting the implementation of SCR 1325 (2000). It also created an online survey to document incidences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) for referral and intervention, and supported a radio program focusing on COVID-19 pandemic from a gender perspective and its impact on gender-based violence in Nigeria. Ms. Obaulo called on the PBC to support: (i) Targeted funding for local women peacebuilders; (ii) Enactment and amendment of legislation to improve the situation of women in Nigeria, specifically that of internally displaced women; (iii) Provision of appropriate technologies and access to online platforms to peacebuilders to reach local communities and organizations, especially during COVID-19; (iv) Connection of the WPS agenda to other key issues such as access to land and economic development; (v) Comprehensive plan to stop the flow of small arms exacerbating SGBV; and (vi) Inclusion of socio-psychological perspectives in humanitarian responses in the post-COVID-19 era.

6. Representing “Plataforma de Mujeres Indígenas de Guatemala”, Ms. Irma Citalán pointed to how Guatemalan women – particularly indigenous women – have made groundbreaking contributions to the establishment and consolidation of inclusive and sustainable peace in the country since the 1996 Peace Accords. She noted that one of the key achievements was the efforts of The Abuelas ‘Grandmothers’ of Sepur Zarco, a group of Q’eqchi’ women peacebuilders who obtained a landmark transformative reparation sentence in 2016, and continued to advocate and monitor the implementation of the 18 reparation measures ruled in the sentence. UN Women and the PBF have actively supported the Grandmothers’ efforts, including by involving them as partners in their initiatives with the aim of strengthening their voices as relevant political actors. Noting women’s low participation in all aspects of life, particularly at the decision-making levels, and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women, Ms. Citalán made the following recommendations: (i) Ensuring the inclusion of indigenous peoples and indigenous women in the consultation mechanisms for all national processes which affect them; (ii) Promote collection of disaggregated data based on indigenous identity or ethnicity for development of evidence-based policies designed to address their needs; (iii) Encourage the UN to include indigenous people and indigenous women as partners and not just as beneficiaries and coordinate their programs directly with women organizations without intermediaries; (iv) Set financial targets to meet the needs of indigenous women and youth to create conditions to build back better and to foster sustainable development.
7. Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:
 - They recognized the PBC Gender Strategy as an effective tool to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda and welcomed the PBSO-UN Women review report as a helpful input to the discussion on the way forward for its effective implementation.
 - They expressed alarm at the spike in SGBV as a result of the pandemic and called for increased international action to prevent further exacerbation of gender inequalities in conflict-affected settings.
 - They stressed the need to ensure the full and meaningful participation of women in prevention, mediation and peacebuilding processes, and highlighted that the inclusion of grassroots women mediation networks, local and young women peacebuilders in these processes results in transformative changes and more stable and peaceful societies. In that respect, some recognized the complementarity between the WPS and the youth, peace and security agenda and called for increased support for young women and men in conflict affected settings so that they can fulfil their potential as agents of change.
 - They recommended that the PBC should use its convening power to further strengthen engagement with women peacebuilders. They noted that briefings need to reflect the diversity of women’s experiences and include women of diverse backgrounds, such as survivors of conflict and displacement, ex-combatants, businesswomen, entrepreneurs etc. They also called for more robust PBC follow-up action to proposals presented by women peacebuilders.

- They noted the importance of national action plans and regional frameworks in ensuring tailored and context-specific approaches for advancing WPS and committed to doing more in support of their implementation, particularly in the countries and regions under the consideration of the PBC.
- PBC members recognized the importance of dedicated and predictable financing for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, and welcomed the contributions of the Peacebuilding Fund to advance gender-responsive peacebuilding. They called for greater collaboration with IFIs and emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation in support of the WPS.
- Recognising that gender responsive peacebuilding requires sound disaggregated data and analysis, particularly in conflict affected settings, PBC members called for up to date gender-sensitive data from across the UN system to inform PBC deliberations.
- They underscored the need to duly consider gender dimensions in the PBC's exchanges with the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and in its partnerships with regional organizations, IFIs and other relevant stakeholders. They also stressed the need to ensure that PBC advice to the Security Council incorporates gender-specific analysis and distills relevant observations and recommendations that women peacebuilders bring to the attention of the PBC.
- They agreed to develop an action plan to ensure regular tracking of the implementation of the PBC Gender Strategy. Some members proposed convening an annual ambassadorial-level PBC meeting, separate from the annual WPS meeting, to follow up on progress in the implementation of the Strategy.