



Community  
of Democracies



# Summary Report

Community of Democracies' Engagement  
in the World Forum for Democracy

November 2018

Strasbourg, France

This summary report was developed by the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies (PSCD). PSCD's publications are independent of specific national or political interests. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the PSCD or the views of the Governing Council member states of the Community of Democracies.

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Published online in December 2018.

# Contents

Community's satellite event

on "Building Sustainable Peace: The Importance of Women's Inclusion" .....5

    Introduction .....5

    Panelists.....6

    Opening Address by the CoD's Secretary General .....8

    Summary of the panel discussion ..... 10

WFD's roundtable discussion

on "Has Democracy failed women? New democratic practices and women's participation" ..... 12

About the organizers ..... 14

CoD and gender equality..... 15





5 RUSSIAN    РУССЕ

6 SPANISH    ESPAÑOL

# Introduction

## Community of Democracies' satellite event on "Building Sustainable Peace: The Importance of Women's Inclusion"

Achieving sustainable peace entails "preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict by addressing its root causes, working towards national reconciliation, and promoting recovery, reconstruction, and development". Doing so effectively requires engaging all segments of the population such that peace becomes a shared task and responsibility, supported by civil society, governments, and international institutions. While traditionally excluded from peacebuilding processes, women are essential participants for ensuring lasting peace.

Data from UN Women finds, for example, that when women are included in peace processes there is a 20 percent increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least two years and a 35 percent increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 15 years. A study by Inclusive Security observes that countries are more likely to be peaceful at the international level when women are empowered in multiple spheres. Efforts to advance women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding are supported by a large international framework of resolutions and agreements since UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (2000), including UNSCR 1889 (2009) and 2122 (2013).

However, the implementation progress has been limited and the world still has a distance to go in fully unleashing the potential and power of women in building and sustaining peace, especially in countries most affected by violent conflict. Due to prevailing gender norms, women are often not perceived as having skills, knowledge, or social status to bring about change in post-conflict environments. Yet countries around the world also provide important examples of innovative initiatives to engage women and bring their views and contributions to bear on building a lasting peace.

Aiming to explore the role of women in peacebuilding processes, specifically women's inclusion in the development of strategies for sustaining peace, the Community of Democracies (CoD) organized a satellite event on "Building Sustainable Peace: The Importance of Women's Inclusion". The event, held on the margins of the World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg, France, addressed good practices for advancing women's participation in sustaining peace and discussed the achievements of women in contributing to peacebuilding.

More specifically, the discussion was shaped around women's involvement in post-conflict resolution processes, e.g. peace talks, transitional justice, mediation, women's organizing at the grassroots level, to promote national conciliation and empower women at the local level. The implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and women's engagement in sustaining peace within political bodies lay at the center of the conversation.

The panel was carried out in the framework of a newly-launched "Engaging Women in Sustainable Peace (EWSP)" project, kindly funded by the Republic of Korea. The project seeks to contribute to the international debate on women in the peace and security dialogue by inferring consolidated best practices from case studies. Additionally, the initiative aims to assess women's beneficial inclusion in peace processes through a global perspective that embraces case studies from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

The outcome of the discussion will serve as input for the publication to be developed by the Community under the EWSP project. The publication will include case studies on how women are effectively involved in building sustainable peace and present recommendations on how government agencies and civil society organizations can develop strategies to ensure an inclusive approach to peacebuilding and peacemaking.

<sup>1</sup>Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, General Assembly (A/RES/70/262), 27 April 2016



# Panelists

Community of Democracies' satellite event on "Building Sustainable Peace: The Importance of Women's Inclusion"



## Opening Address

**Thomas E. Garrett**

**Secretary General of the CoD**

Mr. Garrett has worked in the field of politics and advocacy for more than three decades. He directly led more than 325 training programs on topics related to political participation, especially focused on women, youth and marginalized groups. Mr. Garrett has worked on election observation missions in Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Mali, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and Ukraine.



## Moderator

**Mona Lena Krook**

Professor of Political Science and Chair of the Women and Politics Ph.D. Program at Rutgers University.

Ms. Krook earned her Ph.D. from Columbia University. Her interests include democratization and good governance, gender and electoral politics, electoral gender quotas, candidate selection, political representation, political parties, and qualitative methods. Among her many publications include: *Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform Worldwide* (Oxford University Press 2009) and *The Impact of Gender Quotas* (Oxford University Press, 2012).



### **Lana Ackar**

**Gender Officer, OSCE, ODIHR**

Ms. Ackar has been working on advancing women's rights and gender equality for the past ten years. She started her legal career in a women's rights NGO in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During her time with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lana worked in the area of human rights and non-discrimination specializing in gender equality. Lana joined the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in 2014. She also coordinated the ODIHR Working Group in charge of drafting ODIHR's first 2016-2018 Gender Mainstreaming Roadmap.



