THE FEMINIST AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Theme: *Peaceful and inclusive societies*

Briefing Paper on" Peace and Security" by Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, CEO, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders

ISSUES

Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, armed conflict continues to be a key obstacle to the fulfilment of women's rights and gender equality. On the other hand, gender inequality remains as one of the key drivers of conflict. In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years.[1] The risk of nuclear conflict is growing as key treaties on nuclear disarmament are increasingly under threat, and nuclear competition among countries is intensifying.[2]

1. **Women's and youth's meaningful participation at all levels of peace negotiations and other peace and security processes**

Women and girls suffer disproportionately during armed conflict, as existing inequalities are magnified. They are more vulnerable to sexual- and gender-based violence, abuse. and exploitation. However, they are not passive victims. They play an active role in breaking cycles of violence through conflict resolution, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and sustaining peace.

The UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) places women's leadership and participation as central to conflict prevention and resolution efforts. Young women's important contributions in peacebuilding and conflict prevention—including prevention of violent extremism were underscored in UNSCR 2250 and 2419 on Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS).

There is ample evidence showing strong links between gender equality, women's participation, and the sustainability and quality of peace. For example, a study investigating 82 peace agreements in 42 armed conflicts between 1989 and 2011 found that peace agreements with women signatories are associated with durable peace. The same study also found that peace

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[1]Pathways for Peace: Inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict. World Bank Group. UN. Accessed from
https://olc.worldbank.org/system/files/Pathways%20for%20Peace%20Executive%20Summary.pdf on December 29, 2019.
[2]Kimball, D. The risk of nuclear war is increasing. Accesse from
http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/09/risk-nuclear-war-increasing/ on December 27, 2019.

agreements signed by women have a higher number of provisions aimed at political reform and a higher implementation rate of these provisions.[3]

Despite the evidence, women continue to be excluded from peace negotiations and from the implementation of the peace agreements. The signing of the peace agreement in Colombia, the revitalized peace agreement in South Sudan, and the reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea renewed hope around the world. However, the implementation of peace agreements remains slow. The exclusion of women from peace negotiations persist across the world, from Afghanistan to Ukraine, from Libya to Syria, and from Armenia to Yemen. It is not a surprise therefore that specific provisions on women and gender were almost universally absent from ceasefire and peace agreements resulting from UN-led or co-led processes in 2018[4].

2. **Conflict prevention, sustainable peace, gender equality, and women's empowerment are inextricably linked.**

Peace is the foundation of sustainable development and gender equality.[5] In the same manner, research shows that countries with higher levels of gender equality tend to have lower propensity for conflict. Still, military spending continues to increase, and far exceeds social spending and investment in conflict prevention, gender equality, and sustaining peace. In 2018, world military expenditure has grown to $1.8 trillion representing an increase of 2.6 percent from 2017. In contrast, the political support and investment in peacebuilding and conflict prevention is very inadequate. It is estimated that the annual expenditure on peacebuilding in 2016 was equivalent to less than 1% of the global cost of war that year.[6]

The UN and the rest of the international community should invest more in "collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace", in line with its preventative role enshrined in its Charter, instead of spending billions of dollars on intervention when crises have already escalated. It is important to note that prevention and mediation will not

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[3] Krause, J. Krause, W & Bränfors, P. (2018). Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace, International Interactions, 44:6, 985-1016, DOI: 10.1080/03050629.2018.1492386.

[4] Joint NGO Open Letter to Permanent Representatives to the United Nations: Recommendations on the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security. October 2019.

[5] See, for example: Gates, S. et al., "Development consequences of armed conflict", *World Development,* Vol. 40, No. 9, September 2012; Stewart, F., "Conflict and the Millennium Development Goals", *Journal of Human Development,* Vol. 4, No. 3, 2003.; Denney L., "Security: The missing bottom of the Millennium Development Goals? Prospects for inclusion in the post-MDG development framework", Overseas Development Institute, August 2012.

[6] The Guardian. Military spending or investment in peace? Accessed from: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/24/military-spending-or-investment-in-peace on December 28, 2019.

succeed without women's and youth's participation; and without broader, combined political efforts by all member States in partnership with civil society.

Conflict prevention entails short-term, mid-term, and long-term approaches such as identification and response to early warning signs of conflict, curbing the flow of small arms, nuclear disarmament, and addressing the root causes of conflict such as exclusion, discrimination, human rights violations, and inequalities—including gender inequality. The WPS resolutions stress that women and girls' rights and gender equality are critical to conflict prevention.

