GENERATION EQUALITY
REALIZING WOMEN'S RIGHTS FOR AN EQUAL FUTURE

BEIJING +25

CONNECTING WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY (WPS) AND YOUTH AND PEACE AND SECURITY (YPS) TO BEIJING+25 AND THE GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM

CONNECTING WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY (WPS) AND YOUTH AND PEACE AND SECURITY (YPS) TO BEIJING+25 AND THE GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM

BEIJING+25 WPS-YPS
ACTION COALITION

MARCH 2020

Please feel free to use and cite parts of this publication, crediting the authors and
the Beijing+25 WPS-YPS Action Coalition.

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five years ago, the Fourth World Conference on Women led to the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action—the most comprehensive blueprint for women's empowerment and gender equality. More than two decades later, the Generation Equality Forum is now underway to map progress on gender equality and reactivate commitments to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Forum is a global gathering on gender equality, convened by UN Women and co-chaired by the Governments of France and Mexico, in partnership with civil society. It will reaffirm the value of multilateralism and bring together the leadership and participation of various stakeholders including civil society, governments, the United Nations, and the private sector. The Forum will launch Action Coalitions—multi-stakeholder thematic groups—to catalyze collective action, spark global and inter-generational conversations, mobilize resources and political will, and deliver results that further advance equality for women and girls.

Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, armed conflict continues to be a major obstacle to the fulfilment of women's rights and gender equality. In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. The risk of nuclear conflict is growing as key treaties on nuclear disarmament are increasingly under threat, and nuclear competition among countries is intensifying. It has been established that the gendered impact of conflict increases the levels of sexual and gender-based violence, marginalization, and discrimination in varied forms experienced by women, young women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ persons, including recruitment into sexual slavery and trafficking, limited mobility, and early and forced marriage.[1] In addition, research shows that a state's level of gender equality can serve as a predictor of armed conflict, whether measuring conflict between states or within states.[2] Despite this, women, including young women and girls, are excluded from political decision-making as well as educational and economic opportunities, which increases their vulnerability to discrimination, sexual violence, and violent extremism. A participant in the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) civil society study on Sustaining Peace underlined that women continue to be "regarded as non-political beings in a society that very much exercises domination on women's bodies and movements."[3] The exclusion, discrimination and violence experienced by women of all ages are part of a patriarchal continuum, where patriarchy intensifies and becomes even more harmful and restrictive in times of armed conflict. The multiple forms of marginalization young women and girls experience as women and youth, and the resulting disproportionate impact of violence and armed conflict are overlapping concerns in the Women and Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth and Peace and Security (YPS) agendas.

Therefore, conflict prevention, sustainable peace, gender equality, and women's empowerment are inextricably linked. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved without meaningful participation of women and youth—as recognized by the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the Women and Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, and Youth and Peace and Security (YPS) resolutions. However, despite some progress in implementation, both agendas still face persistent barriers and gaps in critical areas. At the same time, gender equality—and the vision of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action—cannot be realized without due attention given to issues of peace and security, and without meaningful participation of women and youth peacebuilders.

[1]"Pathways for Peace.", United Nations, and World Bank. Open Knowledge Repository. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337.
[2] "Gender Equality and Intrastate Armed Conflict". Melander, Erik. International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 49. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3693506?seq=1
[3] "Building and Sustaining Peace from the Ground Up." Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, October 30, 2019. https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/GNWPReport_24october_4web-1.pdf.

INTRODUCTION

To ensure that the voices of women and youth in conflict-affected communities are fully integrated in the Generation Equality Forum process, the civil society-led Beijing+25 Women and Peace and Security – Youth and Peace and Security (WPS-YPS) Action Coalition has produced this advocacy paper. The paper reflects the perspectives of women's rights organizations from conflict-affected communities as well as national, regional, and global civil society networks that work on women's rights, youth rights, gender equality, peace, and security. It highlights key civil society advocacy messages on the WPS and YPS agendas, including their intersections with the other thematic areas of the Generation Equality Forum. [4]

The core messages in the advocacy paper will be presented by organizations and networks that are part of the civil society-led coalition in all key events on Beijing+25, the Generation Equality Forum, the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the 5th anniversary of UNSCR 2250, the 5th anniversary of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the 75th anniversary of the UN itself. Participating organizations and networks will advocate for the integration of these core messages into the Beijing+25 Feminist and Women's Movement Action Plan as well as in 2020 reports of the Secretary-General on WPS and YPS.

Recognizing that 2020 is a year of multiple milestones and anniversaries, the advocacy paper builds on, and seeks to reinforce and complement, other key advocacy messages of civil society in the lead up to the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, such as the 2020 Roadmap currently being developed by the NGO Working Group on Women and Peace and Security;[5]and the 2020 Vienna Declaration,[6] developed by woman peacebuilders and humanitarian actors during the Global Women's Forum for Peace and Humanitarian Action in Vienna, Austria. For example, this advocacy paper reinforces the Roadmap's call for guaranteeing diverse women's right to meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security, and its recognition of gender equality and the human rights of women, young women, and girls, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as central to maintaining international peace and security. The advocacy paper also reiterates the Vienna Declaration 2020's call for the inclusion of women—including grassroots women—in designing donor priorities and programs, including humanitarian programs; and for greater investment in women's economic empowerment as a conflict prevention strategy.

[4] The thematic areas of the Generation Equality Forum have been defined as: gender-based violence; economic justice and rights; bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); feminist action for climate justice; technology and innovation for gender equality; and feminist movements and leadership; https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/beijing-plus-25/generation-equality-forum/action-coalitions, accessed 03-14-2020

[5] The 2020 Civil Society Women, Peace, and Security Roadmap is an advocacy developed by the NGO Working Group on WPS—a coalition of 19 international non-governmental organizations working to advance the WPS agenda, including GNWP. The Roadmap outlines five key areas where progress has been lagging and more effort is needed to effectively implement the WPS agenda: prevention; gender equality and women's human rights women's meaningful participation; human rights defenders and civil society space; and accountability for implementation.

[6] The Vienna Declaration 2020: Women Peacebuilders and Humanitarian Actors Define Key Priorities in 2020 and Beyond, was drafted and adopted by grassroots women peacebuilders and humanitarian actors from 17 countries across all regions who convened at the Global Women's Forum for Peace and Humanitarian Action in Vienna, Austria on February 19 -20, 2020. The Declaration emphasizes the links between the WPS agenda and gender-sensitive humanitarian action; identifies persistent challenges to the full implementation of both – including lack of funding, exclusion of grassroots women from program and policy design and decision-making; and threats and violence faced by women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, and humanitarian first responders. It puts forth calls of action to the UN and donor community, national and local governments, the private sector, and global humanitarian actors. Available at: https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/Vienna-Declaration-2020_Feb-28.pdf

ADVOCACY PAPER

The civil society-led the Beijing+25 WPS-YPS Action Coalition present the following key messages and recommendations, informed by the recommendations, priorities, experiences, achievements, and challenges shared by grassroots women and youth peacebuilders, and national, regional, and global women's rights and feminist organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cameroon, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uganda, and the United States of America.[7] The outline of this Advocacy Paper is based on the Feminist and Women's Movement Action Plan, a parallel document coordinated by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women with the following thematic areas: Participation, Accountability, and Gender-Responsive Institutions; Freedom from Violence, Stigma, and Stereotypes; Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity, and Decent Work; Poverty Eradication, Social Protection, and Social Services; Peaceful and Inclusive Societies; and Environmental Conservation, Protection, and Rehabilitation. It is an evolving document, that will be updated periodically to incorporate new information and insights from the participating organizations of the coalition.

A. PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

To effectively promote inclusion, it is essential to consider that women and youth are not homogenous groups of people. The meaningful and effective participation of women and youth should extend to all persons who identify as such, including many historically marginalized communities such as refugees, persons with disabilities, grassroots persons, LGBQTIA+ persons, indigenous persons, internally displaced persons, and former combatants.

