



CSW 63 - High-Level Roundtable Discussion on Gender Equality in Public Institutions for Sustaining Peace

CONCEPT NOTE

Date: Thursday 14 March 2019

Time: 11:30 am-12:45 pm (75 minutes)

Location: Amartya Sen Room – UNDP Offices (304 E 45th St. – 10th floor)

This event will bring together Member States, experts and practitioners to share their perspectives and experiences on the relationship between gender equality in public administration (GEPA) and sustaining peace. The event will serve as a platform to discussing key questions around the opportunities and challenges that sustaining peace poses for promoting inclusivity in public institutions. It will also serve as an occasion to present the latest findings from the UNDP-UPitt GEPA research initiative on how conflict shapes women’s participation in and leadership of the civil service.

1. Background

Public administration is the bedrock of government and acts as the means by which vital national and local programmes and actions are implemented. The composition of public administration can have significant impacts on the inclusiveness and effectiveness of governance institutions, including on service delivery, health, sanitation and education.¹ In conflict-affected settings the re-establishment of core government functions, especially though equitable and inclusive public administration and service delivery, is key for accelerating recovery, building state legitimacy and trust and sustaining peace.²

Large policy shifts over the past few years have opened the way for development actors to re-orient their work towards a positive approach to engaging and collaborating with young people as key actors for peace and security. The twin sustaining peace resolutions adopted in 2016, A/RES/70/262 AND S/RES/2282 call on the international community to past approaching peacebuilding as something relevant to only to post-conflict settings toward working to prevent the “outbreak, escalation, continuation of violent conflict” by addressing root causes and potential drivers.

As has been widely recognized, moments of recovery and consolidation of peace present pivotal opportunities for governance institutions to “build back better.”³ Yet in many cases, these efforts have not sufficiently leveraged the potential to increase the representation of women leaders in public administration. In addition, it appears that national commitments to increasing women’s participation in decision-making have not always transformed outcomes on the ground.

¹<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Public%20Administration/gender%20diversity%20in%20the%20state.pdf>

² https://www.pathwaysforpeace.org/sites/pathways/files/2018-02/Pathways-for-Peace_ES_eBook.pdf

³ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/core-government-functions/-re-building-core-government-functions-in-fragile-and-conflict-a.html>

Too little is still understood about how conflict dynamics shape gender representation in public institutions and what opportunities exist for overcoming these challenges in conflict-affected settings. Over the past years, UNDP has partnered with the University of Pittsburgh to begin closing the massive data gap on women in public institutions. Pairing an analysis of global data with in-depth case studies across several countries, new GEPA research has been discovering the mechanisms by which conflict shapes women's participation in and leadership of the civil service. The research has implications for how peacebuilding processes, post-conflict institutional reforms, and power-sharing strategies might be made more inclusive and sustainable.

The 2030 Agenda, through SDG 5 and SDG 16, calls on the international community to promote equality between women and men, and to promote just and inclusive governance of our societies. Now is therefore a timely moment to focus on how national governments, development actors and the international community can work together promote approaches that leverage a commitment to gender equality and inclusive governance for sustainable development and peace.

2. Session objectives

This roundtable will bring together diverse participants, including Member States, practitioners and experts to explore how gender equality in public institutions can contribute to sustaining peace, and to consider key challenges and opportunities.

- Bring greater visibility to the role that gender equality in public administration can play in sustaining peace.
- Explore the ways in which conflicts shape women's participation and leadership in civil service.
- Showcase examples of how women in public institutions and civil service have helped to contribute to peacebuilding in diverse national contexts.
- Provide a platform for Member States to share how their own efforts to promote gender inclusive public institutions have/or can have an impact on promoting peaceful societies.
- Identify existing challenges—including data gaps—for increasing gender equality in public institutions for peacebuilding.
- Engage in a forward-looking discussion on existing opportunities for enhancing gender equality in public institutions to help prevent the “outbreak, escalation, continuation of violent conflict.”

The session will be based the following overarching questions:

- What are the challenges and opportunities that efforts to sustain peace present for fostering inclusive public institutions, and what are the ways in which inclusive public institutions can promote sustainable development and peace?
- How do conflicts shape gender equality in public institutions and women's access to leadership within them?
- What lessons have been gained from national experiences for promoting inclusive public administration and the possibility these strategies hold for advancing gender equality in public administration in conflict-settings?
- How can data, research and multi-stakeholder partnerships be leveraged to promote equitable and inclusive public administration in conflict-affected settings, precisely where they can make a difference for sustainable development and peace?

3. Roundtable participants

- H.E. Ms. Ana Maria Tribin Uribe, *President's High Advisor for Women's Equality, Republic of Colombia*
- H.E. Ms. Janet Camilo Hernández, *Minister of Women, Dominican Republic*
- H.E. Ms. Awut Deng Achuil, *Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Republic of South Sudan*
- H.E. Mr. Charlie Flanagan T.D., *Minister for Justice and Equality, Ireland*
- Dr. Melanie Hughes, *Co-Director of Gender Inequality Research Lab (GIRL), University of Pittsburgh*
- Dr. Müge Finkel, *Co-Director of Gender Inequality Research Lab (GIRL), University of Pittsburgh*
- Ms. Raquel Lagunas, *Senior Advisor on Gender, United Nations Development Programme* (moderator)