3. **Addressing sexual and gender-based violence and guaranteeing human rights of all women and girls before, during, and after conflict.**

Despite the increased attention of the international community to sexual violence in conflict, the crime remains widespread, and accountability for it weak. The 2019 UN Secretary-General's report on WPS concludes that over 50 parties to conflict are credibly suspected of committing sexual violence; and that at least 1 in 5 refugee or displaced women experience sexual violence.[7] There are also numerous examples of the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. In South Sudan, women and girls were raped by allied militias as part of a campaign to drive opponents out of southern Unity States. In Tanganyika Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, warring Twa and Luba militias violated women, girls and boys from each other's ethnic communities as a means of repression, terror, and control. In the Syrian Arab Republic and Burundi, armed actors gang-raped and sexually humiliated detainees perceived as political opponents.[8]

Women and girls affected by conflict, including victims of sexual violence, often have limited access to justice, livelihoods, education, and healthcare. The ability of victims to access justice is frequently hindered by stigma, fear of reprisal, rejection by their families and communities, and lack of confidence in judicial and non-judicial responses. Limited capacities for investigating conflict-related sexual violence, paired with frequently deep-rooted gender biases against women and girls, can also impede the effectiveness and sensitivity of investigative and judicial authorities.[9]

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[7] Report of the UN Secretary-General on women and peace and security. S-2019-800. 09 October 2019.Accessed from
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Report%20of%20the%20Secretary-General%20on%20women%20and%20peace%20and%20security%20%28S-2019-800%29.pdf
 on December 24, 2019.

[8] Report of the UN Secretary-General on Conflict- Related Sexual Violence. S/2019/280. 29 March 2019. Accessed from https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/report/s-2019-280/Annual-report-2018.pdf on December 24, 2019.

[9] Ibid.

Victims also lack access to basic services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare. In times of violent conflict, particularly when rape is used as a weapon of war, sexual and reproductive health services are not an option. It is a life-saving necessity. The full scope of the rights of all women and girls, including sexual and reproductive rights, must be protected in crisis.

Women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and women peacebuilders continue to be under attack. Data published by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project in May 2019 revealed that the political violence targeting women "has grown in recent years, currently reaching some of the highest levels ever recorded."[10] Member States must ensure WHRDs' safety and protection from reprisals, including for cooperating with UN bodies, and speaking out publicly against such attacks.

The protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence is inseparable from women's meaningful participation, bodily autonomy and rights. Ensuring accountability for violations of fundamental human rights is necessary in order to prevent relapse into conflict. The 20th anniversary of the adoption of Resolution 1325 (2000) should reinforce the commitment of all actors to advance the WPS agenda as a whole, defend the full scope of women's rights, and galvanize action to address gaps.

BREAKING SILOS Give examples of how your issues is linked to all themes below. Please highlight human rights and specific subgroups(intersectional) affected.

1. **Inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work**

The consequences of armed conflict extend far beyond deaths and injuries on the battlefront. Conflict damages social, political, and economic institutions and sets back development efforts by several generations. In Yemen for example, a 2019 study commissioned by UNDP revealed that if the armed conflict continues until 2030, "the share of the population living in poverty will increase by 63 percent; the economic activity by US $660 billion, or over 18 times the size of the economy before the escalation of conflict in 2015."[11]

The economic consequences of conflict tend to disproportionately affect women. In fragile and conflict-affected countries, only 4 out of 10 women are in paid work, compared with 7 out of 10 men. The gap is bigger in countries experiencing protracted conflict. In Afghanistan, there is a 60-percentage-point gap between male and female employment rates, and gaps of over 50

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[10] Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). New data confirm political violence targeting women is on the rise, 28 May 2019. Accessed from https://www.acleddata.com/2019/05/28/press-release-new-data-confirm-political-violence-targeting-women-is-on-the-rise/ on January 02, 2020.
[11] UNDP. Assessing the impact of war on development in Yemen. Accessed from https://www.undp.org/content/dam/yemen/General/Docs/ImpactOfWarOnDevelopmentInYemen.pdf on December 26, 2019.

percentage points in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Women are forced out of work by sexual harassment, lack of safety and poor labor standards in the workplace, inadequate social protections, and unpaid care work. New data also show that nearly 40 percent of economies limit women's property rights and nearly 30 per cent of economies restrict women's freedom of movement, thereby increasing women's vulnerability in general, but particularly in conflict-affected settings.[12]

Peace is necessary to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. Investing in women's economic empowerment including employment opportunities for women and equitable access to resources is a conflict prevention strategy.[13] It is an absolute necessity in both developing and developed countries; in countries affected by conflict and those that enjoy relative peace. **When more women work, economies grow and peace lasts.**

2. **Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services**

Conflict aggravates poverty as it results to massive displacement, forced migration, long-term and wide scale refugee crises, and the destruction of infrastructure and private property. It also worsens discrimination against women in terms of access to assets and productive resources, such as land, property, and inheritance, credit, technology and banking services, and the lack of decent work. This violates women's human rights and leaves them vulnerable to extreme poverty and gender-based violence. Illicit economies that profit from and fuel conflict also exploit and violate the rights of women, young women and girls, including through human trafficking.