Women and youth throughout history have defied stereotypes as peacebuilders and agents of change. In the absence of formal mechanisms and accessible opportunities to meaningfully participate in social, political, and economic spheres, women and youth have forged their own avenues to lead peacebuilding efforts and movements for progressive social transformation. Bolstered by the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, which recognized the critical need for the meaningful participation of youth in peacebuilding, young women's leadership in peacebuilding has brought new approaches to advocacy. Young people and women are known to address challenges related to participation and good governance through awareness-raising and training, use of social media, rallies and demonstrations, advocacy with the UN, and regional organizations and participation in elections. For example, in Brazil, there are political renovation movements that have supported the entry of women and youth into politics, including elections. In the Philippines, many youth groups are organizing community discussions with peers on non-partisan electoral education and support for inclusive peace processes. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, youth groups are leading advocacy and awareness-raising training to encourage other young people and women to enhance participate in community discussions and hold institutions accountable. Championing the agenda for gender equality and sustainable peace, young women have led peaceful demonstrations and protests for good governance in India, Hong Kong, Chile, and Algeria. Young women leaders continue to demand and push for equality in a way that can revive the energy of all those around them.

Women and youth's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security—including all formal and informal processes—is a human right that must be promoted and safeguarded. Nonetheless, women and youth participation in political decision-making and peace processes remains low across the globe.[8] In Brazil, women make up only nine percent of the membership of the House of Representatives; in Cameroon, women occupy under 20 percent of the seats of the Upper House of the National Assembly; Ukrainian women hold only 12 percent of the seats in Parliament and 16 percent of senior positions in public service. Meanwhile, during the 2019 national and local elections in the Philippines, only 20 percent of candidates were women.

[7] Unless specifically stated otherwise, all examples and evidence come directly from the experience of Participating Organizations, shared through calls and online consultations.
[8] "Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (%)." World Bank Data. Accessed March 6, 2020. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS.

Young women are excluded from political and security decision-making, as they face multiple forms of discrimination. In an already limited space for women's meaningful participation, young women are overlooked or ignored on the basis of their sex and age. According to an Inter-Parliamentary Union report, only 1.9 percent of the world's members of parliament are under 30,[9] whereas the average age in parliament is 53 years old.[10] When women and youth are included, it is usually in peripheral, advisory roles, rather than as peace negotiators and equal stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of policies and peace agreements.

Deep-seated political, economic, and social inequalities and discriminatory practices are major barriers to women and youth's meaningful participation in peacebuilding. For example, in Nigeria, traditional structures, customs, and values prevent the effective participation of young women in the formal peacebuilding architecture. The lack of access to information, threats and violence, lack of access to economic resources and opportunities, as well as unpredictable and inadequate funding—especially for grassroots women and youth organizations—prevent women and youth's participation in decision-making and peacebuilding.

Women and youth who seek to participate in decision-making and peacebuilding face increased threats and violence. This violence is pervasive and is often perpetrated publicly and with impunity. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, stated, "In many countries, women who dare to speak out for human rights are stigmatized and called bad mothers, terrorists, or witches, silenced and marginalized from decision-making and can even be killed."[11] In Colombia, for instance, the killings of women community organizers and human rights defenders increased nearly 50 percent in 2019, compared to 2018.[12] Female politicians and human rights activists are one of the most "at-risk" targets in Brazil, where it is estimated that four women are killed every day.[13]

Inclusive representation is essential for an effective and accountable security sector, as women, men, girls, and boys experience security differently in any given context. Nevertheless, in many countries, security sector policies and programs have failed to adequately address women and youth's security needs and priorities; instead, they remain male-dominated, exclusionary and perpetuate gender stereotypes. Transforming the security and justice sector requires more than simply increasing the percentage of participation of women and young women in security institutions. Deep-rooted stereotypes and toxic gender norms must be addressed in order for gender perspectives to be successfully integrated into policies.

We call on the key stakeholders to take the following urgent steps:

❖ Member States should develop and implement concrete plans that promote institutionalized inclusion of youth and women in all processes related to peace and security and political decision-making, including by:

> investing in the capacities and leadership of women and youth by ensuring safe and accessible learning opportunities for participation in peace processes and governance;

> addressing the structural barriers limiting meaningful participation of women and youth, including lack of access to education, economic opportunities and resources;

> increasing accessible, flexible, demand-driven and long-term financial support to civil society organizations working on peace and security;

[9] "Young Women in Peace and Security: At the Intersection of the YPS and WPS Agendas." UN Women, April 2018. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/4/young-women-in-peace-and-security.
[10] "Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle." UNDP, October 30, 2015. https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/electoral_systemsandprocesses/enhancing-youth-political-participation-throughout-the-electoral.html.
[11]"Women Human Rights Defenders Face Worsening Violence, Warns UN Human Rights Expert." OHCHR, February 28, 2019. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24232&LangID=E.
[12] "U.N. Decries Nearly 50% Increase in Killings of Women Activists in Colombia" Reuters, February 26, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/02/26/world/americas/26reuters-colombia-rights.html
[13] "Brazil: Four Women Killed Every Day in 2019, Human Rights Body Says." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, February 4, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/04/brazil-women-killed-2019-rate-alarming-iachr

➤ guaranteeing that women and LGBTQIA+ people, including young people, do not face retaliation for their participation, and condemning any violence, reprisals, and other actions that interfere with their work;

➤ adopting affirmative action measures to facilitate women and youth participation, and following through on existing national participation quotas and commitments for direct and gender-equitable participation; and

➤ institutionalizing gender-based analysis training across all government institutions.

❖ UN Entities should demand meaningful participation of local women from diverse backgrounds as mediators and negotiators in all peace processes, including official negotiations.

❖ UN Entities should ensure a systematic focus on women and youth participation in the implementation of key policy frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda; and enhance synergies between mutually reinforcing agendas (such as the WPS and YPS).

❖ Member States, UN Entities and the Donor Community should allocate substantive resources for meaningful, systematic, and regular consultations with civil society organizations led by youth and women, to ensure that youth and women are involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of peace processes. These should include both long-term funding, including for capacity-building and organizational strengthening of grassroots women and youth organizations; and rapidly accessible small grants to enable women and youth participation, by supporting travel, child-care etc.

❖ Member States and UN Entities should ensure that women, youth, and other historically marginalized groups are key stakeholders in the design, implementation, and monitoring of transitional justice processes, including reparation and reconciliation programs, institutional reform processes, criminal justice and accountability, and truth-seeking efforts.

❖ Member States and UN Entities should ensure accessible information and dedicated resources for youth participation in decision-making with specific attention to dissemination and recruitment of young people in rural and/or remote areas.

❖ UN Entities and the Donor Community should recognize the expertise of women and youth peacebuilders, and ensure that women and youth—including refugees, internally displaced, and host communities—are key contributors in design and implementation of humanitarian emergency response.

❖ Civil Society and the Private Sector should keep Member States and the United Nations accountable by increasing training opportunities and workshops to build capacity on institutionalized accountability, transparency, and good governance.

❖ Civil Society and the Private Sector should ensure, through meaningful and cross-sectoral partnerships, the monitoring of gender-and youth-focused funding and resources to ensure participation at all levels of the peace process.

❖ Civil Society and the Private Sector should mobilize grassroots and rural or remote women and youth to ensure their full participation at all levels, recognizing and highlighting the intersectionality of experiences and contributions.

B. FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA, AND STEREOTYPES

Societal and cultural practices, stigma, and norms enshrined in misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia continue to restrict women, girls, and other historically marginalized groups in their efforts to meaningfully participate in political decision-making, peace processes, and the labor economy. From an early age, girls in many parts of the world are told: "You are only girls." They are brought up to believe they should do as they are told, accept what they have and not ask too many questions. Patriarchal cultural, social, and economic practices limit women and girls' access to education, resources, property, and health care. Women and girls often shoulder large domestic burdens and experience discrimination based on assumptions about their capabilities and credibility.

