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**Letter dated 15 December 2017 from the Permanent
Representatives of Germany, Namibia and Spain to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Spain, together with Germany and Namibia, has the honour to transmit the Chair's summary of the Expert Group Meeting of the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network, co-organized by the three countries and held at the International Peace Institute in New York on 30 November 2017 (see annex).

We should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 65, and of the Security Council.

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Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

(Signed) Neville Melvin **Gertze**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations

(Signed) Román **Oyarzun**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 15 December 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Namibia and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network: summary of the Expert Group Meeting (New York, 30 November 2017)

Introduction

The troika of the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network (Spain, Germany and Namibia), in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the International Peace Institute, convened an Expert Group Meeting in New York on 30 November 2017. The meeting targeted New York-based experts on women and peace and security from the Network membership and civil society. Held at the International Peace Institute, the meeting was an opportunity for attendees to share expectations of the Network's role as a resource to accelerate the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and to discuss future planning. The meeting also enabled the Expert Group to provide inputs on the draft technical operative guidelines of the Network and on the main areas of discussion for the upcoming Network meeting to be held in Berlin in April 2018.

Background

The Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network was initiated by Spain and launched in October 2015 during the high-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). The founding meeting of the Network was held in September 2016. The Network aims to assist Member States and regional organizations to improve and strengthen their implementation of the women and peace and security agenda by championing concrete initiatives at the origin of decision-making processes.

The Network serves as an informal, cross-regional forum. It affirms that Member States and regional organizations are the most influential actors in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and have the primary responsibility to ensure that global commitments and obligations are integrated into national policies and legislation. Spain served as Chair of the Network in 2017, Germany will chair the network in 2018 and Namibia will chair in 2019. UN-Women serves as secretariat for the Network. Civil society, with a key role in implementation and oversight of the agenda, plays a permanent, consultative role in the work of the Network. The secretariat has developed a newsletter that will enable regular sharing of targeted best practices, resources and initiatives on women and peace and security.

In April 2017, the Network held its first meeting in Alicante, Spain, which focused on national action plans on women and peace and security. This was followed by the second meeting of the Network, held in September 2017 on the margins of the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, which focused on the promotion of the participation of women and gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention and in the security sector. The first edition of the newsletter was disseminated in October 2017.

Opening remarks

In her opening remarks, the Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations, Victoria Ortega Gutiérrez, observed that beyond the global study

on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, Member States needed to take responsibility for the women and peace and security agenda. She noted that the Network had been initiated as part of the commitment made by Spain at the high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in October 2015. The idea was to create a tool to engage Member States to improve the implementation of their commitments under the women and peace and security agenda at the national and regional levels. Ms. Ortega welcomed the objective of the Expert Group Meeting to discuss how the Network can have added value and complement existing women and peace and security networks. She recalled that the idea of having a high-level representative from either the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Defence to serve as Network focal point was to encourage better coordination of women and peace and security policies across ministries and to create an opportunity for the Network to have an impact on the working methods of focal points.

With regard to the Network's institutional arrangements, Ms. Ortega noted that UN-Women currently served as secretariat of the Network and that the creation of a Network newsletter provided a good opportunity to share lessons on what was being done nationally and regionally on a monthly or bimonthly basis. Looking ahead, she remarked that the Expert Group Meeting aimed to address focal points' expectations of the Network in 2018 and 2019. She recalled that very strong recommendations had come out of the meeting in Alicante and that the conversation would be continued in Berlin.

In his remarks, the Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, Andreas Glossner, underscored that the Focal Points Network was a network and not a series of meetings. He announced that the 2018 Focal Points Network meeting would be held in Berlin on 9 and 10 April. Mr. Glossner shared the following proposed four main areas of discussion for the Berlin meeting and encouraged input from attendees: (a) building alliances, especially at the regional level, including with the African Union, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; (b) operationalizing and mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda through capitals; (c) an element on sexual violence in conflict (Germany was working closely with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict); and (d) continuity from Alicante. Mr. Glossner also highlighted the importance of involving civil society at the 2018 meeting.

The Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations, Lahya Shikongo, commended the work of the Network and noted that the engagement of Namibia with the Network had contributed to the decision of Namibia to embark on the process to develop its first national action plan. She reiterated the commitment of Namibia to the Network and to serve as its Chair in 2019. She underscored that Namibia was very supportive of civil society engagement with the Network and holding consultations at the national level.

