



**Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network
Side Event – 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly
Wednesday, 25 September 2019, 6:30pm-8:00pm**

Concept Note

Women, Peace and Security: Towards Full Participation
Mainstreaming the WPS Agenda in Regional Economic Communities

Background

Under Namibia's chairmanship, the third capital-level meeting of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Focal Points Network was held in April 2019 in Windhoek under the theme, *Women, Peace and Security: Towards Full Participation* and the sub-theme, *Mainstreaming the WPS Agenda in Regional Economic Communities*. About 200 representatives from Focal Point countries, regional and international organizations and civil society organizations from around the world attended the two-day meeting. Focal Points adopted a joint communique¹ with recommendations for action on designing and implementing impact-driven national action plans on women, peace and security, strengthening the nexus between disarmament, small arms and light weapons and women, peace and security, integrating the WPS agenda in regional organizations and policies, and the role of youth in implementing the agenda.

On the margins of the 74th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and ahead of the 20-year anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325, Namibia, Germany, Canada and Uruguay, in collaboration with UN Women, will host a WPS Focal Points Network side event to report on the outcomes of the Windhoek capital-level meeting and to accelerate action to ensure women's full participation in peace and security.

Women, Peace and Security: Towards Full Participation

Despite evidence that women's meaningful participation is directly linked to more sustainable peace, there are still formal peace processes taking place in 2019 where women are excluded. National action plans are an important identifier and driver of Member States' commitments to the WPS agenda. However, many national and regional action plans and strategies on women, peace and security remain underfunded and funding for women's transformative peacebuilding work remains limited.

During the discussions in Windhoek, in addressing the challenges to women's full participation in peace and security, Focal Points noted the potential value of global coalitions of women peacekeepers, to exchange notes on peacekeeping, and strengthening global networks of women mediators. Focal Points also recognized the necessity of mainstreaming the women, peace and security agenda into regional policies to establish coherence with existing regional objectives. Discussions during the Windhoek meeting also brought forth the need for the harmonization of regional action plans and indicators, considering the sometimes-varying nature of conflict and peace situations in different countries.

The Windhoek meeting also emphasized the importance of opening spaces and ensuring accountability for the meaningful participation of young people in all aspects of peacebuilding. Among other recommendations, Focal Points recognized the importance of Governments having inclusive and open discussions when formulating national action plans by engaging all relevant implementing stakeholders. Focal Points further welcomed the United Nations Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and highlighted the negative impact of trafficked arms on women, girls and youth in and outside of conflict situations. Whether in societies that have never experienced armed conflict, or in those that have endured periods or cycles of conflict, the availability of small arms inhibits efforts to prevent armed violence and contributes to the escalation of lethal violence, also affecting regions that are not major arms producers.

¹ Windhoek meeting communique: <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/513>

Side Event Discussion Questions

- What are some of the monitoring and accountability mechanisms that regional organizations can put in place to strengthen their role in ensuring the implementation of Member States' Action Plans?
- How can we enhance the connection between gender and disarmament issues, and how can regional organizations support those efforts?

Meeting Format

The opening segment of the meeting will be at ministerial level and will include an interactive discussion among Foreign Ministers and speakers. This will be followed by discussion and updates from Focal Points and civil society on actions taken since the April capital-level meeting to implement the outcomes of the meeting.

The Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network

The WPS Focal Points Network was initiated by Spain and launched in 2016. Germany chaired the Network in 2018 and Namibia is current Chair. In 2020, Canada and Uruguay will co-chair the Network. UN Women serves as Secretariat for the Network. The Network is a cross-regional forum² of more than 80 UN Member States and regional organizations, working in close collaboration with UN agencies and civil society, to share experiences and best practices to advance the implementation of all Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. Member States and other regional organizations that have not yet signed onto the Global Focal Points Network are invited to join, to maximize the impact of the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

² **Current Membership:** Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, African Union, Council of Europe, Economic Community of West African States, European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Union for the Mediterranean