Understanding intersectionality is essential to combating stigma, stereotypes and human rights abuses. Intersectionality means that various social identities such as gender, age, sex, race, ethnicity, ability, geography, religion, occupation etc. all contribute to one's particular experience of oppression, discrimination and conflict. Women human rights' defenders (WHRD), young women, indigenous persons, ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTQIA+ and gender non-confirming persons, refugees, internally displaced persons, and women and youth with disabilities experience multiple, overlapping forms of discrimination—and often experience higher levels of violence and human rights abuses as a result.

Indigenous women, young women, and girls experience disproportionate marginalization, stigma, stereotypes, and violence. "Indigenous women are twelve times more likely to be murdered than any other woman in Canada," a participating organization in the Beijing+25 WPS-YPS Action Coalition shared. The antagonistic nature of Canadian society when it comes to the country's first people fosters an environment of intolerance and promotes the use of violence and dehumanizing methods against indigenous communities. The government's inaction in addressing this blatant racism further fuels hate and stigmatization directed towards indigenous women and girls. There have been violent hate crimes against minority communities in recent years within Canada. Although the Canadian government condemned the crimes and perpetrators were put on trial, the underlying racism and discord between communities is not being addressed. Stereotypes are often handed down through generations and shared among communities, leading to the stigmatization of minority communities. For example, in Brazil and Colombia, Afro-indigenous women and men are heavily stigmatized, often racially profiled and arrested for petty crimes and drug trafficking.[14] These stereotypes and stigma are deeply embedded within society, creating a deep-rooted issue that has become increasingly difficult to tackle.

State-sponsored or culturally ingrained stigma often prevents marginalized groups from benefiting from safe access to local resources and services. For instance, in Sweden, women immigrants, asylum-seekers, or refugees are marginalized from society and struggle to easily access public services (including sexual health and reproductive services) due to their skin color, residency status, unfamiliarity with the Swedish language, and culture. A participating organization from Sweden expressed an increasing concern about the development of parallel societies within the country's population, which furthers the segregation of immigrants and asylum seekers from local populations and increases their vulnerability to recruitment into organization criminal groups, radicalization, and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. It is critical that the specific challenges facing women, girls, older women, LGBTQIA+ persons, migrant and refugee women, indigenous women, grassroots women, and women with disabilities in conflict-affected situations be fully integrated into policies that address all forms of violence against women and girls, stigmas, and stereotypes.

[14] Picanço, Lara Bartilotti. "Brazil's Mass Incarceration Policy Has Not Stopped Crime." Wilson Center, August 30, 2019. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/brazils-mass-incarceration-policy-has-not-stopped-crime.

Girls, young women, immigrant women, LGBTQIA+ persons, refugees, internally displaced persons, indigenous women and women with disabilities are more likely to face conflict-related violence. During and after armed conflict, women, young women, girls, and other historically marginalized groups experience different forms of violence, including rape, forced marriages, trafficking, sexual slavery, abduction, honor killings, forced abortions, mutilation, and torture, amongst many other human rights abuses. Worldwide, ninety-six percent of the victims of conflict-related sex trafficking are women and girls; and 133 million women and girls have experienced female genital mutilation in over 29 countries.[15] Since June 2019, countless displaced women and girls from Venezuela who are seeking refuge from violence and political persecution in Colombia and Ecuador have been enslaved and trafficked by criminal networks.[16]

The rise of violent extremist groups and hybrid criminal-terrorist networks has resulted in the systematic use of sexual violence—including slavery and trafficking—against women and girls as a tactic of terrorism for recruitment and retention of fighters, military strategy, financing, and ideology. Women and girls are treated as "wages of war," being gifted as a form of in-kind compensation or payment to fighters, who are then entitled to resell or exploit them as they wish. Between 1986 and 2006, over 20,000 children were forcibly abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army, a majority of whom were girls held in sexual slavery and forced marriages to insurgents.[17] Similarly, from August 2014 onwards, in the process of committing genocide and ethnic cleansing, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) forced around 6,700 Yazidi women and girls into sexual slavery and domestic servitude across eastern Syria and western Iraq.[18]

While young women are seen as passive victims without agency, young men are stereotyped as perpetrators of violent extremism and organized crime. The overarching consequence of these negative and dishonest stereotypes is that they contribute to the marginalization and stigmatization of youth by framing them as a problem to be solved and a threat to be contained, instead of "partners for peace." Predictably, most prevention initiatives are designed by governments and security sectors without consulting civil society; they perpetuate hardline security measures which violate human rights and preserve gender stereotypes of women and youth. The WPS and YPS agendas provide a framework for an inclusive, demilitarized and preventive response to terrorism and violent extremism.

The normalization of state-sponsored, conflict related, domestic, gang-related, sexual, or structural gender-based violence and the stigmatization of survivors pose a significant challenge for women and girls to speak up and demand accountability. This creates an environment of impunity for perpetrators. In Nigeria, survivors of sexual violence struggle to reintegrate into societies and access sexual health and reproductive services. Countless young women have committed suicide due to the stigma of being called a "wife of Boko Haram" with a "terrorist child." It is integral that safe spaces be created in order to ensure that survivors are able to share their personal experiences of trauma and seek help in environments that are free from judgement and stigma.

Many participating organizations in the Beijing+25 WPS-YPS Action Coalition agreed that intimate partner violence is the most common form of gender-based violence in and after conflict. Participants described intimate partner violence as an "unintended consequence of war." In Ukraine, toxic masculinity, discriminatory societal norms, and post-traumatic stress disorder caused by the armed conflict have been cited as the main causes of the increase in intimate partner violence. [19] An Iraqi civil society activist shared that 25 percent of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced intimate partner violence. However, this form of violence remains grossly underreported, in part due to low awareness of what constitutes it.

[15] "Infographic: Women and Armed Conflict." UN Women, October 8, 2015. https://www2.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2015/10/infographic-women-armed-conflict.
[16] Cone, Devon, and Melanie Teff. "Searching for Safety: Confronting Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Venezuelan Women and Girls." Refugees International. Refugees International, August 5, 2019. https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2019/8/2/searching-for-safety-venezuela-trafficking.
[17] "Abducted children and youth in Lord's Resistance Army in Northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): mechanisms of indoctrination and control." Kelly, J. T., Branham, L., & Decker, M. R.Conflict and health, 10, 11. 2016. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-016-0078-5
[18] United Nations. "Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence." Refworld, April 15, 2017. https://www.un.org/en/events/elimination-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict/pdf/1494280398.pdf.
[19] "Men in Ukraine Hold Fast to Gender Norms, Landmark Study Finds." United Nations Population Fund, September 13, 2018. https://www.unfpa.org/news/men-ukraine-hold-fast-gender-norms-landmark-study-finds.

Evolving tactics of warfare require evolving, locally driven, multi-sectoral, and gender-sensitive strategies to sustain peace and address the root causes of conflict. New tactics of warfare, the absence of clear battlefields, the use of media and the internet to incite violence and radicalization, the rise of violent extremist groups and organized criminal networks, the use of child soldiers, and the increasing number and diversification of parties to conflict are all trends in the evolution of armed conflict that continue to deteriorate the human security of women and girls.

In an environment of increasing pushback and opposition to women's rights and gender equality from right-wing, conservative, and misogynistic groups, women and youth peacebuilding organizations are dispelling restrictive narratives of women as victims of conflict without agency. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, many women's rights organizations run community centers which provide psychosocial support, livelihood opportunities, and empowerment workshops for survivors of sexual violence. Nepali women's rights organizations support survivors of sexual violence and families of victims of enforced disappearances in advocating for gender-sensitive truth and reconciliation processes and accountability. Despite widespread religious tensions in Burkina Faso, women peacebuilders from different religious groups established a women-led interfaith network of over 300 people to promote non-violence and tolerance amongst local communities through conflict sensitivity, mediation, and interreligious dialogue. Similarly, in Poso, Central Sulawesi and Lamongan, East Java, young women led advocacy efforts with local and national government to ensure that initiatives to prevent violent extremism are gender-sensitive, sustainable, and protect human rights, thereby countering gender stereotypes of young women in hardline, securitized discussions.

