



Community
of Democracies



Summary Report

Women for Peace: Recognizing Women's Role in Peacebuilding

Side-event held on the margins of the 74th UNGA session
held by the Community of Democracies and hosted by the Republic of Korea

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Introduction

The Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies held a side-event on “Women for Peace: Recognizing Women’s Role in Peacebuilding” on the margins of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, on September 26th, 2019. The event was carried out in the framework of the Community’s project “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace (EWSP)”, generously supported by the Republic of Korea. It consisted of a presentation of the publication on “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: A Guide to Best Practices” followed by a panel discussion on the importance of women’s meaningful participation in peace processes and political agreements.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted in October 2000 represents the cornerstone of gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout the process of the conflict cycle. In 2010, it was followed by an action plan for gender-responsive peacebuilding, developed to enhance responses to women’s needs and priorities in the aftermath of conflict and to support women as equal participants in shaping their communities and societies. It is organized around seven commitments: conflict resolution, post-conflict planning, post conflict financing, gender responsive civilian capacity, women’s representation in post-conflict governance, rule of law, and economic recovery.

The CoD’s published guide presented at the side-event is organized around these seven commitments and identifies both supportive practices for engaging women in sustaining peace as well as the challenges they have and continue to face. It is based on desk research conducted in post-conflict countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and offers recommendations based on the research conducted in these regions. The panel discussion that followed expanded on the guide and further contributed to international debate on women in peace and security by inferring consolidated best practices from the panelists’ respective regional expertise.

The discussion addressed:

- Women’s engagement in sustaining peace within political bodies, e.g., via the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda at the national level;
- Women’s involvement in post-conflict resolution processes, e.g., peace talks, transitional justice, mediation;
- Further recommendations and areas of future research on engagement of women in sustaining peace.

The recommendations proposed at the end of the report are drawn from the panelists discussions and aim to ensure women’s meaningful participation in peacebuilding.

Speakers

OPENING ADDRESS

Mr. Thomas E. Garrett

Secretary General of the Community of Democracies

WELCOMING REMARKS

H.E. Mr. Jeong-sik Kang

Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs, The Republic of Korea

PANELISTS

■ **Dr. Abigail Ruane**

Women, Peace and Security Program Director, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Dr. Ruane is the Women, Peace and Security Programme Director for the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the longest standing women’s peace organisation in the world. Dr. Ruane is currently representing WILPF on the UN Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security as well as the Civil Society Advisory Board of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

■ **Dr. Kathleen Kuehnast**

Director of Gender Policy and Strategy at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP)

Dr. Kuehnast is the director of Gender Policy and Strategy at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), where she has worked for more than a decade. Her work focuses on the gendered impacts of violent conflict on both men and women, boys and girls and the importance of UNSCR 1325 as an institutional mechanism for change. Dr. Kuehnast is the co-author of USIP’s Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory (GIFT) and co-editor of the volume, *Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century* (2010 USIP Press).

■ **Lynrose Jane D. Genon**

Member of the Executive Council of Young Women+ for Peace and Leadership (YW+PL-PH)

Young Women+ for Peace and Leadership (YW+PL-PH) is a network of young women and young leaders from the Philippines who are agents of peace and advocates of human rights, women’s rights, gender equality, and peace and security. Ms. Genon is also the co-Director of Project YACAP (Youth Amplifying, Co-Creating and Advocating Peace), a youth leadership development program for peace which envisions to build a network of young people in Mindanao with a view to nurturing a culture of peace.

■ **Marina Kumskova**

UN Liaison Officer & Regional Coordinator for GPPAC North America

Ms. Kumskova has been working in the field of human rights since 2013, by being part of numerous projects exploring human rights issues around the world. Ms. Kumskova worked at Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom to advance gender-sensitive conflict analysis and women’s participation in peace work with a specific focus on the Middle East and North Africa.

Opening Address

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

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this side event “Women for Peace: Recognizing Women’s Role in Peacebuilding”. I would like to express my gratitude to the Republic of Korea for the continuous support to CoD initiatives improving gender equality and advancing women’s political participation, including the research conducted in the framework of the project on “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace” that we will present today.

Advancing women’s political participation has been a core focus of the international community’s agenda since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the UN General Assembly in 1979. The emphasis on female participation in peacebuilding became part of the agenda in 2000 with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, it is important to remember that its very first paragraph calls for “an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes”. It also recognizes that the “full participation of women in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security”.

