



Security Council

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Letter dated 1 October 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Switzerland, the Security Council is planning to hold the annual Security Council open debate on women and peace and security, with the topic “Women working for peace in a changing world”. The open debate will be held on Thursday, 24 October, at 10 a.m. and will be chaired by Viola Amherd, President of the Swiss Confederation.

Please find attached a concept note to guide the discussions (see annex). I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Pascale **Baeriswyl**
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 1 October 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the annual Security Council open debate on women and peace and security, on the topic “Women building peace in a changing environment”, to be held on Thursday, 24 October 2024

Background

Building sustainable peace remains an urgent and complex task in a world with over 120 armed conflicts, in which civilians bear the brunt of the ensuing violence, displacement and humanitarian crises. Universal normative frameworks, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, are being violated with impunity in many contexts.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago, the Security Council recognized in its groundbreaking resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) the critical role of women in conflict resolution and mediation. Over the last 20 years, subsequent Security Council resolutions relating to women and peace and security, alongside various programmes, further consolidated a strong international normative framework. Those developments strengthened the understanding that the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership of women in peace processes, the promotion of their rights and their protection against all forms of violence and attacks, including sexual and gender-based violence, are essential to building lasting peace.

Peace agreements reached through inclusive processes have proved to be more comprehensive. Because they go beyond military and security considerations, they are more likely to provide a sustainable solution. The provisions of peace agreements that included women signatories have a higher rate of implementation 10 years after the agreement was concluded than those that did not. On average, agreements with women signatories have an almost 90 per cent implementation rate compared to the 77 per cent implementation rate for agreements without them.¹

Women take on a variety of roles in formal peace mediation and negotiation processes, and in wider efforts to build and sustain peace. Each woman, in her own way, contributes to collective efforts to prevent and resolve conflict and to build lasting peace. They serve as negotiators in official delegations, representatives of civil society, technical experts, observers, guarantors, facilitators and mediators. Women are also involved in peace processes more broadly, including in the context of informal and alternative peace initiatives and dialogues. For instance, they can act as peace advocates or channel the perspectives and voices of local communities to mediators and negotiators. Those diverse roles, the collaboration among such actors and groups, and the range of topics brought to the negotiation table all improve the quality and durability of peace agreements.

In recent years, however, there has been a widening gap between the well-developed international normative framework on women and peace and security, which encompasses both women’s participation and their protection, and its implementation on the ground. The most recent reports of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security highlight concerning trends in relation to the

¹ Jana Krause, Werner Krause and Piia Bränfors, “Women’s participation in peace negotiations and the durability of peace”, *International Interactions*, vol. 44, No. 6 (2018). Between 1990 and 2014, out of 130 peace agreements, women signed only 13. The study includes only women who actually signed an agreement, as a tangible sign that they were able to influence the negotiations.

representation of women in peace processes. Moreover, while the increasing use and spread of new technologies can bring opportunities, including the potential to enhance women's participation, they also carry serious risks that can undermine women's participation and access, for example when women are targeted online in public and political spaces. Furthermore, the United Nations has managed at least 10 transitions in politically and operationally complex settings over the past 10 years, and drawdowns and withdrawals of personnel have been taking place at an accelerated pace, something that has further affected women's rights and gender equality.

Ahead of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the landmark resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), in 2025, Member States must reverse those trends and endeavour to implement the women and peace and security framework with renewed vigour. In so doing, the Security Council and the international community have an opportunity to play a meaningful part in upholding the Charter of the United Nations and international law and creating a more peaceful global environment for current and future generations.

Objectives of the debate

This year's high-level open debate represents an opportunity for Member States to restate their political commitment to the women and peace and security agenda in the light of the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). The United Nations, Member States and representatives of civil society are invited to share best practices on how to strengthen women's participation and leadership, identify potential areas for common action, and highlight existing and new, innovative tools to bolster implementation of the normative framework built over the past 25 years. Three points stand out in particular:

- Political will to implement the existing framework, including concrete measures to advance women's participation and rights, alongside national action plans
- Structures to integrate and strengthen women's expertise and contributions in a variety of roles at the local, national, regional and international levels, and to strengthen cooperation with civil society and women peace actors
- Effective use of existing and new, innovative tools and approaches to address current and emerging challenges in a changing environment for mediators and peacebuilders.

In preparation for the debate, Switzerland convened a two-day retreat with representatives of 10 regional women mediator networks in July 2024. The participants reflected the diversity of roles and backgrounds that women bring to the table. Key outcomes from the discussions at the retreat included the following points:

- Strengthening preparedness for peace negotiations: The need for stronger gender-responsive conflict analysis, mapping and documentation as the basis for women's effective participation in peace talks
- Rethinking mediation approaches: Peace process design that allows for multi-track processes with gender expertise and the inclusion of local women peacebuilders with technical expertise on all topics under negotiation, while also advancing women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in official peace processes, including through specific targets, implementing measures and incentives
- Recognizing women's peace work and efforts: Acknowledging and institutionalizing, as relevant, women mediator networks for more effective integration into peace processes

- Investing in peace: Political and financial support for women-led peace- and alliance-building.

A report capturing the more detailed outcomes of their discussions can be found at the following address: <https://www.aplusforpeace.ch/fr/retreat-report-women-building-peace-changing-environment>.

Guiding questions

1. What commitments should the Security Council, the United Nations, regional organizations, Member States and other actors make in order to move beyond mere political will and promote the concrete implementation of the existing framework for women and peace and security?
2. What concrete initiatives on the part of the Security Council, the United Nations, regional organizations and Member States could reverse the current negative trends in women's participation in peace processes and in the inclusivity of such processes?
3. What tools are needed to address the current challenges? How can new technologies be utilized to promote the participation of women in peace processes and protect women in the public sphere from threats, online harassment and disinformation campaigns?

Briefers

- The Secretary-General of the United Nations
- The Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)
- Civil society representatives (to be confirmed)

Format

The high-level open debate will be chaired by the President of the Swiss Confederation, Viola Amherd. Heads of State or Government and ministers are encouraged to attend.

Member States wishing to participate in the open debate should inscribe their names on the list of speakers through the eSpeakers module of the e-deleGATE portal. A letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, duly signed by the Permanent Representative or the Chargé d'affaires a.i., requesting to participate in accordance with rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council should be uploaded to the eSpeakers module of the e-deleGATE portal.

In the interests of a focused and action-oriented debate, speakers are requested to limit their statements to three minutes.