We call on the key stakeholders to take the following urgent steps:

❖ Members States should reform discriminatory laws and policies that further the marginalization and stigmatization of youth, women, refugees, indigenous, grassroots, LGBTQIA+ and other historically marginalized groups; as well as policies that allow for the impunity of perpetrators of gender-based violence.

❖ Member States and the UN should meaningfully involve women and youth in the development of gender-sensitive and inclusive measures to address which take into account intersectionality and human rights to address evolving warfare tactics and prevent violent extremism.

❖ Member States should uphold their obligations under human rights law to prevent and protect women and youth from gender-based sexual violence and other human rights abuses perpetuated in the context of armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies; and strengthen accountability and safe-space reporting mechanisms.

❖ Member States should respect, protect, and uphold women human rights' defenders, civil society, and youth peacebuilder's universal, inalienable rights of freedom of organization, peaceful assembly, association, opinion and expression, and participation in public affairs, to foster an enabling and safe environment for women and youth working on peace and security, and ensure that they do not face reprisals for their work.

❖ Civil Society Organizations, particularly women's rights organizations, should work to engage men and boys, along with other important community stakeholders such as religious leaders, indigenous leaders, and local government in their advocacy for gender equality and sustainable peace.

C. INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY, AND DECENT WORK

Peace is a prerequisite of inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work.[20] Conversely, economic exclusion has been identified as a driver of conflict across the world. Growing inequalities within countries threaten social stability, development, and the government structures that underpin these processes, thereby increasing the prevalence of conflict and violence. Investing in women's economic empowerment, including employment opportunities for women and equitable access to resources, is a conflict prevention strategy for both developed and developing countries; in countries affected by conflict and those that enjoy relative peace. [21]

The economic exclusion of women and young women has dire consequences for their wellbeing and security and is a barrier to their meaningful participation in peacebuilding, and an obstacle to sustainable peace. It limits their power over their own sexual and reproductive lives, buttresses economic dependence despite intimate partner violence, and increases experiences of violence during crises. The gendered impacts of conflict combined with economic exclusion aggravate the levels of sexual and gender-based violence, recruitment into sexual slavery and trafficking, limited mobility, and early and forced marriage women and girls experience. There are numerous barriers to inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work, all of which are exacerbated by armed conflict and organized violence, as described below.

Armed conflict and political violence have an overall negative impact on the economy.[22] The loss often disproportionately affects women, who are over-represented in the informal sector and lack the securities that come with formal employment. In fragile and conflict-affected countries, only 4 out of 10 women are in paid work, compared with 7 out of 10 men; women constitute only 11.5 percent of landholders.[23] When women are able to access jobs, they are more likely to be exposed to informal labor conditions,[24] and they earn on average less than men.[25] New data also shows that nearly 40 percent of economies limit women's property rights and nearly 30 percent of economies restrict women's freedom of movement, thereby increasing women's vulnerability in general, but particularly in conflict-affected settings.[26] Even at times of peace, women face a plethora of risks and barriers in entering and remaining on the labor market. They 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. The exclusion becomes more marked during conflict or violence.

The forced displacement that results from conflict and organized violence further affects women's access to economic opportunities. Many refugee households are headed by women, which increases their economic burden. CARE International found that nearly 40 percent of Syrian households in Jordan are female-headed.[27] In many contexts, including Sweden, asylum-seeker and refugee women face multiple layers of discrimination as they are deprived of job opportunities based on their ethnicity and religion.

[20] Stewart, Frances. "Conflict and the Millennium Development Goals." Taylor & Francis, August 3, 2010. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1464988032000125737.
[21] The World Bank estimates that one year of conflict could lead to as much as 5.2% of loss in GDP growth. United Nations, and World Bank. "Pathways for Peace." Open Knowledge Repository. 2010. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337.
[22] The World Bank estimates that one year of conflict could lead to as much as 5.2% of loss in GDP growth. United Nations, and World Bank. "Pathways for Peace." Ibid.
[23] "Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security (S/2018/900)," October 9, 2018. https://undocs.org/S/2018/900.
[24] For example, in Latin America, women constitute 93 percent of domestic workers, a vast majority of whom are exposed to informal labour conditions. "Labour Informality Affects Almost 80 per Cent of the 18 Million Domestic Workers in Latin America." Domestic work: Labour informality affects almost 80 per cent of the 18 million domestic workers in Latin America, July 11, 2016. https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_498779/lang--en/index.htm.
[25] "How Big Is the Gender Pay Gap in Your Country?" Global Wage Report 2018/19,, November 26, 2018. https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/enhanced/WCMS_650829/lang--en/index.htm.
[26] "Women, Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform." World Bank, February 27, 2019. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/101301551208346052/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2019-A-Decade-of-Reform
[27] "On Her Own: How Women Forced to Flee Syria Are Shouldering Increased Responsibility as They Struggle to Survive - Syrian Arab Republic." CARE, September 12, 2016. https://www.care.org/newsroom/press/press-releases/syria-crisis-increase-syrian-women-fleeing-conflict-alone-says-report.

C. INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY, AND DECENT WORK

Women are also largely excluded from male-dominated industries. Coalition participating organizations from Nigeria, Syria and South Sudan noted that women's representation in the labor market increased as men were conscripted or killed during conflict. However, they also noted that it is difficult for women to remain in their new positions once men return, and the skills they have gained through their work are not appreciated as they search for employment post-conflict.

Women's economic exclusion is aggravated by the fact that women are traditionally excluded from dialogue and decision-making positions related to macroeconomic policymaking. Currently, only 17 countries worldwide have female Finance Ministers. Women, especially young women, are also typically excluded from dialogue and consultations on economic issues. In the context of conflict, women are left out from decision-making on economic recovery, and their perspectives are not sufficiently reflected in defining donor priorities. Forty percent of respondents in the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) study on local women and civil society perspectives on Sustaining Peace reported that local civil society was not able to influence the design of donor programs at all, or only to a limited extent. [28]

Economic exclusion not only exacerbates women's vulnerability to violence in armed conflict. It also fuels the conflict itself. The 2014 Millennium Development Goals Report recognized the negative impact of conflict on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, emphasizing in particular the way it affects education and poverty.[29] Lack of economic opportunities is often cited as a reason for youth joining organized crime groups, non-state armed groups and violent extremist groups. UNDP's "Journey to Extremism in Africa" study found that 55 percent of the voluntary recruits to violent extremist groups expressed moderate to severe frustration at their economic conditions, and that employment was the most often cited need at the time of joining.[30] There is also evidence linking higher unemployment with higher rates of recruitment to national armies.[31] Participating organization from Mali noted that poverty and unemployment "have left young people with few options—and armed groups see them as 'easy targets.'"

At the same time, women and youth are at the forefront of building inclusive development and sustainable peace. Women conduct mediation between organized crime groups, police officers and other actors in the impoverished parts of Brazilian cities (favelas), which are heavily militarized and affected by police brutality. Women and youth also lead micro-economic projects to support their families and communities. In Burundi, when many children dropped out of school in the Kabasazi community, women started lending and saving associations to help each other send their children to school. [32] In South Sudan, women and youth engage in income generating activities and micro-enterprises and created market linkages with traders across different communities. In DRC, micro-economic initiatives supported by GNWP and led by young women in South and North Kivu enabled young women's effective participation in decision-making in their families and communities. As one of the young women involved in GNWP's Young Women for Peace and Leadership program in DRC put it, "Being economically empowered encourages women to stand for themselves and assert their rights."

Investing in inclusive economic development is therefore a necessary conflict prevention strategy. As noted by Oxfam Kenya, one of the Beijing+25 WPS-YPS participating organizations, "Women's transformative leadership and economic empowerment are central to the notion of a feminist peace – since it affects one's ability to become independent."

[28] "Building and Sustaining Peace from the Ground Up." Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, October 30, 2019. https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/GNWPReport_24october_4web-1.pdf.
[29] "The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014." United Nations, July 2014. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/mdg-report-2014.html.
[30] "Journey To Extremism In Africa – Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment." UNDP, 2017. http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/.
[31] See, for example: "High Unemployment Means High Military Recruitment." The Christian Science Monitor. The Christian Science Monitor, November 12, 2009. https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2009/1112/p17s01-usmi.html.
[32] "Building and Sustaining Peace from the Ground Up." Ibid.