When addressing the 42nd Human Rights Council meeting earlier this week, UK Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, emphasized, when women do meaningfully participate in a peace process the impact is profound, with the resulting agreement 64% less likely to fail and 35% more likely to last at least fifteen years. Next year the international community will be looking back at the progress made regarding the implementation of the first UN 1325 Resolution and nine subsequent resolutions that form the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Recently, we have seen advancements as 82 UN Member States have already adopted National Action Plans to facilitate the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the national level. However, more needs to be done.

Indeed, as revealed by the Women, Peace and Security Index, supported by the Governing Council Member State Norway and developed by Peace Research Institute of Oslo and Georgetown Institute for Women Peace and Security, among 153 countries ranked there is no state that has an excellent score on all dimensions of women’s inclusion in peace and security.

According to the report, countries in the top dozen share some important characteristics. Each of these societies is generally peaceful and stable. Each has high scores on multiple aspects of inclusion, especially women’s education and financial inclusion.

In the face of various challenges, the engagement of our Governing Council Members has been pivotal to the work of the Community of Democracies aimed at increasing gender equality in all areas of public life. The recent initiative of the CoD sought to contribute to the international debate on women’s involvement in peace and security by analyzing post-conflict countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America and identifying good practices in these regions for engaging women in sustainable peace.

As part of this initiative, a publication on “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: A Guide to Best Practices” has been developed to assess women’s beneficial inclusion in peace processes through a global perspective, building on the 2010 UN Secretary General’s Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender Responsive Peacebuilding.

I would also like to extend my utmost gratitude to the authors of this publication: Mona Lena Krook, Meriem Aissa, Brittany Anlar, Elizabeth Corredor, and Anja Vojvodic, some of them present with us today.

We will briefly present our publication and its findings following by a panel discussing challenges and good practices in women’s involvement in conflict resolution, post conflict planning and financing, and decision-making at the local, national and international level. The conversation will also aim to explore concrete ways to increase women’s engagement in peacebuilding.

Finally, thank you to our panelists, partner organizations and attendees, for contributing their time and knowledge to today’s important discussion. I look forward to a fruitful conversation.

Welcoming Remarks

By H.E. Mr. Jeong-sik Kang, Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs

I warmly welcome you all to this event on “Women for Peace.” Today we are launching the publication on “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: A Guide to Best Practices.” First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Secretary General Thomas Garrett and the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies for their hard work and great efforts which have made today’s event possible.

Democracy is not a “luxury goods” allowed for only a few. But rather, democracy is essentially for everyone. Democracy provides a more stable and resilient foundation for peace and development, which in turn provides well-being and security for its people.

In his message for this year’s International Day of Democracy, UN Secretary General said, and I quote “At heart, democracy is about people. It is built on inclusion, equal treatment and participation – and it is a fundamental building block for peace, sustainable development and human rights (unquote).”

Today we will focus on one of the most vulnerable groups in terms of democratic participation; women in conflict settings. Women and girls are very often referred to as the largest victims of armed conflict. But we should not ignore or neglect their potential as peacemakers, peacebuilders and agents of positive change in the most volatile situations.

The publication before us explores a part which women could play in building and sustaining peace. Based on first-hand accounts and case studies, it presents a comprehensive picture of the positive role women can play in the whole continuum of peace process. I believe this product of hard work will serve as a useful reference and guide for policy makers, civil society organizations and international humanitarian and development actors engaged in peace processes and post-conflict transitions.

We are proud that the Republic of Korea has financially contributed to this important research project. In fact, my government attaches great importance to the agenda of Women, Peace and Security.

Last year, drawing on our historical experience, my government launched “Action with Women and Peace” Initiative to protect and empower women and girls in conflict-related situations. Under the Initiative, we are working closely with international organizations such as the UNFPA and UNICEF to provide tailored assistance for survivors and sexual violence in Myanmar, Central African Republic and Afghanistan.

At the same time, we convened the International Conference to discuss issues under the agenda of women, peace and security in Seoul this last July, bringing together more than 300 stakeholders from more than 50 countries.

There are plenty of evidence by now that peacebuilding and reconciliation process are more successful and sustainable when women take part in prevention, early warning, peacemaking and peacekeeping, and post conflict resolution and rebuilding. But in practice, we still have a long way to go before the potential of women’s participation is fully realized. I hope that the publication we are launching today and our discussions thereon will help narrow this gap between the ideal and reality.

Once again I thank the Community of Democracies for the publication and I also thank you all for your participation in this event. Thank you very much.

