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Letter dated 5 February 2020 from the representatives of Canada, Germany, Namibia and Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Namibia, together with Canada, Germany and Uruguay, has the honour to transmit the Chair's summary of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network side event, which was held in New York on 25 September 2019 on the margins of the high-level segment of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly (see annex).

The ministerial-level meeting was hosted by Namibia, as Chair of the Network for 2019, in collaboration with the troika members Germany (2018 Chair), Canada (2020 Co-Chair) and Uruguay (2020 Co-Chair) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) serving as the secretariat.

More than 130 participants deliberated on the theme "Women and peace and security: towards full participation" and the sub-theme "Mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda in regional economic communities" to report and follow up on the outcomes of the third annual capital-level meeting of the Network, which was held on 10 and 11 April 2019 in Windhoek.

We would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

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Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

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(Signed) Neville Melvin **Gertze**
Ambassador
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(Signed) Carlos **Amorín**
Ambassador
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Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network side event, held on the margins of the high-level segment of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly

Women and peace and security: towards full participation

Mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda in regional economic communities

Chair's summary

On 25 September 2019, during the high-level segment of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network held a ministerial-level side event at United Nations Headquarters, which brought together more than 130 participants, including government ministers, ambassadors, heads of regional and international organizations and agencies, focal points on women and peace and security and civil society representatives, to deliberate on the theme “Women and peace and security: towards full participation” and the sub-theme “Mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda in regional economic communities”. The meeting was hosted by Namibia, as Chair of the Network for 2019, in collaboration with the troika members Germany (2018 Chair), Canada (2020 Co-Chair) and Uruguay (2020 Co-Chair) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) serving as the secretariat, to report on the outcomes of the third annual capital-level meeting of the Network, which was held on 10 and 11 April 2019 in Windhoek, and to accelerate action to ensure women’s full participation in peace and security while highlighting the role of regional economic communities.

In her introductory remarks, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, noted that the Windhoek meeting marked the first time that the annual capital-level meeting of the Network had been held in Africa. She recalled the main outcome of the discussions in Windhoek, which resulted in a joint communiqué by the Focal Points ([A/73/912-S/2019/513](#), annex), underscoring that access to information, youth networks and the use of technology, including social media, can play a crucial role in promoting and supporting women and youth’s active engagement in peace and security. Ms. Nandi-Ndaitwah highlighted the need to improve information-sharing between regional organizations and to integrate early warning systems for conflict prevention into regional frameworks to enhance effective preparedness and responses to conflict. She also recalled the discussions in Windhoek on the relative underrepresentation of women in arms control and disarmament forums and the need to mainstream the women and peace and security agenda in disarmament processes. She further recalled the concern expressed at the Windhoek meeting over the impact of illicit small arms and light weapons on women and the recognition by the Network Focal Points of the commitment by member States to the Arms Trade Treaty.

In his opening remarks, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, Ariel Bergamino, emphasized the political relevance of the Network to increase the visibility of the women and peace and security agenda and to contribute to its effective implementation at the national, regional and international levels. Noting the significance of the year 2020, which will mark the twentieth anniversary of the

adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, the Ambassador for Women and Peace and Security of Canada, Jacqueline O'Neill, and the Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Affairs of Germany, Bärbel Kofler, in their opening remarks, urged participants to seize the opportunity of the anniversary as a time to accelerate actions on the women and peace and security agenda that will have the greatest impact.

Interventions were also made by the Vice-Minister for Development of Austria, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs of Ireland, the Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare of South Sudan, the Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Executive Director of UN-Women, the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security and the European Union Principal Adviser on gender and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), as well as senior officials from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America and representatives of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, FemWise-Africa and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.

Key recommendations

Several speakers underscored the dismal reality of women accounting for only 2 per cent of mediators and 4.2 per cent of peacekeepers. A recommendation was made that ministers for foreign affairs ensure that women occupy an increased number of roles in peace negotiation processes. All troop- and police-contributing countries were urged to enforce the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to swiftly and credibly address criminal allegations.

The Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, reiterated her call to action from the Windhoek meeting to map out critical issues relating to women and peace and security that need urgent traction, namely protecting women human rights defenders, securing sustained financing for women and peace and security, involving women in post-conflict decision-making, increasing the number of women peacekeepers and investing in gender and conflict analysis. She urged the Network to push back against the pushback on women's rights and issued a challenge for member States to appoint women mediators and to only support mediation processes that include women.