We call on the key stakeholders to take the following urgent steps:

❖ Member States should adopt and enforce gender-responsive labor laws, including guaranteeing labor rights for domestic workers, formalizing unpaid economic labor, ensuring equal access for all women and youth to the labor market, and protecting the right of all persons to work. This should be considered as a priority in post-conflict recovery, rather than delayed.

❖ Member States, UN Entities and the Donor Community should transform structural barriers to economic participation by investing in gender and age-appropriate financial education, functional literacy, and economic empowerment initiatives for young women and girls, including in refugee and IDP camps and conflict-affected communities.

❖ Member States should institutionalize women and youth's participation at all levels in financial institutions and decision-making on economic recovery and sustainable development.

❖ Private Sector Employers must take tangible steps to prevent discrimination in recruitment – including discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and asylum status – and to increase women's participation in senior positions. This may include adopting affirmative action policies.

❖ Member States and the Donor Community must invest in gender and age-appropriate education for young women and girls, including in refugee camps and IDP camps and conflict-affected communities.

❖ Member States must increase diverse women's (including rural and indigenous women; IDP women etc.) participation in financial institutions and in decision-making on economic recovery.

❖ Member States and the International Community should integrate gender-responsive budgeting in post-conflict financing.

❖ The Donor community should support women and youth-led peacebuilding initiatives – recognizing that peace is a prerequisite of inclusive economy.

D. POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Conflict aggravates poverty as it results in massive displacement, forced migration, long-term and wide-scale refugee crises, and the destruction of infrastructure and private property. For example, in Iraq, local communities directly impacted by armed conflict, such as Nenewa, are much less developed than communities that have remained insulated, such as Erbil. The political tensions between the regional autonomous government of Kurdistan and the central Baghdad government, which have heightened over the last four years and prevent the distribution of budgets and funds, are impacting the poorest communities.

During and after conflict, women and girls are denied equal access to basic rights provided through nationally appropriated social protection systems. These include maternal care, sexual and reproductive health services, health care, education, food and water security, employment opportunities and fair pay, income to support their families, and representation in political decision-making. When operative, national social protection systems aid in achieving sustainable peace by enhancing human capital and productivity, reducing socio-economic inequalities, and increasing investment in health and education infrastructure. Yet, more than 80 percent of the world's population does not have access to inclusive social protection systems.[33] The recent political protests in Latin and Central America—across Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and Haiti, among other states—are in part the result of drawbacks in social protections, particularly on pension systems and targeted programs like conditional cash transfer programs. These rollbacks affect women and youth disproportionately. For example, in post-conflict Colombia, attacks against women have increased. In the year 2017, murders in general increased by 30 percent, and assassinations of women increased by 70 percent. One of the powerful and structural reasons behind this violence is the repeated failure of the war on drugs in Colombia. This failure results in more casualties, prosecutions and imprisonment; however, it will not achieve the eradication of illegal drug trafficking. Therefore, building, maintaining, and ensuring equal access to social protection systems are crucial to empowering young women in conflict-affected communities.

The disintegration of nationally appropriated social protection systems during armed conflict prevents women and girls from gaining basic, functional literacy and education, which limits their independence and employment opportunities. Globally, the average literacy rate among adult men is 89 percent, compared to 82 percent among adult women. However, the gender gap is more pronounced in contexts affected by conflict. In South Sudan, the adult literacy rate among men is 40 percent while among women it is 28 percent.[34] High levels of organized violence and conflict prevent girls and boys from attending school. Similarly, in Myanmar's Rakhine State, Rohingya people, particularly women and girls, were denied access to formative education as a part of many discriminatory state-sponsored measures to persecute historically marginalized ethnic minorities. Over 1.3 million Rohingya refugees have fled the genocide[35] and widespread and systematic human rights abuses committed by the Burmese security forces in the Rakhine State, choosing to take refuge in Cox's Bazar in neighboring Bangladesh. Women and girls make up 52 percent of this number—many of them are survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). They are denied access to education, struggle to gain access to sexual health and reproductive services, and remain excluded from family and camp decision-making. While there are approximately 1,179 learning centers[36] in the refugee settlements, these cater primarily to teaching young children basic literacy and numeracy. Given the lack of age-appropriate and gender-responsive education, only four percent of Rohingya women refugees over the age of 15 have access to fundamental literacy training.[37] As a result of their extremely restricted mobility and limited education and economic opportunities, the Rohingya refugee women and girls have become increasingly vulnerable to human and drug trafficking, radicalization, and violence.

[33] "Report of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda | Department of Economic and Social Affairs." United Nations. United Nations, 2013. https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/report-of-the-un-system-task-team-on-the-post-2015-development-agenda/.
[34] "Sustainable Development Goals Database." UNESCO UIS, 2018. http://uis.unesco.org/.
[35] Khandaker, Tamara. "Canada's Parliament Declares Rohingya Crisis a Genocide." Vice, September 20, 2018. https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/pa8gwk/canadas-parliament-declares-rohingya-crisis-a-genocide.
[36] Patinkin, Jason. "A Lost Generation: No Education, No Dreams for Rohingya Refugee Children." The New Humanitarian, August 23, 2019. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2018/05/28/lost-generation-no-education-no-dreams-rohingya-refugee-children.
[37] "One Year On: Time to Put Women and Girls at the Heart of the Rohingya Response." Oxfam, September 11, 2018. https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/one-year-on-time-to-put-women-and-girls-at-the-heart-of-the-rohingya-response/.

Forced displacement and humanitarian emergencies as a result of armed conflict has a deeply gendered impact on women and girls' access to public services. In Syria, the vast majority of the population lives below the poverty line and is highly dependent on humanitarian aid. Women and youth are more severely impacted and at higher risk of being targeted, sexually extorted, or denied access to aid. Since the crisis began, nearly 1.7 million Syrian refugees have fled to Jordan and Lebanon; over half are children, and over half are female. The Syrian refugee population living in Jordan and Lebanon is young, with over 81 percent under 35 years of age.[38] While humanitarian aid and refugee assistance programs provide some degree of assistance for the basic needs of refugee populations, these programs are not sustainable and do not foster a transition to economic self-reliance. In addition, although young women and girls consist of 34 million of the 136 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the world,[39] humanitarian emergency response programs are rarely gender-sensitive, nor do they respond to the needs of historically marginalized communities.

Donor-driven social protection systems are unsustainable. In certain conflict-affected countries, such as South Sudan, social protection systems take on the form of a non-contributory safety net support that is almost exclusively financed by donors as humanitarian assistance. It is estimated that poverty levels in South Sudan reached 82 percent in 2016.[40] This deterioration can be linked to the fresh breakout of conflict in 2013, as well as the decline in the price of oil in late 2014. A vast majority of the population faces food insecurity either due to loss of their subsistence farm activities or loss of the earning member of the family. In the absence of adequate safety net measures, South Sudanese women, girls, and young men are on the verge of even graver distress.

Early, forced, and child marriage is strongly exacerbated by poverty and debt systems. "Terrorist brides" and their children face specific challenges and are denied social protections. In many countries, youth who cannot prove the citizenship of their father (due to disappearance, death, or other) are denied national registration and are stateless. As the number of stateless youth increases, they face grave problems, severe discrimination, frustration, and despair, yet, are denied agency and rendered "invisible" by status. This makes youth vulnerable to exploitation and violations in exchange for basic services. There remains an absence of accurate statistics on the intersecting impacts of statelessness on children and youth. Early, forced, and child marriage in Indonesia, which has approximately 1,459,000 child brides, [41] is linked to the rise of violent extremism conducive to terrorism, ethno-religious conflict, and intolerance. Young women in Indonesia are often the first victims of violent extremist groups. They are also recruited, forcibly or willingly, and play a role in recruiting others.

