JOINT EU-UN WORKSHOP ON PROMOTING WOMEN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN PEACE OPERATIONS, CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND PEACE PROCESSES: ENABLING FACTORS AND GOOD PRACTICES

Organised by the European Union External Action Service, the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the United Nations Department of Peace Operations, with the support of the European Union Institute for Security Studies, the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZiF), the Folke Bernadotte Academy, Australia, Canada, Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands, on 21 November, 2019, at the EU headquarters in Brussels.[1]

Summary Report

1. A joint EU-UN Workshop brought together representatives of **EU and UN Member States as well as practitioners and experts**,[2] with the aim of arriving at **concrete and actionable recommendations** on *Promoting Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Operations, Crisis Management and Peace Processes*, for the EU, the UN and their Member States. These recommendations are **included in this Summary Report**.

2. There was broad agreement among the participants that effective promotion of women's meaningful participation, whether as personnel in crisis management and peace operations or as participants in peace and political processes, requires **tackling the structural, social and political barriers** impeding women's participation. These barriers must be systematically assessed in order to set clear and measurable targets and to develop concrete, context-specific roadmaps for ways to overcome them. Participants stressed the importance of **strategic prioritisation and**

---

[1] The Workshop was organised within the framework of the 2019-2021 priorities to reinforce the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management and agreed during the 25th UN-EU Steering Committee on Crisis Management held on 26 April 2019, in New York.

[2] Speakers included women mission leaders and gender advisers from EU and UN missions, women peacekeepers from Australia, Fiji, Namibia, South Africa, Solomon Islands and Vietnam, a member of the Swedish Women's Mediation Network, a representative from the Office of the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, senior academics and civil society leaders.

mainstreaming of the Women, Peace and Security agenda across all areas of work, including through **policies with accompanying action plans**. There was consensus that **harmful gender stereotypes must be addressed** and that men must be part of all these efforts. In the current international environment, characterised by increasing scepticism towards multilateralism and pushback against gender equality and women's empowerment, the EU and the UN, in close partnership with other international and regional organisations, must remain resolute in their efforts to promote the international normative frameworks, which recognise women's rights and meaningful participation in crisis management, peace operations and in peace and political processes.

3. With regard to women's participation in crisis management and peace operations, the discussions emphasised **the need to remove barriers that impede women from pursuing and accessing a variety of positions in peace and crisis management missions. A more enabling environment must be created within missions** for women to feel that they have equal opportunities to carry out their duties and that their contributions are welcomed and valued on an equal basis with that of their male counterparts and that entities can recruit, retain and promote women. Concerning the removal of hurdles, participants shared good practices and lessons learned, such as **developing workforce and deployment flexibility, assessing and reforming service criteria** to remove biases in favour of men (and against women), and **adopting gender-sensitive recruitment strategies that target women and generally aim at increasing diversity**. The importance of creating a mission environment conducive to both women and men was underlined. Central to this is **eradicating all forms of sexual and gender-based violence including sexual harassment within missions** as well as sexual exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, the necessity of considering women's **practical needs with regard to facilities and equipment**, rather than assuming that only men are being deployed, was underlined. Strengthening **gender mainstreaming in training** – both at the national and international levels – coupled with solid and transparent accountability mechanisms was seen as pivotal. The importance of strong leadership for change that would bring the values of gender equality and women's empowerment to the forefront was stressed. Finally, more visible **role models and high profile positions for women from different backgrounds to encourage and normalise women's participation** was seen as critical, with numerous participants noting that "you cannot be what you cannot see".

4. Concerning women's participation in peace and political processes, participants emphasised the importance of **enabling women's active participation throughout the conflict cycle**, from conflict prevention and mitigation, to formal and informal peace talks (i.e. talks at all track levels), through to the implementation phase of peace agreements and beyond. Despite the success of women's movements and women's efforts, ensuring that women are **decision-makers, negotiators and mediators, particularly in track I processes/formal peace processes remains a major challenge**. To this end, participants emphasised the **critical role of the EU and the UN** (and other regional organisations such as the African Union) **in facilitating and supporting the access of women and women's organisations and networks** to national and international decision-making arenas. It was highlighted that overcoming resistance to inclusive

talks and women's meaningful participation requires strong and gender-responsive leadership and creativity, taking into account country- and conflict-specific contexts. Moreover, participants emphasised that **women's networks and organisations need adequate support and resources to sustain their efforts and to be able to play an active role in peacemaking and peacebuilding**. Simultaneously, **local-level peace processes** in which women often play key roles as peacemakers and peacebuilders should be better leveraged and widely publicised and reported. It was recognised that in all these efforts it is important to be attentive to the specific needs and circumstances of women affected by conflict.