Summary of the Panel Discussion

Women for Peace: Recognizing Women's Role in Peacebuilding

Following the presentation of the publication on “Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: A Guide to Best Practices” by CoD Senior Advisor Patricia Galdamez, **Dr. Abigail Ruane** began the panel discussion by stating the need for a power shift to take place in the society from discrimination to justice, and from violence to peace. She emphasized the critical role feminist movements play in unlocking system change, noting the correlation between activities of feminist movements and the decrease in violence against women. Providing an example from Colombia, the panelist informed that the absence of women from the 2012 peace talks resulted in women mobilizing and working together with the Gender Sub-commission to successfully include over 100 gender provisions in the 2016 Peace Agreement. Their analysis of discrimination through a gender lens resulted in a more holistic agreement, with commitments to zero tolerance for Gender Based Violence and justice for these discriminations. Women peacebuilders also called for further transformation through their *“Mas Vida, Menos Armas”* (“More Life, Less Arms”) campaign, which called not only for the demilitarization of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), but for the demilitarization of society as a whole.

Continuing to offer a global perspective, Dr. Ruane presented the value of women's participation in sustaining peace efforts in the Korean Peninsula. In 2015, women crossed the Demilitarized Zone to call for a political solution to officially end the Korean War (1950). They envisioned a political process before others thought it was possible. Today, despite major challenges, political space for dialogue is opening, and the **#KoreaPeaceNow** campaign continues to urge for a peace agreement with women at the table and a disarmed Korean Peninsula.

Dr. Ruane further warned against excluding women from peace processes by bringing to attention analysis conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which found that doing so reinforces injustices and builds bases for new conflicts. Today, feminists continue to advocate for post-conflict reconstruction to ensure women's meaningful participation, redress inequalities, and promote social protections. Intentional budgets aimed at well-being of people and planet are possible. Countries like Costa Rica and Thailand show that this can include reducing and reallocating military expenditure to social protections.

Lastly, the panelist outlined the responsibilities that governments and parliaments have in ensuring gender equality and peace and highlighted the beneficial role the SDGs' commitments have had in that regard. Dr. Ruane further recommended that governments and parliaments should contribute more to the Women, Peace and Security agenda by: 1) shifting the focus of the budget away from military towards gender equality instead; 2) supporting and strengthening human rights institutions within and without countries; 3) pushing International Financial Institutions to support social protection rather than austerity and; 4) linking up social and security reconstruction processes in a way that leaves no one behind.

Dr. Ruane concluded by recalling the successful approach taken by the 2015 Peace and Security Reviews in identifying, supporting and amplifying women's analyses and recommendations to address root causes of violence to achieve peace.

Panelist **Lynrose Jane D. Genon** built on Dr. Ruane's observations on sustaining peace, with a focus on the importance of young women both individually and collectively. Drawing on her experience as a member of the Executive Council of Young Women+ for Peace and Leadership in the Philippines – a youth program and network which aims to empower women to become peacebuilders in the country – Ms. Genon advocated for the usefulness of social media to promote accountability to gender equality, women's rights and peacebuilding policies. She also stressed

the importance of organizing youth community discussions to improve awareness of youth in civic responsibilities, increase low voters' turnout among the youth and educate young voters on the systemic implications of voting.

Additionally, Ms. Genon argued for the need to recognize and support existing initiatives of youth engaged in sustaining peace and amplify them by addressing the multiple and cross-cutting barriers that young women face from birth to womanhood, such as gender stereotypes and unpaid care work. Among others, the panelist brought to attention the negative influence of existing patriarchal values, the lack of financial resources, the few capacity building and mentorship opportunities available and the insufficient access to relevant networks.

Regarding the role that governments, parliaments and international organizations can play in promoting the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, Ms. Genon highlighted the added value of working with youth organizations and reiterated the need to continue challenging the idea of hierarchy, the top down approach. Lastly, the speaker called on states to continue to support civil society and work in a collaborative way with relevant UN entities and non-governmental actors on the ground.

Ms. Genon concluded by recommending pursuing inclusiveness through 1) the creation of a platform to share and develop expertise supporting youth; 2) linking youth groups together to amplify individual efforts.

“ NOT JUST PUTTING YOUNG WOMEN AT THE TABLE BUT GIVEN THEM THE AGENCY TO RESHAPE THE TABLE”

Dr. Kathleen Kuehnast began her presentation by recalling the paradigm shift brought upon by the United Security Council Resolution 1325 and the positive impact it has had in urging the international community to look at challenges that women face in war differently. The panelist suggested that as we approach the 20th anniversary of the Women, Peace, and Security Resolution, we should prepare and encourage the development of another paradigm shift that would bring issues of masculinity and men in violent conflict into the lens of our analysis. We cannot make a societal cultural shift without all of us working toward gender equality, especially in our peacebuilding efforts.