### **Annika Schabbauer**

**Director, Operation 1325**

Ms. Schabbauer has worked with organizational and competence development for women's leadership in South Africa and Uganda in development cooperation. Before that she lived and worked in the West Bank. She has a master's degree in modern standard Arabic from Lund's University and civil society organizations from Färnebo college with Women for Peace. Methods to contribute to sustainable peace in the interpersonal as well as international level have been her professional focus.



### **Sawsan Zakzak**

**Coordination Committee Member, Syrian Women's League (SWL)**

Ms. Zakzak holds a bachelor's degree in Arabic Literature, and joined SWL in 1990. She worked as a member in the Research team of SWL on topics related to Syria (Unpaid Job of Women, GBV in the Armed Conflict). Sawsan was Gender Sector Coordinator in the National Agenda for Future of Syria. In 2017, She was elected as General Secretary for Syrian Women for Peace and Democracy Initiative. Later, she was elected as the General Coordinator for the Syrian Women Gathering for Democracy. She is now a member in the Women Advisory Council.

# Opening Address

by Mr. Thomas E. Garrett, Secretary General of the Community of Democracies

From the moment of its inception in 2000, the CoD has been actively supporting activities dedicated to women's empowerment and gender equality. The most recent example of its commitment to these topics, is a project on "Engaging Women in Sustainable Peace (EWSP)". In the framework of this project, earlier this year in June, the Community held a policy session on "Women: A Powerful Force for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism" at the Women Political Leaders Forum 2018 in Vilnius, Lithuania. Engaging representatives from NATO, OSCE, Women in International Security and European External Action Service, the session addressed the importance of gender inclusion in preventing and countering violent extremism as well as good practices for improving women's political participation in this regard. A summary report including speakers' recommendations to policy-makers, was produced and shared with stakeholders.

Today's panel discussion serves as an opportunity to bring together distinguished speakers from international and non-governmental organizations as well as governmental officials and representatives of academia to discuss the role of women in sustaining peace. Advancing women's political participation has been a key focus of the international agenda since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the UN General Assembly in 1979. Improving women's participation specifically in peacebuilding became part of the agenda in 2000 with the UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and has been reemphasized in numerous international resolutions and agreements. This international commitment to advancing the participation of women in peacebuilding is strongly supported by research. Evidence shows that peacebuilding and reconciliation processes have higher rates of success, and more likely to last, when women are meaningfully involved. A study of 40 peace processes in 35 countries over three decades showed that when women's groups were able to effectively influence a peace process, an agreement was always reached. Additionally, an analysis of 182 peace agreements signed between 1989 and 2011 showed that a peace agreement is 20 percent more likely to last at least two years and 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women are guaranteed meaningful participation.

It is clear from research that far more needs to be done to advance women's participation in sustaining peace and to track the achievements of women and women's organizations in contributing to peacebuilding - not merely to uphold international commitments, but to safeguard both international security and the security of women.

At the Community of Democracies, we are truly committed to expanding inclusive participation in democratic processes, particularly with respect to expanding the political participation for women, youth, and minority groups. Subsequently, we will continue to work on advancing the political empowerment of women by enhancing dialogue between governments and civil society.





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# Summary of the panel discussion

## Community of Democracies' satellite event on "Building Sustainable Peace: The Importance of Women's Inclusion"

Discussing the active role that women play in contributing to peacebuilding, the panel highlighted the importance of exploring good practices that can advance women's political participation and empowerment. The speakers underlined how crucial it is to ensure women's meaningful political participation. By evaluating gender quotas as a starting point for inclusion of women, the session stressed how gender parity does not represent the ending phase of the process, but rather a contribution to achieving real power-sharing.

The event began by stating that sustainable peace requires democracy and builds on women's participation: "democracy provides avenues to prevent and manage conflicts peacefully by allowing different voices to chime in on public debate".

The speakers said, gender parity in peace processes represents only the first step towards full women's inclusion, but there is a need to provide them with the possibility to participate in transitional justice and mediation. Parity in negotiations, operations and positions among the security sector must be accompanied by universal gender-sensitivity and gender analysis for meaningful participation. When addressing this issue, some panelists advised to distinguish between stable regimes and post-conflict nations; as certain historical events have been shaping the current political and social reality of countries such as Bosnia and Syria, with a consequential impact on women's participation.

"PEACE PROCESSES THAT ARE MORE INCLUSIVE, THAT BRING IN THOSE MOST AFFECTED BY CONFLICT, ARE MUCH MORE DURABLE."

In a related point, the essential role that peace, justice and strong institutions play for sustaining peace was also mentioned: "supporting inclusive institution-building leads to sustaining peace".