Women's economic empowerment contributes to the effectiveness of post-conflict relief and recovery. However, many economic empowerment initiatives are short-term and temporary and fail to generate long-term impact. Economic exclusion and the failure to promote the economic rights of women, including disabled women, widows and female heads of households, are often rooted in harmful social mores that require long-term, transformative change. Awareness-raising does not suffice, nor do small-scale initiatives that focus solely on livelihoods, the number of which has also declined. In 2018, the total number and ratio of female temporary employment beneficiaries in early economic recovery programs delivered by UNDP decreased to 1.2 million (32 percent of total beneficiaries, compared with 36 percent the year before).

3. **Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes**

It is vital that the specific challenges facing young women, migrant and refugee women and girls, women and girls with disabilities, indigenous women and girls, people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics, and older women in conflict-

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[12] World Bank. Women, business and the law 2019: A decade of reform. As cited in the 2019 report of the UN Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security. Accessed from https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/800 on December 28, 2019.
[13] Ibid.

affected situations are fully integrated into policies that address all forms of violence against women and girls, stigma, and stereotypes.

Violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism undercuts peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development. A common thread among violent extremist groups around the world is that their violent acts include attacks on women and girls' rights to education, to public life, to decision-making over their own bodies, and increasingly, sexual violence.

A persistent challenge in preventing violent extremism and counter terrorism efforts is that they overlook the broad spectrum of roles that women play in both preventing and participating in violent extremism. The WPS and YPS agenda provide a framework for a de-militarized and preventive response to terrorism and violent extremism.

4. **Participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions**

Women's political participation and their participation in peace processes are inextricable. Each one reinforces the other. Deep-seated political, economic, and social inequalities and discriminatory practices are major barriers to women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding. Women's absence in formal peace negotiations often results in their underrepresentation or absence in formal political leadership and decision-making positions. The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders' research on women's perspectives on Sustaining Peace found that political and economic exclusion of women and the fact that they are perceived as "non-political beings" prevents their meaningful participation in peace processes. It recommends that the Sustaining Peace agenda should focus on long-term transformative changes, such as supporting inclusive and accountable institutions, fostering a culture of peace and challenging militarized response to conflict, implementing sustainable development programs, and guaranteeing access to education and employment.[14]

Violence against women participating in or seeking to participate in politics is a major barrier to participation, and is often worsened in the context of conflict. It is pervasive and often perpetrated publicly with impunity. During elections in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years, women candidates faced intimidation, online harassment, and direct targeting of their campaign events. Female candidates and their families are also at heightened risk of kidnapping and murder. Despite such serious risks to their lives, women continue to defy such violence. In Iraq, 2,000 women ran for office and won 84 of the parliamentary seats (25.5 per cent) in 2018. In

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[14] Fal Dutra Santos Agnieszka et al., "Building and Sustaining Peace from the Ground Up: A global study of civil society and local women's perception of sustaining peace," Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, (2019), https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/GNWPReport_24october_4web-1.pdf

Afghanistan, 391 women ran for the Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) in October 2018. Despite persistent security threats, women made up 15 percent of the candidates.[15]

5. **Peaceful and inclusive societies**

The Women, Peace, and Security and Youth, Peace, and Security agenda are essential to the attainment of peaceful and inclusive societies. Please see the rest of the text under this section on Breaking Silos for analysis on how peace and security intersect with the other themes of Beijing +25.

6. **Environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation**

Climate change aggravates conflict and insecurity[16] – therefore, environmental conservation is an important conflict prevention strategy. The 2015 Global Study on UNSCR 1325 drew attention to climate change and natural resource scarcity as two of the emerging themes that are at the core of the WPS agenda's approach to conflict prevention.[17] The global threat of climate change and environmental degradation can negatively affect farming, livestock production, reduce fish and marine production, and damage economies overall.

Conflict-affected women and communities around the world identify access to resources – including land and water – as one of the main sources of conflict.[18] The scarcity of resources such as farmable land and water is aggravated by climate change, which in turn leads to more competition over resources, including violence. For example, in South Sudan localized conflicts between farmers and herders over access to water wells have been exacerbated by floods and droughts.[19] Poor harvests exacerbated by extreme weather conditions can also push people to

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[15] Report of the UN Secretary-General on Conflict- Related Sexual Violence. S/2019/280. 29 March 2019. Accessed from https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/report/s-2019-280/Annual-report-2018.pdf on December 24, 2019.