Speakers underscored the need for impact-driven national action plans and localization processes and the urgent need to protect women human rights defenders and to strengthen accountability for sexual violence in conflict. In focus was the necessity to substantially increase funding support for the women and peace and security agenda and for innovative financing mechanisms, such as the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. Speakers also mentioned the need for effective data collection and gender and conflict analysis by member States and regional organizations to prompt more targeted action on women and peace and security. Speakers further highlighted the important role of young people, especially young women, in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and sustaining peace and the need to strengthen the nexus between women and peace and security and youth and peace and security.

A multi-stakeholder approach to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda was recommended, as well as better coordination and cooperation between regional organizations, national Governments, development actors, civil society and the private sector, including regular exchanges between United Nations

agencies, regional organizations, women and peace and security focal points and focal points on small arms and light weapons.

More Member States were encouraged to join the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network, particularly those from Asia and Africa.

Updates on national action plans on women and peace and security

Network members shared updates on the development, adoption and implementation of their national action plans on women and peace and security and noted the value gained from learning from the experiences of other Network members. The United States Strategy on Women and Peace and Security, a mandate of the Women and Peace and Security Act of 2017, was submitted to the United States Congress in June 2019. Namibia adopted its first national action plan in 2019 and South Africa validated its first in August 2019. Uruguay is developing its first national action plan. Canada's current second national action plan has been expanded to address the situation of indigenous women in Canada. South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are currently implementing their first and second national action plans, respectively, and encouraged additional support from partners. Ireland adopted its third national action plan in 2019 after an extensive consultative process. Slovenia has issued its first annual report on the implementation of its second national action plan.

Representatives of regional organizations also highlighted initiatives to increase the effectiveness of national action plans. The European Union has adopted a new women and peace and security strategy, and a regional action plan is being implemented. The African Union will present its first report on women and peace and security in 2019 using the African Union Continental Results Framework. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe continues to support its 57 participating States in the development of national action plans, and 36 have developed such plans. The Union for the Mediterranean is committed to the development of national action plans among its member States and the establishment of a provision to evaluate the implementation of such plans.

Announcements and commitments

- South Africa has put forward a draft resolution to the Security Council focusing on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in its entirety to provide ways to contribute to fully implementing existing commitments and to find ways to address persistent and emerging challenges.
- The African Union has a target to ensure that more than two thirds of African Union member States adopt national action plans by 2020, and that more African countries join the Network.
- Namibia will establish an international women's peace centre in Windhoek in 2020 to serve as an institute of excellence for mediation, inclusive peacebuilding and conflict prevention processes in Africa and globally, in particular to measure the impact of women on peace processes.
- Germany will take stock of the implementation of the pledges committed at the women and peace and security pledging event hosted by Germany, the United Kingdom and UN-Women in April 2019 by more than 75 Member States, United Nations entities and international civil society organizations.
- Uruguay and Canada will host a regional workshop on women and peace and security in December 2019 in preparation for their co-chairmanship of the Network in 2020. Among other things, the workshop will aim at improving and increasing women's meaningful participation in United Nations peacekeeping

operations by discussing partnerships and sharing experiences and lessons learned.

- The United Kingdom will host an international conference on preventing sexual violence in conflict in London in November 2019.

Launch of Commitment 2025

During the meeting, Spain, a founding member of the Network, and represented by its Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Fernando Martín Valenzuela Marzo, launched an initiative of Spain and Finland, Commitment 2025, to ensure that women's inclusion and meaningful participation in peace processes becomes the norm by 2025. The initiative is a list of political and operational commitments to be assumed by States to play a leading role and proactively strive to advance the women and peace and security agenda. Also included are specific actions for the United Nations to ensure that peace and mediation structures are gender-responsive and respond to realities on the ground. At the time of the meeting, Spain, Finland, Belgium, Germany, Namibia, Norway, the United Kingdom and Uruguay had committed to the initiative.

Announcement of the Co-Chairs of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network for 2021

South Africa and Switzerland, represented by the Deputy Political Coordinator of the Security Council Team of the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations, Kgaugelo Mogashoa, and the Head of the International Organizations Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Frank Gruetter, announced that they will serve as Co-Chairs of the Network in 2021. Among their priorities, they plan to strategically anchor the women and peace and security agenda into existing mechanisms and structures and to use common interests and strengths in the field of peace and security, as well as their engagement in different regional networks and organizations, to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.
