

## **Event Summary of the Expert-level discussion among Adopters of the Secretary-General's Common Pledge on Women's Participation in Peace Processes**

8 May 2025

On 8 May, DPPA and the Permanent Missions of Angola and Switzerland to the United Nations (UN) co-hosted an expert-level discussion among the Member State, Regional Organization and non-governmental adopters of the Secretary-General's Common Pledge on Women's Participation in Peace Processes. The Permanent Representatives of Angola and Switzerland to the UN, as co-hosts, as well as briefers from The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (Fem-Wise Africa), the Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF), and a United Nations gender advisor from the field shared good practice and lessons-learned on institutionalizing Common Pledge commitments. In all, 19 of the adopters of the Pledge took the floor to describe steps they have taken related to the Pledge.

DPPA Policy and Mediation Division Director Asif Khan noted that no single mediation actor can bring about global change in women's participation in peace processes. He highlighted that the Secretary-General's Common Pledge contains practical steps, and that over 30 mediation actors have committed to take measures to increase women's participation in the peace processes they support. Sharing member state perspectives, the Permanent Representatives of Angola and Switzerland highlighted the importance of renewing political will to promote women's role in mediation in concrete ways across the world. From a regional perspective, FemWise-Africa shared the African Union (AU) experience on opportunities for institutionalizing bold targets and creative implementation measures for women's participation in regionally led peace processes, highlighting the importance of raising expectations to take steps towards gender parity. From a conflict diplomacy and mediation support organisation perspective, NOREF highlighted the importance of designing engagement to include women from the very early stages, as exemplified in its work with the Syrian Civil Society Support Room. A UN mission highlighted the need to move from an ad hoc approach to the establishment of a comprehensive accountability framework with local buy-in to ensure the inclusion of civil society, including women's organisations, the integration of a gender perspective and women's effective participation at all levels of the peace process.

The discussion among the adopters highlighted the importance of institutionalizing measures to advance multi-track processes. Adopters generally agreed that the most challenging Common Pledge commitment relates to identifying ways to engage with conflict parties on including women in their negotiating delegations. Adopters highlighted how advocacy by mediators on concrete targets and supporting measures, can critically raise the bar. Adopters highlighted their efforts to advocate for women across all tracks (including consultative committees and dedicated track 1.5 mechanisms). They also noted the need for meaningful participation that goes beyond "a seat at the table". Adopters highlighted efforts to sensitize conflict parties to identify barriers to inclusion and consider them in process design.

Adopters also emphasized that consulting and engaging diverse women including women's groups and women-led civil society at all stages is essential to build pressure for women's direct

participation in track 1 processes, as well as to advance holistic and durable peace priorities. This also includes technical and financial support to women networks and actors, women mediator networks (such as the Ibero-American Network of Women Mediators, Mediterranean Women Mediator Network, and the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks) and women-led civil society. They further highlighted the importance of providing safe spaces to listen to women mediators and peacemakers, and ensuring their analysis informs inclusive peacemaking.

Securing gender expertise in mediation teams was also affirmed by adopters as essential to promote gender-responsive peace processes and agreements, alongside ensuring all staff are responsible for mainstreaming gender in their various areas of supporting mediation efforts. To support such efforts, Terms of Reference of mediation advisors should include gender expertise and mediation teams should receive dedicated training on gender and women's participation.

Finally, it is also important to “walk the talk” by modeling women's participation and leadership. Adopters highlighted the importance of political will in appointing women as lead mediators and including women in mediation teams – from peace process guarantors in Latin America to mediators in the Horn of Africa. The importance of providing technical support for women diplomats in conflict settings to engage was also noted, in particular in ceasefire negotiations.

UN Women also shared their Women in Peace Processes Monitor, which tracks and analyzes data on women in peace processes. They invited adopters to contribute to this, as relevant, in order to complement efforts and learning on the Common Pledge.

Overall, discussion highlighted the importance of continuing to increase efforts to operationalize the four main Common Pledge commitments in the mediation processes of which adopters are a part. Beyond the Common Pledge, adopters stressed the importance of leadership, clear mandates and consistent advocacy for women's participation in all areas of work (including through the UN Group of Friends on Mediation, the UN Security Council, the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and through regional organizations). They noted the importance of creating an enabling environment for women's participation, including through funded and effectively monitored Security Council resolution 1325 National Action Plans.

Despite challenges, the discussion also highlighted how, with persistence and creativity, inclusive diplomacy can make a difference. Adopters will continue efforts to deliver on these priorities in the run up to the 25th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 in October 2025.