In Canada, access to social services is through nationally appropriated social protection systems; however, the reality of Indigenous women and youth is much more complex. Indigenous women and youth experience violent conflict and poverty due to systemic discrimination towards indigenous peoples. This makes it almost impossible for indigenous women and youth to receive services from the state. Access to land and housing is often used against Indigenous groups to keep them on the margins of society and impoverished. Ensuring indigenous women and youth have access to social protection and social services must involve advocating for the state to acknowledge the treatment of Indigenous groups, both historically and in the present.

The impact of poverty and conflict are strongly interconnected—and deeply gendered. Countries with high rates of poverty are more prone to conflict. Poverty compounds the vulnerability to insurgency at both the individual and community level; it creates systemic discriminatory patterns that prevent women and youth from having equal access to opportunities, social protection, and economic opportunities. Social welfare is often depleted in times of war, and most strongly impacts rural communities and vulnerable groups (such as refugee populations) where women are overrepresented. As a result, there is a decrease in school enrollment rates, and an increase in child marriages, health crises, and other forms of social crises.

[38] Verme, Paolo; Gigliarano, Chiara; Wieser, Christina; Hedlund, Kerren; Petzoldt, Marc; Santacroce, Marco. 2016. The Welfare of Syrian Refugees : Evidence from Jordan and Lebanon. Washington, DC: World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23228/9781464807701.pdf?sequence=21&isAllowed=y
[39] "Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security (S/2018/900) - World," October 9, 2018. https://undocs.org/S/2018/900.
[40] United Nations, and World Bank. "Pathways for Peace." Ibid.
[41] Girls Not Brides. "Indonesia - Child Marriage Around The World. Girls Not Brides." Girls Not Brides. Accessed February 26, 2020. https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/indonesia/.

Women, young women, and girls in conflict-affected communities have mobilized to advocate for equal access to nationally appropriated social protection systems. In the absence of government social protections, they provide social services to local communities. For example, rural indigenous women in Canada have been trained as midwives so that women from their historically marginalized communities do not need to depend on urban health centers where they could experience discrimination or gender-based violence. Similarly, the I am She Network in Syria provides psychosocial and mental health support for girls, youth, and women affected by conflict. Cordaid supports sustainable income-generating activities for women and youth in conflict-affected communities, so that local communities are able to fund children's education and medical care. Finally, the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) Nigeria engages youth through a program called Youth Coalition Against Terrorism to reduce their vulnerabilities of joining extremist groups such as Boko Haram.

We call on the key stakeholders to take the following urgent steps:

❖ Member States should maintain and ensure equal access for women and girls—particularly from grassroots communities—to nationally appropriated social protection systems, which respond to the urgent and long-term needs of women, young women, girls, and other historically marginalized groups during or after armed conflict.

❖ Member States should make specific investments in education at all levels as a tool for peace and protection women, youth, and other historically marginalized and vulnerable communities (such as refugees, undocumented migrants, former combatants, indigenous people, and religious minorities) uninhibited access to educational institutions in conflict-affected settings.

❖ Member States, UN Entities and the Donor Community should develop and implement gender-sensitive humanitarian emergency responses that reduce the vulnerability of women and youth refugees to sexual violence, radicalization, and trafficking.

❖ Member States, UN Entities and the Donor Community should also prioritize access to sexual and reproductive health in times of crisis, recognizing that it is one of the basic services women need access to, and an inalienable part of a survivor-based approach to sexual violence in conflict.

E. PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Peace is the foundation of sustainable development and gender equality. [42] 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.[43] 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 percent of the global cost of war that year.[44] Preventing conflict and sustaining peace is more than simply ending war; it must address root causes of conflict including militarization, arms proliferation, gender inequality and violations of human rights, lack of sustainable development, and a shrinking space for civil society. Given the overwhelming evidence showing that gender inequality is a key predictor of violence, it is pertinent to reaffirm human rights, including the rights of all women, girls, and other historically marginalized groups in order to fulfil their responsibilities to maintain international peace and security.

The increase in conflicts and their evolving nature have a strong impact on gender roles in society, deepening inequality and discrimination. New tactics of warfare, the absence of clear battlefields, human and sex trafficking, the deliberate targeting of education and health care facilities, the use of child soldiers, and the increasing number and diversification of parties to conflict are all trends in the evolution of armed conflict which have deteriorated the human security of women and girls. Over 50 parties to conflict are suspected of having committed or instigated systematic patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council.[45] In 2019, 30 percent of ongoing armed conflicts experienced an escalation of violence, resulting high levels of forcibly displaced persons and sexual violence in conflict.[46] Refugee crises and humanitarian emergencies as a result of armed conflict have increased the vulnerability of many displaced women and girls to sexual violence. The total number of people forcibly displaced by conflict reached 70.8 million in 2019; with women and girls making up over 50 percent of this number.[47] According to the 2018 UN World Water Development Report, an estimated 3.6 billion people (close to half the global population) live in areas that are water-scarce; this population could increase to 5 billion by 2050.[48]

Aid for women and youth organizations in conflict is alarmingly low. Between 2016 and 2017, only 0.2 percent of total bilateral aid to fragile and conflict-affected situations went directly to women's organizations; the percentage of direct aid for youth organizations is even lower.[49]

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. It is important to note that prevention and mediation will not 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 and YPS agendas are essential to the attainment of peaceful and inclusive societies. In addition, the UN Sustaining Peace Agenda puts forth a vision of peacebuilding that is context-specific, locally-driven, and demands coherence, coordination and concerted actions across the UN system, member states, civil society, and other stakeholders. Bridging the gap between national and local peacebuilding has been indicated as one of the most important contributions of women and youth to sustaining peace.

[42] 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.
[43] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Accessed from:
https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/world-military-expenditure-grows-18-trillion-2018 on December 28, 2019.
[44] 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.
[45] "Secretary General Report to the United Nations Security Council on Women, Peace, and Security, 2019." Security Council Report, October 9, 2019. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/{65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9}/s_2019_800.pdf.
[46] "Alert 2019! Report on Conflicts, Human Rights and Peacebuilding - World." ReliefWeb, June 4, 2019.
https://reliefweb.int/report/world/alert-2019-report-conflicts-human-rights-and-peacebuilding.
[47] "World Refugee Day 2019." Doctors of the World, June 20, 2019. https://doctorsoftheworld.org/blog/world-refugee-day-2019/.
[48] "United Nations World Water Development Report, Nature-based Solutions for Water." UNESCO, 2018.
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261424
[49] "DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker." OECD. Accessed February 26, 2020. http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm.

Women and youth civil society work towards protecting human rights, human security, sustainable development, responsible natural resource management, good governance, and a harmonious community relying on non-violent conflict resolution are the foundation of peace. In their diverse constituencies, women and youth bring in different perspectives to peace processes and demand that the root causes of conflict be addressed. They think beyond elite power sharing to truly inclusive, just, and accountable post-conflict resolution. For example, the strong gender and women's rights provisions in the peace agreements between the Colombian and Philippine governments with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front respectively are a direct result of the advocacy and meaningful participation of feminist movements and women's rights groups from both countries. In addition, the persistent and sustained advocacy of the South Sudan Women's Coalition for Peace during the High-Level Revitalization Process in 2018 directly contributed to the advancements in women's political participation enshrined in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, including a required minimum of 35 percent participation of women in national and local political decision making and a youth leader for the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Sport.

When women and youth participate in the implementation of peace agreements, they help ensure that implementation is effective, and that it benefits everyone. They are involved in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace in a variety of ways, especially through advocacy and communal gatherings. For example, in Kenya women and youth are working as first-responders, mediators, peace ambassadors and peacebuilders, innovators, and entrepreneurs to advance sustainable peace in their communities. Additionally, women and youth groups are frequently those working on the frontline of crisis response. In Nigeria women and young people serve as monitors to report signs of conflict and are using news outlets to disseminate warnings and raise awareness. In Canada, young people are hosting healing circles to bring community members together in dialogue to work towards peaceful solutions. In Colombia, women's groups carry out relief coordination by creating initiatives to feed the incoming refugees from Venezuela. Women's rights groups and organizations led by young women also work to promote sustainable and inclusive post-conflict reconciliation processes. Civil society advocacy in DRC, Nepal, and Rwanda (among many other countries) demands safe and unrestricted access to sexual health and reproductive services; sustained psycho-social counselling for victims as a post-conflict recover measure; and accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence as a part of truth and reconciliation processes. Peacebuilding measures and programs designed by governments and UN entities should amplify the existing efforts of grassroots women's rights and youth organizations.