Key conclusions and recommendations

5. There was a shared understanding among the participants that promoting women's meaningful participation in all peace and security areas is ultimately a question **of equality and fundamental human rights**: women have an equal right to participate and be part of all processes that concern them. There was a consensus that gender parity does not equal gender equality and that the presence of more women does not automatically make a mission or a process more gender-responsive. It is essential that women have equal access to different roles and that women are respected within these roles. A **transformation of attitudes** towards women is required. Three general observations recurred throughout the day.

6. First, there was an awareness of the need to better acknowledge both the common challenges and threats that women face (e.g. marginalisation, gender-based violence) as well as **women's diverse roles and backgrounds**. Women have a variety of experiences, needs, interests and capacities and should not be seen as a homogenous group. The diversity of women's roles in peace and conflict highlights the need to promote women's participation, as well as their leadership, in a manner that recognises women in their multiplicity. Second, the discussions brought to the fore concerns about instrumentalisation and marginalisation of women, both in peace and security institutions and in power-sharing. Third, participants emphasised the need to **further deepen multilateral cooperation and efforts** to promote women's participation in peace processes. Better coordination is needed to on the one hand ensure and sustain women's meaningful participation at all levels and throughout all stages of peace processes, and on the other, to demonstrate international consensus to do so. To these ends, the continuation and further development of comprehensive EU-UN cooperation on Women, Peace and Security was considered pivotal.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	Ensure **more systematic, strategic and focused exchanges, within existing regional and international structures, of best practices and lessons learned** among and between international organisations and member states **on how to improve women's representation and participation** at all levels and stages of peace operations, crisis management and peace processes.
2	Enforce the Women, Peace and Security agenda as a core component of peace operations, crisis management and all activities related to peace and political processes by **integrating the WPS agenda in all documents and strategies through the systematic use of gender analysis and the integration of a gender perspective, as well as institutionalising and strengthening the role of gender advisors.**
	Women in Peace Operations and Crisis Management
3	Conduct **thorough and systematic context-specific barrier assessments** at all levels to inform the development of **targeted measures** that address different obstacles preventing women's meaningful participation, paying **particular attention to gender stereotypes and biases in mission environments** (e.g. mission infrastructure, equipment, attitudes, etc).
4	Review **recruitment processes and criteria** for international missions and national security forces from a gender perspective and **adopt measures to abolish systematic bias against women**. Foster diversity in recruitment, actively recruit women for positions traditionally not considered for women, pro-actively counteract narratives that raise expectations that women (and men) perform certain tasks and act in certain ways because of their gender. Make physical standards specific to what is actually needed in each role.
5	**Set clear and transparent targets** for gender equality and parity, and **consistently follow up on implementation**, including through diplomacy and high-level visits, **holding leadership accountable** for performing in this area (rather than making this responsibility the prerogative of gender advisors or women staff).
6	**Promote women's leadership and ensure women leaders are visible** through **media campaigns and awareness-raising work** in order to normalise the idea of women holding these roles and to provide role models for women and girls.
7	Invest in **enhanced** (and more transparent) **data collection, research and conflict analysis with an integrated gender perspective**, specifically aiming towards more gender-responsive policies and effective interventions.
8	Invest in and prioritise **gender awareness and Women, Peace and Security training** for all staff and personnel, **including mission leadership**.
	Women in Peace and Political Processes
9	**Actively and consistently advocate from the outset for women's participation in all stages and tracks** of peace processes in all forums.

10	Include **gender equality and the promotion of women's participation in Terms of Reference** for lead mediators and all staff involved in peace and political processes.
11	Increase sustainable, longer-term and coordinated **funding for diverse women's networks and civil society organisations.** Consider establishing **mechanisms to fast-track funds to local women's organisations to directly support their participation** in peace and political processes.
12	Create and support **mechanisms and strategies to** increase the influence of women's organisations and networks, support the creation of women's coalitions, and **facilitate opportunities for them to present their recommendations and priorities to those leading political and peace processes**.
13	Include **provisions in peace agreements to ensure women's representation** in government institutions, political and electoral processes and in the implementation mechanisms of the agreement.
14	**Recognise the diversity among women and their experiences** when planning and implementing programmes. Support the engagement of women of all ages, including women ex-combatants and marginalised women, so that they can meaningfully participate in, and access to, decision-making.
15	For **mediators**: push for **quotas** for women's representations and develop other **strategies and tools**, such as codes of conduct that apply to all participants **to work towards the elimination of gender-based discrimination, violence and intimidation**.
16	**Invest in gender responsive programming** through budgeting and results frameworks, and require monitoring and reporting on progress.
17	**Facilitate contacts and mentoring** between local, national and international women's groups and networks.
18	**Invest in and support gender responsive analysis and research** on women's participation for evidence-based and informed policy-making.