

Women and Inequalities

Promoting equal rights and women's participation towards peace

Panel event March 2022

Concept Note

SDG 5 Gender Equality

SDG 10 Reduced Inequality

SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Context

Today's post-covid reality and the on-going conflicts around the world have severe adverse effects on gender equality and women are facing many risks to their health, economic situation and security. While women bear the weight of increased child and elderly care responsibilities after closures of schools and quarantine restrictions, many have lost access to loans and economic opportunities. The pandemic's impact has been devastating on those who were already suffering from health issues and with little resources, pushing large numbers of women into poverty. For many, the focus was shifted to immediate survival.

Women in particularly vulnerable situations, such as in displacement or conflict and post-conflict contexts, are enduring a two-fold crisis, placing their human rights and their participation as equal stakeholders in all facets of society at risk. The 2022 Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights¹ (A/HRC/49/37) highlights the increasing complexity of women's issues in crisis situations, stressing the need for a holistic approach.

In parallel, women are also vital defenders of communities in times of war and conflict through mobilizing and delivering humanitarian assistance at the local community level and play a vital role in both conflict prevention and peace building efforts. Furthermore, the role of women's in fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue, countering extremist

¹ <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/49/37>

discourse, healing rifts between individuals and communities, and addressing the trauma of victims of violence is of paramount importance for sustainable peace. Through the inclusion of a gender perspective, women's meaningful engagement in conflict prevention, recovery and peace building can undeniably contribute to tangible and lasting results. Research has shown that in cases where women had a strong influence on the negotiating process, chances of reaching an agreement was much higher. Women's meaningful participation increased the probability of a peace agreement lasting two years by 20 percent, and 15 years by 35 percent.²

The UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), unanimously adopted in 2000, provides a global framework for the equal involvement of women in peace efforts. Built on the four pillars of prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery, the WPS agenda acknowledges the different gendered experiences of armed conflicts, calls for women's participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction, and demands the protection of women in armed conflict. It provides a tool for advocacy and makes explicit the imperative of equal participation of women. However, despite women's crucial role in achieving lasting stability, the vast majority of peace processes and agreements continue to exclude women. In 15 of 16 examined national dialogues, the decision-making was left to a small group of male leaders.³

Panel Objectives

1. promote gender equality and raise awareness of women's crucial role in fostering lasting peace
2. identify best practices, highlight innovative initiatives and reflect on existing partnerships that reinforce women's meaningful participation in prevention, protection, and peace building
3. offer practical recommendations for enhancing women's meaningful participation in protection, conflict prevention and peace building
4. provide an opportunity for dialogue and information sharing between international experts, NGOs, grassroots activists, and the general public.

Panel Format

The 1 hour panel discussion event will be held on ZOOM on the 22nd of March 2022 at 11am (GMT+1). It will begin with opening remarks from the moderator, **Dr. Umesh Palwankar**, Executive Director, Geneva Centre, followed by a keynote speech by **Dr. George Papadatos**, Ambassador/Head of Delegation, EPLO Geneva (co-organiser) and the statements by panellists. The panellists will have 8 minutes each for their presentations.

² UN Women (2000) Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace, A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, <https://wps.unwomen.org/index.html>

³ Ibid.

After these presentations, there will be 10 minutes reserved for questions from the participants to the panel and closing remarks by the moderator.

Topics of discussion can include

- innovative ways to promote gender equality, to reinforce participation of women, and to raise awareness of women's crucial role in protection, conflict prevention and peace building efforts
- capacity building at the local, national or regional levels
- women in addressing root causes of violence, fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue, community awareness, countering extremist discourse, and promoting gender equality and respect for human rights
- implementation of UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security agenda
- advocacy for women's rights and access to justice
- digital technologies as an opportunity for women's enhanced participation and innovative solutions to conflict prevention

Expected outcome

A follow-up publication for wide distribution, including through social media platforms, will be produced rapidly after the event. The publication will reflect the discussions, lessons learned, and recommendations.

About the organisers

The event is organized by the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue and EPLO.

The Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue is an independent, human rights think-tank and advocacy institution, established in 2013 with its headquarters in Geneva. The Centre is dedicated to promoting a universal, value-driven human rights system anchored in the principles of equity, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, and solidarity. The Centre was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in July 2017. The Centre's principal activities consist of research and publications, training in human rights, reporting on human rights conferences, and organization of thematic panel debates and international advocacy to further the promotion of human rights.

The European Public Law Organization (EPLO) is an international organization dedicated to the creation and dissemination of knowledge in the area of Public Law lato sensu and Governance. The EPLO has been granted the Observer Status at the General Assembly of the United Nations, at the World Intellectual Property Organization, the International Labor Organization and the International Organization for Migration. EPLO develops, organizes, promotes, and supports educational, research, training, institution building and other activities that provides assistance to democratic institutions. EPLO actively participates in the activities and events organized by the Civil Society and undertakes joint actions in tackling issues of common interests.