Women peacebuilders support the implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325. "Activists groups such as the Granddaughters movement in Yemen have used the NAP on UNSCR 1325 as an entry point to translate the fluffy UN framework to a local context, wherein religious women can on roles as leaders, decision-makers, and agents of change," shared a participating organization from Yemen. The localization of UNSCR 1325, an innovative program pioneered by GNWP, is a people-based, bottom-up approach which involves key local stakeholders in the integration of UNSCR 1325 across local legislation such as community development plans and the formulation of local action plans (LAPs). Cited by the UN Secretary General seven times in his reports to the Security Council, localization is a key tool for translating policy into practice. In Nepal, the NAP on UNSCR 1325 is crucial for women peacebuilders' advocacy for accountability and justice for conflict-related sexual violence.

However, women continue to be largely excluded from peace processes and political decision-making. Between 1992 and 2018, women constituted 13 percent of negotiators, 3 percent of mediators, and only 4 percent of signatories in major peace processes.[50] Women and youth's absence in formal peace negotiations results in their underrepresentation or absence in formal political leadership and decision-making positions. "There is a significant amount of research that proves the importance of women's effective and meaningful participation in peace processes, but even in spite of that, democracy and stability cannot be built on discrimination," a participating organization from Armenia shared. Diverse, inclusive, just peace processes should be politically and financially supported. Donor countries with self-proclaimed "feminist foreign policies" should require women and youth mediators in peace processes they fund. For example, Sweden established a network of women peace mediators from Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria who are involved in peace negotiations. In addition, Sweden has included a "democracy clause" for arms trade, through which it will not export arms to governments violating the human rights of their citizens. In addition, monitoring and evaluation is critical to ensure effective implementation and accountability for commitments on the WPS and YPS agendas.

[50] "Women's Participation in Peace Processes." Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations.Accessed February 26, 2020. https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes.

Although 26 indicators to monitor the implementation of the WPS Agenda were developed under UNSCR 1889 (2009), monitoring and reporting capacities remain limited, financing insufficient, and coordination among regional and national authorities lacking. Collecting data using locally adaptable and acceptable indicators is necessary to track implementation progress, identify gaps, and address challenges. Effective reporting is equally important. The collected data must be used to inform advocacy, raise awareness, hold stakeholders accountable and accelerate implementation. Government, civil society, local and traditional leaders, the media, and international and regional actors all play important roles in monitoring and evaluation.

The media plays a key role in combating stigma and stereotypes, as well as in holding governments accountable to the WPS and YPS Agendas. Journalists play a crucial role in raising broad public awareness of the WPS and YPS agendas, important developments in peace processes, stimulate debate, and generate public support for the role of youth and women in peace and security and political decision-making processes. Mass media can not only break the traditionally conservative stereotypes around women and youth portrayed as victims of conflict, but also report on government accountability.

We call on the key stakeholders to take the following urgent steps:

❖ Member States, UN Entities, and the Donor Community should take decisive action to prevent conflict, avert humanitarian crises, and end war through inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding measures that:

➤ address the root causes of conflict;

➤ protect the human rights of all persons; and

➤ support the full and effective implementation of the WPS, YPS, and Sustaining Peace agendas.

❖ Member States should ratify and uphold the Arms Trade Treaty, and stop arms transfers, especially when they may be used to commit serious violations of international law, including human rights and humanitarian law.

❖ Member States, UN Entities and the Donor Community should support women and youth-led peacebuilding and economic empowerment initiatives, including localization of National Action Plans (NAPs) and other localized approaches to the implementation of the WPS and YPS agendas.

❖ Member States, UN Entities and the Donor Community should ensure access to funding for civil society working on the implementation of the WPS and YPS without bureaucratic barriers and marginalizing requirements; and include women and youth civil society in development and decision-making in the allocation of grants. Multi-year funding and core funding for organizations working within the peace movement and for WPS and YPS Agenda implementation is key to sustaining peace.

❖ Member States, UN Entities, the Donor Community, and Civil Society should ensure consistent gender-disaggregated data collection, monitoring, evaluation, conflict analysis and reporting of the implementation, or lack thereof, of the WPS and YPS Agendas, along with consistent qualitative and quantitative data for evidence-based advocacy.

❖ Member States and UN Entities should support the coordination and mobilization of transnational grassroots led movements by women and youth, including with financial support and funding opportunities.

❖ Member States and UN Entities should commit to legal reform and the sustainability of peace through justice and local laws that protect advocacy initiatives, including the right to protest and organize. Facilitating these gatherings are essential for grassroots mobilization and social change.

❖ Civil Society, the Media and the Private Sector should increase cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaborative efforts for sustainable peace, promoting tolerance, and upholding human rights.

F. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION, AND REHABILITATION

Climate change and natural resource scarcity are two emerging themes at the core of the WPS agenda's approach to conflict prevention.[51] The global threat of climate change and environmental degradation can negatively affect farming, livestock production, reduce fish and marine production, and damage economies overall. Management of access to natural resources can decisively contribute to poverty, food insecurity, crime, and instability in local communities, often impacting women and girls disproportionately.

Conflict-affected women and communities around the world identify access to resources—including land and water—as one of the main sources of conflict. 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. Poor harvests intensified by extreme weather conditions can also push people to join militia groups. 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.[52]

In addition, the environmental impact of armed conflict is often immense and contributes to a recurrence of violence in post-conflict situations. For example, the influx of 1.3 million Rohingya refugees fleeing genocide in the Rakhine State of Myanmar to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh has created significant pressure on—and misuse of—the scarce natural resources in the host communities, resulting in degraded natural forests and an imminent water crisis.[53] The indiscriminate clearing of forested areas for refugee camps and facilities,[54] increased air pollution due to smoke and firewood being burned by refugees, and improper solid-waste management[55] all contribute to rising tensions between Rohingya refugees and the host Bangladeshi community, and could serve as a potential driver of conflict. Similarly, in North Central Nigeria in the Benue State, armed conflict has led to the widespread destruction of agriculture infrastructure, leaving people's livelihood prospects limited. Youth in this context have become vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups. Therefore, protection of the environment and gender-sensitive access to natural resources are essential elements of sustainable and inclusive peace.

Young women and girls are in conflict-affected countries are the most vulnerable to climate insecurity. When resources dwindle as a result of climate change, young women and girls are forced to take on domestic work or agricultural labor to support their families. There is also a reported increase in the incidence of early, forced, and child marriage after floods and droughts, due to families' inability to support daughters financially during these periods.[56] Forced displacement as a result of extreme weather further increases the vulnerability of young women and girls to sexual violence and sex trafficking.[57] The changing climate fuels and aggravates poverty, inequality and violent conflict, compounding the burden and violence experienced by women and girls as a result.

[51] This was highlighted in the 2015 Global Study on UNSCR 1325, see: "A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325". 2015. https://wps.unwomen.org/.
[52] "Leadership from the Ground up: Research on Civil Society Perceptions of the Meaning of Sustaining Peace for Local Populations, Especially Local Women." GNWP, 2018. https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/Sustaining-Peace_summary-report_5-Dec.pdf.
[53] "Environmental Impacts of Rohingya Influx: A Multifaceted Problem Requires Multifaceted Responses." UNDP in Bangladesh, September 2018. https://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/09/18/Environmental_impacts_of_Rohingya_influx.html.
[54] Ibid. "Environmental Impacts of Rohingya Influx.."
[55] "4,300 Acres of Hills, Forests Razed for Rohingya Shelters." The Daily Star, August 26, 2019. https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/rohingya-influx-puts-biodiversity-risk-in-coxs-bazar-1635562.
[56] SDSN Youth. "Youth, Peace & Security Thematic Paper." SDSN Youth. SDSN Youth, August 12, 2017. https://sdsnyouth.org/blog-posts/yps-press-release.
[57] "Migration, Environment and Climate Change." International Organization for Migration, 2009. https://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/migration_and_environment.pdf.