The speakers underlined the need to ensure the right of every person to freedom of opinion and of expression. In post-conflict reality, women often experience limitations of fundamental rights that serve as a basis for genuine reconciliation and lasting peace.

Members of the panel agreed on the strong nexus between peace and security work, development and human rights, reiterating: "according to the Resolutions on the United Nations' peacebuilding architecture: development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing". Human rights and the rule of law are central for addressing challenges of war-affected communities and building national strategies for sustainable peace.

The panel explained security and peace operations have to be planned taking into consideration the country's historical and cultural context. The discussion also recognized non-state actors as essential for creating sustainable solutions by recommending systematic consultations with civil society organizations. "Peace processes that are more inclusive, that bring in those most affected by conflict, are much more durable." To sustain peace in challenging contexts, international peacebuilders must establish close partnerships with local actors to better understand their key concerns and needs. On this basis, civil society can evaluate the progress made towards inclusion by monitoring and reporting government policies and fostering government accountability. "We need to ensure that civil society can add their concerns into peace agreements so that the root causes of conflicts are addressed", highlighted one of the speakers.

Presentations on national and regional initiatives to secure peace included:

Colombia's agreement to end the conflict and build a lasting peace (2016), which was mentioned as an example of the first gender sensitive peace deal. The agreement has had higher women's participation than the global average; at times, one-third of the delegates in Havana have been women. "The deal was reached with invaluable contribution from various civil society actors, e.g.: trade unions, religious and indigenous groups", again underlining the importance of dialogue between governments and non-governmental stakeholders.

The second peace process considered was the Yemeni peace talks. "When the women of Yemen join the conversation, the sustainability of the peace process and peacebuilding will increase. Yemen deserves peace and development", was a shared sentiment by the participants. One of the participants mentioned "it is necessary for women to participate in decision-making processes thematically ranging from disarmament, prisoner exchange and the provision of humanitarian aid, to sanctions and the creation of a new democratic Constitution".

When presenting their organizations, participants explained that organizations such as Operation 1325 and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) constantly promote women as actors of mediation, trying to include women in negotiations that in turn increase the durability and the quality of peace. To address women's exclusion from both discussion tables and constitutional reforms, the OSCE and partner organizations started cooperating with political parties, in order to foster the inclusion of gender-based practices within their agendas and make women's presence in parliaments more accessible.

The final part of the panel highlighted the involvement of Syrian feminist organizations in the peace movements. Since 1970, it has been illegal to establish any women's organization, unless they originated from the political establishment. In 2011, after the Syrian Uprising (civil uprising phase of the Syrian Civil War) occurred, small civil groups of women started to emerge, with the majority being transformed into political movements.

#### Conclusions presented by Annika Schabbauer, Operation 1325:

- Even if peace can simply mean the absence of war - this concept needs to be expanded further to become more effective and inclusive. In order to make peace more sustainable - we need to address the underlying core issues, such as, lack of human development, rule of law and a culture of non-violence.
- Women need to be included in peace building - both for the sake of fairness and effectiveness. Peace is more probable to benefit more people, if the peace-agreements are more gender sensitive both in their content and in their process of establishment and negotiation.
- The space for civil society and democracy is shrinking worldwide. At the same time, there is a rise of authoritarian rule around the globe. This is not only bad for civil society but could erode many of the institutions which limits the risks of violent conflict. A healthy civil society is a way of ensuring both democracy and sustainable peace.

# WFD's roundtable discussion

"Has Democracy failed women? New democratic practices and women's participation"

The discussion in which the Secretary General of the CoD, Thomas E. Garrett, participated reviewed existing practices of women's inclusion in participatory democracy.

The Secretary General highlighted that democracy in any country is a continual work in progress. He noted the recent gains in women's political participation in Governing Council member state Mexico with 246 women (48.6%) and 254 men (51.2%) in the Chamber of Deputies and 65 women (50.78%) and 63 men (49.22%) in the Senate (IPU). He also spoke of both positive and negative uses of technology in the quest for equality; and provided an example of practices from young democratic countries like The Gambia and the Maldives that regard women as force for change, incorporating gender quotas and using social media as instruments for further female empowerment. Additionally, SG Garrett presented highlights from the regional consultations that took place in Asia, America, Africa, Europe and the MENA region, in the framework of the CoD's project on "Advancing Women's Political Participation". Among others, he mentioned that electoral gender quotas, for the most effective results, should be accompanied by a range of other measures in order to further women's participation in politics.

Parameters for gender-mainstreaming in decision-making processes and examples of concrete projects that integrate a gender perspective, were identified in the round-table discussion. The need to bypass several traditional, cultural and economic barriers, with women's lack of self-confidence hindering sometimes their process of inclusion, were among challenges discussed by participants. Lastly, good practices which have seen an increase in women's participation, with special regard to social media tools, were also highlighted in the discussion.

