

Peacebuilding Commission
Ambassadorial-level meeting on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)
31 January 2024

Chair's Summary

On 31 January 2024, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting to discuss the needs and gaps in investing in women's full, equal and meaningful participation throughout the peace continuum and how the Commission could help to address the challenges. While recognizing the critical role played by women before, during and after conflict, the Commission acknowledged the recent setbacks in advancing the WPS agenda. A number of Member States provided suggestions on how the Commission could strengthen the implementation of its Gender Strategy and Action Plan.

1. On 31 January 2024, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović, convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting on the needs and gaps in investing in women's full, equal and meaningful participation throughout the peace continuum. The meeting provided, among other, an opportunity to identify how the international community, and the PBC specifically, can further support women's full equal and meaningful participation and leadership throughout the peace continuum at local, national, and regional levels.
2. In his opening remarks, **the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović**, underlined the crucial role of women in addressing root causes of conflict and advancing social cohesion at local, national and sub-national levels. Furthermore, he noted that gender sensitive solutions were essential for successful peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts. The Chair noted that despite women's significant contributions to peace processes, progress towards women's equal participation has been slow. In that regard, he informed that women represented only 16 per cent of conflict party delegations in 2023. He called on the international community to reverse the negative trend and to increase its support to ensure gender equality and women's full and meaningful participation throughout the peace continuum. He also recommended the Commission to increase the full, equal and meaningful participation of women peacebuilders in all PBC engagements.
3. **Ms. Sarah Hendricks, UN Women Deputy Executive Director a.i.** highlighted the threats and violence faced by women rights defenders and peacebuilders when carrying out their work on early warning, conflict prevention, resolution, and dialogue. She noted that support to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding requires setting ambitious and measurable targets for women's direct participation in delegations and negotiations, in line with international norms and standards. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of supporting women in political and public life and the achievement of gender parity in political representation, through the greater use of temporary special measures for women in conflict-affected settings, including reinforcing mechanisms to prevent violence against women in politics. She underscored the importance of investing and securing funding to ensure that women peacebuilders can carry out their work free from threats and intimidation, especially as the world witnesses an increase in scale and severity of ongoing attacks against women peacebuilders and human rights defenders.

3. **Dr. Sima Samar, Scholar of Tufts University**, noted the lack of implementation of the UN resolution 1325 as well as the absence of accountability within that framework. She continued by stating that many countries and regions have experienced backlashes against gender equality and women's rights and that the culture of impunity on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) continues. She gave practical examples on the lack of women's participation in peace processes, referring to the peace agreement in Afghanistan in which no women were actively involved or acknowledged. She underlined the importance of women's participation both in the peace talks and as signatories to peace agreements. She continued by highlighting the undeniable interlinkages between human rights, peace, security, and development and therefore stressed that it was paramount to protect human rights and gender equality to achieve sustainable peace and security. She also noted that patriarchal and cultural barriers continue to impede women's empowerment and equality, particularly in relation to peace and security. Within this context, she underlined the importance of access to quality education, justice and reproductive health as strong tools for women's empowerment.
4. **Ms. Teresa Curristine, Deputy Division Chief of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, emphasized the importance of gender budgeting as means to advance gender equality, including in reconstruction efforts in post-conflict contexts. She provided information on the gender budgeting approach and process, which applies gender lens to government expenditure policies and practices and budgetary tools. She underscored that gender budgeting helps to identify if government spending is helping to promote gender equality or unintentionally hindering gender equality and the opportunities for women in the society, and consequently helps to improve the design of policies and programs. As a result of gender budgeting, resource allocations and decision-making can be influenced, and it can provide accountability for government actions in gender equality. Furthermore, she underlined the importance of favorable political environment for gender equality as well as the role of the Finance Ministries to ensure that gender equality policies are linked to budget processes. Within this context, she noted that gender budgeting coverage is highly uneven among the G20 countries and beyond. She continued by informing of the key issues to gender budgeting, including coordination and technical challenges in implementing the budgets and policies and the lack of gender analysis and gender needs assessments. In this regard, she informed that the IMF continues to work on gender budgeting and in implementing its IMF Gender Strategy.
5. **Mrs. Ibrahima Mariama Alassane, the President of Réseau des Femmes pour la Paix/Women's Network for Peace (REFEPA)** informed of the work of REFEPA, including projects supported by the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) that has enabled women to prevent and manage conflicts and build social cohesion in Niger. She provided information on good practices, including advocacy and cooperation with customary and religious authorities to enable women to participate in conflict resolution processes; training and capacity-building of women on mediation and conflict management; and the provision of assistance and psychosocial support to victims of gender-based violence. She noted that through these initiatives, 59 conflict mediation sessions were held as well as 40 awareness raising sessions on the use of natural resources, radicalization, and violent extremism, as well as gender-based violence. She underscored the need to scale up these beneficial interventions and to bolster the visibility of the women mediators, including at national and international levels.