As the world population continues to grow younger and younger, enabling young people to play a role in environmental conservation and peacebuilding is essential for progress and sustainable peace. Young women have forged their own avenues to lead advocacy for peacebuilding, the protection of the environment, and gender-sensitive access to natural resources. Oladosu Adenike from Nigeria, Winnie Asiti from Kenya, and Nakabuye Hilda F. from Uganda are all young ecofeminists leading "Friday for Future" climate marches in conflict-affected communities and raising awareness of the hazards of climate change on peace and security.[58]

We call on the key stakeholders to take the following urgent steps:

❖ Member States should establish mechanisms to improve the meaningful participation of women and youth, particularly indigenous climate activists, scientists, grassroots farmers, and technical advisers, in decision-making at all levels for environmental safety and resource management programs and policies as an essential conflict prevention strategy.

❖ Member States should ensure equal and uninhibited access to natural resources for women, youth, and other historically marginalized groups across age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identities, and socio-economic class.

❖ Member States should raise awareness of conservation and sustainable living practices in local communities and promote local participation of women and girls in spatial-planning and infrastructure development during peace processes, reconstruction and recovery.

❖ UN Entities should improve gender-based, sustainable and environmentally friendly humanitarian emergency response and peacekeeping missions.

❖ UN Entities should mainstream gender and youth perspectives into the design, approval and execution of projects funded under the Global Environment Facility and other suitable UN agencies.

❖ The Private Sector should commit to the Women's Empowerment Principles and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, along with the UN's Due Diligence Screening.

[58] https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/female-activists-saving-planet/, accessed 03-14-2020

MEMBERSHIP

We are grassroots women and youth peacebuilders, national, regional and global women's rights and feminist organizations, and civil society networks from around the world who are working towards the full and effective implementation of the Women and Peace and Security, and Youth and Peace and Security agendas. Together we formed ourselves as the civil society-led Beijing+25 Women and Peace and Security – Youth and Peace and Security (Beijing+25 WPS-YPS) Action Coalition to ensure the intentional integration of key messages on the WPS and YPS agendas in the Beijing +25/Generation Equality Global Forum processes and outcome documents.

1. Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) (Jordan)
2. Alamal Association (Iraq)
3. Amassuru (Brazil)
4. Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (Latin America and the Caribbean)
5. Asia-Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security (Asian and the Pacific)
6. Asian Youth Peace Network (Bangladesh)
7. Associa-Med (Tunisia)
8. Afghan Women Welfare and Development Association (AWWDA) (Afghanistan)
9. 1325 Action Group (Nepal)
10. Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) (Asia and the Pacific)
11. Azerbaijan National Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (Azerbaijan)
12. Burundian Women for Peace and Development (BWPD) (Netherlands)
13. Benimpuhwe Organisation (Rwanda)
14. Balay Mindanaw (Philippines)
15. BrightPoint (Afghanistan)
16. Better World NGO (Iraq)
17. Business for Peace Community Development Foundation (United States)
18. Canadian Council of Young Feminists (Canada)
19. Centre de Développement Communautaire (Democratic Republic of Congo)
20. Collectif des Associations et ONG Féminines du Burundi (CAFOB) (Burundi)
21. Centre Bamamu Tabulukayi (Democratic Republic of Congo)
22. Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (Canada)
23. Cordaid (Netherlands/Global)
24. Centerfor Civil Society and Democracy (CCSD) (Syria)
25. CEIPAZ-Fundación Cultura de Paz (Spain)
26. Coalition for Action 1325 (CoAct 1325 (Uganda)
27. Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica (CIASE) (Colombia)
28. Center for Peace Education (Miriam College) (Philippines)
29. Cadre Permanent de Concertation de la Femme Congolaise (CAFCO) (Democratic Republic of Congo)
30. Democracy Today (Armenia)
31. Democracy Development Center (Ukraine)
32. Eve Organization on Women Development (South Sudan and Uganda)
33. Escola de Cultura de Pau, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona (Spain)
34. Femmes Juristes pour les droits de la femme et de l'enfant (Democratic Republic of Congo)
35. Foreign Policy Association (APE) (Moldova)
36. Fontaine-ISOKO (Burundi)
37. Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) - UK (United Kingdom)
38. Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) (Global)
39. Green Hope Foundation (Canada)
40. Gender Centru (Moldova)
41. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) (Global)
42. Global Shapers Alexandira (Egypt)
43. Institute for International Women's Rights-Manitoba (Canada)
44. IDP Women's Association Consent (Georgia)
45. I am She Network (Syria)

46. International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (Global)
47. Inclusive Society (France)
48. Iraqi Women's Network (Iraq)
49. Jago Nari Unnayon Sangstha (Bangladesh)
50. Luwero Women Development Association (Uganda)
51. Middle East and North Africa Partnership for Preventing Armed Conflict (MENAPPAC) (MENA Region)
52. Messengers of Peace Liberia (Liberia)
53. National Organization of Women (Sierra Leone)
54. Naripokkho (Bangladesh)
55. Nile Basin Discourse Forum (NBDF) (Rwanda)
56. NGO Working Group on Women and Youth in the Great Lakes Region (Great Lakes Region - Africa)
57. National Network for Beijing Review (Nepal)
58. National Organization for Women (NOW) (Sri Lanka)
59. Nobel Women's Initiative (Global)
60. Our Generation for Inclusive Peace (Global)
61. Operation 1325 (Sweden)
62. Permanent Peace Movement (PPM) (Lebanon)
63. Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network (RCCDN) (Rwanda)
64. Rural Women Peace Link (Kenya)
65. Red Nacional de Mujeres (Colombia)
66. Rwanda Women Network (Rwanda)
67. Saathi (Nepal)
68. Synergie des Associations Féminines du Congo (SAFECO) (Democratic Republic of Congo)
69. Synergie des Femmes pour les Victimes des Violences Sexuelles (SFVS) (Democratic Republic of Congo)
70. Teso Women Peace Activists (Uganda)
71. Together We Build It (Libya)
72. Think Peace (Mali)
73. Total Women's Development and Unity Centre (RUWDUC) (Nepal)
74. United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) (Global)
75. Unity for the Future (Ukraine)
76. UN Major Group on Youth and Children (Bangladesh)
77. West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) - Nigeria (Nigeria)
78. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Germany (Germany)
79. Women, Peace and Security Network - Canada (Canada)
80. WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform (Netherlands)
81. Women in Public Service Center (Albania)
82. Women's Information Center (Georgia)
83. Women Problem Research Union (WPRU) (Azerbaijan)
84. Women's Association for Rational Development (WARP) (Azerbaijan)
85. Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) (Liberia)
86. Women for A Change (Cameroon)
87. Women's Empowerment Organization (Iraq)
88. women's International League for Peace and Freedom - DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo)
89. Wi'am Center (Palestine)
90. Women's International Peace Center (Uganda)
91. Women's Resource Center (Armenia)
92. Young Peacemakers in Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan)
93. Young Women for Peace and Leadership (Bangladesh)
94. Young Women for Peace and Leadership (Democratic Republic of Congo)
95. Young Women for Peace and Leadership (Indonesia)
96. Young Women for Peace and Leadership (Philippines)
97. Young Women for Peace and Leadership (South Sudan)
98. Youth for Change and Development Organization (Afghanistan)
99. Zhiva Ya (Ukraine)
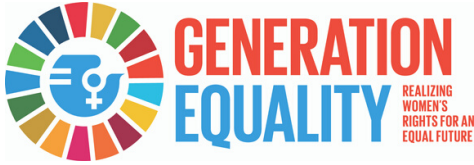
BEIJING+25 WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY - YOUTH, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACTION COALITION

40+ COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

For more information, contact Mallika Iyer at: mallika@gnwp.org