Dr. Kuehnast observed that women's participation has been and remains an issue due to the fact that the perspective of power has not been laced in. That is, in order to have a participatory peace process, it must be inclusive. Dr. Kuehnast suggested that as we enter the next decade, we need to find better pathways to engage men, and identify a new conception of what is men in a society - especially in societies coming out of conflict. The speaker stressed the importance for men to be part of the efforts toward gender equality and serve as positive agents of change. Elaborating on her experience working in Kyrgyzstan following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Dr. Kuehnast warned about the rapidity with which gender equality backsliding can happen when these efforts fail to include men. She recalled that, despite initial high rates of gender equality in the country, the standards for women in Kyrgyzstan were quickly swallowed in the resurgent nationalism movement in which there was a return to 19th century ideals of men as protectors and women as the protected. Dr. Kuehnast stressed the need for greater partnership bringing together men and women in the processes of Women, Peace and Security to avoid the latter being mis-understood as a zero-sum game benefiting only women.

Regarding the role that governments, parliaments and international organizations can play in promoting the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, Dr. Kuehnast stressed the need for the international community to frame understanding of problems through a gender perspective. To that end, she recommended developing a better toolkit to help build empathy and gender inclusive framework. She also stressed the need to dismantle bygone ideals of masculinity particularly difficult in conflict settings. Lastly, the panelist concluded by reminding those present not to think in the binaries but instead to look at the intersections and leverage those intersections for power and change.

“ IT IS SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH TO ADD WOMEN AND STIR. WE MUST TRULY ENGAGE MEN IN THE EFFORT TO PROMOTE AND ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY”

“ IT [THE UN] IS AT ITS BEST WHEN IT IDENTIFIES AND FACILITATES LOCAL PEACE-BUILDING RATHER THAN DUPLICATING AND RECREATING THE WHEEL. SUSTAINED PEACE REQUIRES A BOTTOM APPROACH THAT SUPPORT LOCAL WOMEN LEADERSHIP FOR PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND JUSTICE.”



Ms. Marina Kumskova began her presentation by stressing the complementarity between sustaining peace and conflict prevention when working toward peaceful, just and inclusive societies (SDG 16). The speaker emphasized the importance of pursuing conflict prevention for peacebuilding through complete community-based approaches. Drawing from her experience in the South Caucasus where Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) supports young women working with male chiefs to sensitize on gender equality. The panelist further highlighted the importance of women's empowerment through the example of GPPAC's work in Cameroon where they support women in advancing peace education in school and in empowering wives of non-traditional leaders. Regarding gender and youth promotion initiatives, Ms. Kumskova called for more action at the international level to support and amplify the work done by women peacebuilders and communities to ensure peace is sustained and rooted in communities.

Building on the result of two GPPAC-led studies conducted on the implementation of SDGs in Cameroon and in Ghana, Ms. Kumskova noted that people in different countries and situations face various challenges that need to be addressed on a case by case basis.

Ms. Kumskova concluded by calling on the international community to promote sustainable, complementary and effective conflict prevention by advancing inclusive and regular engagement that give space for women of various backgrounds and experiences to come and inform the process. That requires: 1) stronger capacity of all peacebuilding actors to understand and address gender harms and causes of conflicts; 2) long-term sustainable funding and political support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives and; 3) joint and complementary efforts to advance sustaining peace and conflict prevention at the national, regional and international level.

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WHAT IS NEEDED IS CREATING SPACE FOR WOMEN IN COMMUNITIES TO REDESIGN THE TABLES AND REBUILD PEACE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES”

Ms. Kumskova concluded by calling on the international community to promote sustainable, complementary and effective conflict prevention by advancing inclusive and regular engagement that give space for women of various backgrounds and experiences to come and inform the process. That requires: 1) stronger capacity of all peacebuilding actors to understand and address gender harms and causes of conflicts; 2) long-term sustainable funding and political support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives and; 3) joint and complementary efforts to advance sustaining peace and conflict prevention at the national, regional and international level.

Panel Recommendations

To improve women's participation in sustaining peace

Creating new funding opportunities and implementing resourcing commitments:

- Providing long-term sustainable funding and political support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives;
- Urging International Financial Institutions to support social protection rather than austerity;
- Considering shifting the main focus of the budget away from military expenses towards gender equality and inclusion.

Increasing capacity of actors and providing better post-conflict environment assesment:

- Improving capacity of peacebuilding actors at all levels;
- Creating a platform to share and develop expertise supporting women and youth ;
- Linking women's, youth and other organizations together to amplify individual efforts;
- Providing assessment of post-conflict settings to better understand and address gender harms and causes of conflicts.

Ensuring collaboration at all levels between the stakeholders involved:

- Uniting efforts to advance sustaining peace and conflict prevention at the national, regional and international level.
- Providing better coordination between actors involved to avoid duplication of activities.



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