[16] Ryan, D. Stanford-led study investigates how much climate change affects the risk of armed conflict. Accessed from https://news.stanford.edu/2019/06/12/climate-change-cause-armed-conflict/ on December 28, 2019.

[17] Coomaraswamy, R. Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325. UN-Women, 2015. Accessed from https://wps.unwomen.org/ on December 28, 2019.

[18] See, for example, Fal Dutra Santos Agnieszka et al., "Building and Sustaining Peace from the Ground Up: A global study of civil society and local women's perception of sustaining peace," Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, (2019), https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/GNWPReport_24october_4web-1.pdf

[19] Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED), "Building Climate Resilience in Fragile Contexts: Key Findings of BRACED Research in South Sudan", February 2018. Available at: https://www.concern.net/insights/building-climate-resilience-fragile-contexts.

joining militia groups.[20] This was highlighted by participants in GNWP's research on women's perspectives on Sustaining Peace in Bangladesh, Burundi and South Sudan, who noted that unsustainable use of resources and economic impacts of climate change (such as worsening crops) are among the primary root causes of conflict and violence in their communities.[21]

Despite limited availability of data, experts also agree that climate has affected organized conflict in recent years[22], and that while direct relationship is difficult to capture, there are indirect links between climate change and peace and security.[23] There is therefore an urgent need for better analysis and concrete, immediate actions to address the linkages between climate change and violent conflicts from a gender perspective.

ACTIONS What are the top actions that would make an impact across 6 themes? For governments? private sector? civil society?

1. Governments, donors, and the private sector: Increase and make predictable the funding for women's rights organizations, particularly those that work in local communities affected by violent conflicts. Ensure that funding support for the implementation of gender equality and WPS resolutions is provided to civil society, as well as governments as needed.
2. Governments: Ratify and implement the Arms Trade Treaty fully and effectively.
3. Governments: Prioritize conflict prevention in domestic and foreign policies and overseas development aid, and adopt peacebuilding and sustaining peace approaches that are gender-responsive and focus on long-term goals.
4. Governments, the UN, and regional organizations: Ensure the gender responsiveness of political institutions and facilitate women's access to opportunities to exercise their political rights, participate in decision-making, exercise leadership, and contribute to peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development processes.
5. Governments, the UN, and regional organizations: Guarantee women's and youth's meaningful participation in peace negotiations, implementation of peace agreements, and all peace and security processes and political decision-making. This entails making

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[20] Adela Suliman, "Conflict and climate change in South Sudan", Thomson Reuters Foundation-BRACED, 21 February 2018. Available at: https://www.climatecentre.org/news/962/conflict-and-climate-change-in-south-sudan

[21] Fal Dutra Santos Agnieszka et al., "Building and Sustaining Peace from the Ground Up: A global study of civil society and local women's perception of sustaining peace," Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, (2019), https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/GNWPReport_24october_4web-1.pdf

[22] Stanford News, "Stanford-led study investigates how much climate change affects the risk of armed conflict", 12 June 2019. Available at: https://news.stanford.edu/2019/06/12/climate-change-cause-armed-conflict/.

[23] Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), "The relationship between climate change and violent conflict", 2017. Available at: sida.se/contentassets/c571800e01e448ac9dce2d097ba125a1/working-paper---climate-change-and-conflict.pdf.

sure that gender-sensitive provisions and language proposed by women are included in the final peace agreement.

6. Governments and the UN: Ensure full accountability for sexual and gender-based violence, including in the context of conflict and post-conflict, through establishing clear, transparent, and accessible reporting and accountability mechanisms.
7. Governments, donors, and the private sector: Prioritize the provision of sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular in times of crisis.
8. Governments: Ensure safety of all civil society, including women human rights defenders and women peace builders, LGBTI+ people, indigenous people and land activists, and take measures to prevent the shrinking civil society space.
9. Governments, donors, and the private sector: Invite women civil society to participate in donor conferences, to enable them to meaningfully contribute to shaping donor priorities.

POLICY AND LEGAL DEFENSE What are the most important UN policy documents and human rights treaties to support these actions? Specify recommendations and text as adopted (e.g. CEDAW articles and General Recommendations).

- UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the 9 supporting resolutions on WPS: UNSCRs 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).
- UNSCR 2250 and 2419 on YPS
- UNSCR 2282 (2016) and UN General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (2016(on Sustaining Peace
- CEDAW General Recommendation 30 on Women in Conflict prevention, Conflict and Post-conflict Situations
- SDG 16
- Arms Trade Treaty