"WHEN A WOMAN ENTERS POLITICS, IT CHANGES HER LIFE.  
WHEN MANY WOMEN GET INTO POLITICS, IT CHANGES POLITICS."  
MS. DE SUTTER QUOTED THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF SPAIN, MS. DOLORES DELGADO GARCIA







#### Participants:

**Robert Bjarnason**  
President of Citizen Foundation in Iceland on quality issues in Iceland

**Thomas E. Garrett**  
Secretary General, Community of Democracies (CoD)

**Vanessa Liston**  
Co-founder of CiviQ (smart cities) member of the Incubator on discursive representation

**Petra De Sutter**  
Chairperson in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, Belgium

#### Moderator:

**Anthony Zacharzewski**  
Founder of The Democratic Society, United Kingdom

# About the organizers

## Community of Democracies (CoD)

The Community of Democracies (CoD) is a global intergovernmental coalition comprised of the Governing Council Member States that support adherence to common democratic values and standards outlined in the Warsaw Declaration. The CoD is represented in the international fora by the elected Secretary General.

Born as a common initiative of former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, the Community of Democracies was founded at the Ministerial Conference held in Warsaw, Poland, where high-level delegations from 106 countries signed the Warsaw Declaration Toward a Community of Democracies. Signatories pledged to uphold the democratic values expressed in the Warsaw Declaration and to support them through a variety of initiatives.

Since its establishment in 2000, the Community of Democracies gradually developed from a conference initiative into a global intergovernmental coalition of democratic states and a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue and discussion.

The Community of Democracies provides Member States with a forum in which to work together to learn from each other and identify global priorities for diplomatic action to advance and defend democracy, including through collective diplomatic action at the UN and in other multilateral fora. In addition to facilitating joint diplomatic action, the Community provides an international forum that facilitates mutual dialogue, learning, and exchange of experiences among Members.

## World Forum for Democracy (WFD)

The World Forum for Democracy is a unique platform for political decision-makers and activists to debate solutions to key challenges for democracies worldwide. By identifying and analyzing experimental initiatives and practices, the Forum highlights and encourages democratic innovations at grassroots level, and their transfer onto a systemic level in order to strengthen the foundations of democratic societies. The Forum thus contributes to the evolution of democracy and the development of more participatory and inclusive structures and institutions.

The World Forum for Democracy is organized by the Council of Europe in partnership with the City of Strasbourg, the Region Grand Est, the Conseil départemental of Bas-Rhin and the French Government.

The World Forum for Democracy 2018 was dedicated to gender equality and women's rights. It focused in particular on women's public, political and economic participation and on combating violence against women in the wake of #MeToo.

# CoD and gender equality

## Policy session on “Women: A Powerful Force for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism”

The gender aspect of violent extremism has been largely understood through awareness about how women and girls uniquely suffer from its impact. What is less understood is the important role that women can, and should, play in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

Facilitating a continued discussion on the findings of the Community's Democracy & Security Dialogue and building up on the “Advancing Women's Political Participation” project's policy recommendations, the CoD held a policy session on “Women: A Powerful Force for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism” at the Women Political Leaders (WPL) Summit on June 8, 2018, in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The session discussed the role of women in P/CVE: existing stereotypes and evidence-based reality, gaps remaining in the international legal framework on P/CVE, the importance of women's inclusion in national law enforcement and security agencies, good practices on promoting women's inclusion, women's political participation, leadership and empowerment across society, correlation between improvement of women's participation in policy making and actual development of gender sensitive P/CVE policies. The event resulted in producing a report that summarizes the discussion and outlines recommendations on increasing women's participation in preventing and countering violent extremism.

## Project on “Advancing Women's Political Participation”

Gender equality and political empowerment of women are key elements for the consolidation of sustainable democracies worldwide. To support women's participation in politics, the Community of Democracies, in cooperation with International IDEA and the UNDP, organized regional consultations to advance women's political empowerment, held on the margins of large democracy-related international events.

Through dialogue, the project provided an opportunity for participants from all over the world to discuss and compare the challenges and successes that women face in politics and look for ways to propel the idea of women's political participation forward. It consisted of five regional consultations organized in 2016-2017 in Strasbourg (France), Johannesburg (South Africa), Tunis (Tunisia), Bali (Indonesia) and Mexico City (Mexico). The project aimed to produce global and regional policy recommendations and contribute to a policy guide-book based on input collected from the five regional consultations. The guidebook “Regional Organizations, Gender Equality and the Political Empowerment of Women” is a part of the Inter-Regional Dialogue on Democracy (IRDD) initiative of International IDEA and provides recommendations on how to efficiently advance women's political participation.



# Community of Democracies

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