7. Ms. Dorothy Senatus, Executive Director of Fondation Voix Essentielles - Femmes en Démocratie (FED) noted Haiti's challenging socio-economic, political and security situation, and informed that almost half of the Haitian population i.e 5.2 million people (57 per cent of women and girls) required humanitarian assistance in 2023. Within this context, women play a prominent role in peace processes, as well as preventing and resolving crises and conflicts. She provided examples of Haitian women's organizations' work before, during and after conflict. Before conflict, women have carried out prevention activities in relation to the rule of law, democracy, human rights, and in particular, socio-economic empowerment. They have also held workshops to analyze the socio-political situation and alerted the national authorities on emerging issues. Women also carry out projects to strengthen the capacity and the leadership of women in socio-economic empowerment, including vocational training, as well as providing health care services through mobile clinics, and psychological and medical first aid training. She stressed the need to increase women's participation in peacebuilding at community level as well as to evaluate the impact of the actions carried out during crises to capitalize what has been achieved. She also highlighted the issue of confining women's participation to only certain areas such as health and education, and advocated instead that they should be also at the center of security-related matters.

8. Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, stressed the need for concrete action to ensure the meaningful participation of women across the peace continuum. She acknowledged the PBC's Gender Strategy and Action Plan as remarkable achievements and underlined that PBC was the first UN body to prepare a gender strategy. She stressed the need for continued efforts to translate the strategy into concrete actions. In that regard, she recommended more structured and systematic integration of gender perspectives across the work of the PBC, including strengthening gender analysis based on disaggregated data, as well as increasing the participation of women briefers. She informed that the PBF had exceeded its targets in support of gender equality and women's empowerment for the seventh year in a row - reaching 47 per cent of the Fund's investment. She provided examples of the Fund's concrete support to women's full, equal and meaningful participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and sustaining efforts in different regions. She reiterated the importance of adequate and sustained financing to support women's full, equal, and meaningful participation and gender responsive peacebuilding, stressing that increased support to governmental structures and civil society women's groups at all levels was critical.

9. Member States who took the floor welcomed the briefings and made the following points:

- The recognition of the critical leadership role played by women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, mediation, peacebuilding, humanitarian, and recovery efforts.
- That women remain excluded from a number of decision-making in peace, security, and post-conflict recovery processes.
- The need to prioritize the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making by adopting proactive measures to promote gender balance in recruitment, training and mentorship for women in peace and security roles.
- The importance of fully utilizing existing frameworks and tools to advance women's participation and leadership. For the case of the PBC – to implement its Gender Strategy

and Action Plan by providing gender-responsive advice to relevant UN bodies and by strengthening its engagement with women peacebuilders.

- That the PBC improve its ability to follow-up on the recommendations of its engagements, particularly made by women peacebuilders.
- The importance of removing structural barriers and fostering socio-economic conditions, including livelihood opportunities to enable women's participation throughout the peace continuum.
- The necessity of ensuring the human rights of women and preventing all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including by strengthening legal frameworks and improving access to justice.
- Strengthening the protection of women peacebuilders to secure a safe and enabling environment for their participation.
- Investing in women's access to capacity building, resource mobilization and decision-making including through adequate, sustainable, and predictable funding for women's organizations.
- The PBF was acknowledged for its work, including in exceeding its target in terms of allocation of resources to women's peacebuilding initiatives. A recommendation was made for the Fund to set even more ambitious targets.
- To fully integrate gender dimensions in all peacebuilding efforts, including in the design, implementation, and evaluation of peacebuilding programs and strategies, national prevention strategies and the mandates and transitions of the UN missions.
- To advance the WPS agenda and women's participation and leadership, the need to continue and strengthen the partnerships between regional and international organizations as well as financial institutions such the IMF, the World Bank Group, and the African Development Bank, as well as the private sector.

10. In his concluding remarks, **the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović**, underlined the need for joint and decisive action to stop the decline in terms of women participation in prevention, peacebuilding, and peace processes. He encouraged the PBC to continue reflecting on how the Commission can contribute to enhancing women's role throughout the peace continuum. He concluded by noting that the issue must be addressed in the context of the Summit of the Future and its outcome document as well as within the Peacebuilding Architecture Review in 2025.

Chair's recommendations

- For the PBC to strengthen the implementation of its Gender Strategy and Action Plan, including monitoring and measuring the impact of its engagements.
- For the PBC to enhance its cooperation with local and regional women-led organizations and networks to ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of women throughout the peace continuum.
- For the PBC to garner adequate and sustained financial support for women peacebuilders and women-led organizations at local, regional, and international levels.
- For the PBC to continue providing a platform for women peacebuilders to inform of the priorities and needs of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts, as well as to integrate their recommendations to the Commission's advisory to relevant UN bodies.