In her opening remarks, the Chief Adviser of the Peace and Security Section of UN-Women, Päivi Kannisto, reiterated the commitment of UN-Women to serve as secretariat of the Network. She welcomed the initiative by Member States to drive the women and peace and security agenda concretely forward. She observed that the Expert Group Meeting was an opportunity to discuss best practices — what worked and did not work — in advance of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). In terms of opportunities, she noted the intersection between the women and peace and security agenda and the sustaining peace and sustainable development agendas, the increase in the number of national action plans, the synergy between national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and action plans to prevent violent extremism, the need for resource mobilization and to

prevent cuts to gender expertise in peacekeeping, and the need for cross-border cooperation between States.

Open discussion

Moderated by the Research Fellow at the International Peace Institute, Sarah Taylor, and conducted under the Chatham House Rule, the discussion addressed the following points:

- **Strategic positioning.** Looking towards the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), in 2020, how can the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network leverage its activities in 2018 and 2019 for maximum impact at the national and regional levels?
- **Participation in the Network.** How can the technical operative guidelines and initiatives of the Network encourage increased membership and active participation in the Network?
- **Knowledge dissemination.** What type of content should be reflected in the Focal Points Network newsletter?

Some key considerations arising from the discussion are described below.

Functioning and membership of the Network

It was highlighted that the Network was well placed to enable regional and domestic engagement with the women and peace and security agenda, and that the troika balance was important because the concept allowed for consistency. It was reiterated that the Network should keep its momentum in terms of membership and maintain regional balance and representation. Moreover, the importance of ensuring the sustainability and momentum of the initiative, particularly in terms of funding for the secretariat, was noted. It was suggested that the Network be proactive in reaching out to potential members and that the work of the Network should demonstrate that there was value in joining the Network. It was observed that while considering what was realistic in terms of workload, existing members needed to be more active. A recommendation was made that a meeting with regional organizations be held to prompt outreach to their members to join the Network. It was underscored that all Member States should be welcome to join the Network regardless of their level of expertise on women and peace and security.

Strategies for the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#)

With regard to national action plans for the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), it was discussed that as Member States embarked on their third and fourth national action plans, implementation must involve a wide range of ministries. One example was the latest national action plan of Canada, which involved six different ministries. In contexts in which there was a regional action plan, it was suggested that to promote effectiveness there should be synergy between national and regional action plans. An example cited was the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose Gender Development Centre was looking at how to link and leverage national action plans with the ECOWAS regional action plan. A trend that was highlighted as problematic and needed addressing was that there was usually a lot of energy when developing a national action plan for the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), but that once the plan had been launched, financial attention and general enthusiasm waned. It was discussed that there was a need for Governments to finance national action plans without relying solely on gender ministries or official development assistance. It was noted that a costing manual prepared by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders highlighted financing

alternatives. It was suggested that one way of fostering implementation could be to recognize Member States for successfully implementing their national action plans.

Building alliances was noted as important, and the idea of “twinning” between developing countries and developed countries, as in the case of Namibia and Norway on national action plans, was highlighted as good practice. Another good practice presented was the establishment of cross-sectoral steering committees for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at both the national and district levels, as had been done in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone.

Other salient issues raised were the need for funding coherence and consistency to avoid funding of overlapping initiatives. It was also recommended that the Network should work on breaking down silos between development and peace and security and ensure that local women’s voices were highlighted. Moreover, the Network should explore approaches to encourage the international community to look at the root causes of gender inequality.

Knowledge dissemination

It was noted that the Network should be commended for being a resource to Member States who were developing their national action plans. Attendees also highlighted the need to maximize information-sharing. Member States should, for instance, feed into the newsletter by exposing their best practices and lessons learned and maybe even create a space for civil society on their experiences working with Member States. It was recommended that, to generate reader interest, the newsletter could feature those innovative and interesting aspects of knowledge products, such as the salient sections of national action plans. Information on progress on national action plans, such as the mapping done by UN-Women, could also be included in the newsletter. The suggestion was made that the newsletter could dedicate space to a focal point for each newsletter edition. A request was made for the Network to share best practices for funding local organizations, and it was hoped that the Berlin meeting could take forward the question of how focal points can engage and share and/or receive information locally.

It was recommended that Network members be reminded that all meeting documents of the Network and the newsletter were public and could be widely disseminated. In the same vein, it was noted that the Network practice of sharing the Chair’s summary as a document of the Security Council was good to uphold to ensure that the United Nations membership was aware of substantive outcomes of the Network. It was also recommended that the Network explore avenues to share Chair’s summaries through regional mechanisms.

Closing remarks

In closing, Ms. Ortega and Mr. Glossner shared their appreciation for the discussion and the points raised. They remarked that as the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) was fast approaching, the discussion would continue in Berlin on operationalizing all substantive inputs. They urged Member States, if interested, to express interest in chairing the Network in 2020 and beyond.