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Letter dated 23 October 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Namibia and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Germany, together with Spain and Namibia, has the honour to transmit a Chair's summary of the high-level meeting of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network, which was held in New York on 26 September 2018, during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly (see annex).*

More than 160 participants attended the ministerial-level event, which brought together foreign ministers, heads of regional organizations, United Nations officials, focal points of the Network and civil society representatives to discuss the theme of the event, "The Security Council and women and peace and security: fostering practical action".

The summary contains the numerous and practical recommendations for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda that were made during the meeting.

We would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 29, and of the Security Council.

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* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.



Annex to the letter dated 23 October 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Namibia and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network
Side event: 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly

The Security Council and Women, Peace and Security: Fostering Practical Action **Chair's Summary**

During the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network held its annual UNGA side event. The event was hosted by the Permanent Missions of Germany, Spain and Namibia to the United Nations (UN), in partnership with UN Women, on September 26, 2018 at 3pm to 5pm at the German Mission in New York. More than 160 participants attended the ministerial-level event, which brought together foreign ministers, heads of regional organizations, UN officials, focal points of the Network and civil society representatives, to discuss the theme of the event, *The Security Council and Women, Peace and Security: Fostering Practical Action*. Ten of the more than 80 members of the WPS Focal Points Network are current members of the UN Security Council, and 10 are slated to be Council members in 2019.

Welcome and introductory remarks were delivered by Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany who highlighted that women's participation is not just a matter of gender equality, but also a prerequisite for peace. In opening remarks, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia noted that while the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda has gained momentum since the adoption of UN Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and seven subsequent women, peace and security resolutions, momentum for implementation of the agenda needs to be sustained. Josep Borrell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain urged a greater responsibility for WPS commitments.

In an open discussion format moderated by Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report, attendees intervened on a number of key national and global priorities for the women, peace and security agenda, using the questions below as a guide:

- How can Focal Points strengthen follow-up on the implementation of the Security Council's normative framework on WPS?
- Which actions will Focal Points take to ensure a systematic approach to the WPS agenda at national level?

UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, noted the need for the international community to act when international commitments are being ignored by conflict parties. Tanya Gilly-Khailany, a former Iraqi parliamentarian and co-founder of SEED Foundation in Iraqi Kurdistan, drove home the point that women's rights and status is linked to the stability, security and prosperity of nations, and that the rights of women in conflict countries are an essential part of the solution.

Interventions were made by the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein, the Secretary-General for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Secretary-General for the Union of the Mediterranean, the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, as well as senior

government officials from the European Union, Afghanistan, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, United States, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Uruguay, and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Drawing attention to the upcoming 20th anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR [1325 \(2000\)](#) in 2020 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, speakers noted the urgency for more tangible impact of the women, peace and security agenda. They discussed progress made, emerging challenges and recommendations, including creating more awareness, taking into account the experiences of migrant and refugee women, and engaging young women in peacebuilding. Acknowledging the current *#MeToo* movement against gender-based violence, speakers also highlighted the importance of utilizing existing mechanisms within the UN Security Council for investigating and prosecuting acts of sexual and gender-based violence, increasing the number of female peacekeepers and increasing briefings by women to the Security Council on pressing matters.

Key recommendations to emerge from the discussion were as follows:

Accountability and Monitoring

- Encourage efforts by international tribunals to **take up investigations and bring charges related to sexual violence in conflict**.
- The UN Security Council should impose **sanctions more frequently on those responsible for gross human rights violations in conflicts**, to serve as a deterrent to human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. Specific designation criteria on sexual and gender-based violence can be a useful tool in that regard.
- Increase the number, quality and implementation of **national action plans** on women, peace and security, and continue the sharing of good practices among Member States.
- Strengthen the **data collection mechanism on women, peace and security** at the national level.
- Continue to foster increased **regional cooperation in the implementation of women, peace and security commitments** on gender budgeting, national action plans, mediation and crisis management.
- Support **strong funding for WPS and gender equality**, recognizing that gender equality is often first on the chopping block, and last on the priority list.
- The women, peace and security agenda should be **more integrated with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, particularly with Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies.
- Members of the Network who are members of the **UN Security Council** should work closely to ensure implementation of Network recommendations.

Prevention and Protection

- Ensure **more regular reactions of the UN Security Council** in any instance of conflict-related sexual violence and make **better use of the different instruments to help end impunity** for sexual violence.
- Explore effective ways of **integrating disarmament into the women, peace and security agenda**, particularly to address the issue of small arms and light weapons.

- Support **women human rights defenders** who take a lot of risk to implement the women, peace and security agenda, through targeted support and capacity building mechanisms.
- Strengthen **protection for refugee and migrant women** and provide inbuilt support systems for victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Support **consistent gender conflict expertise and analysis** that amplifies diverse local women’s experiences, and addresses differentiated needs, power relations, and risks of women, girls, men boys, and LGBTQI people.
- **Sexual violence against men and boys** remains underreported and there is need to find comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

Participation

- Ensure continuity of the practice of having an **increased number of female briefers** address the UN Security Council.
- Support women mediator networks and increase the number of **women in mediation and preventive diplomacy**.
- Support **practical initiatives to increase the number of women in peacekeeping operations**. The Elsie Initiative, for example, provides training, research, technical and financial assistance to troop and police contributing countries.
- **Increase investment in the economic needs of women** and their rehabilitation and reintegration in the aftermath of crisis.
- Increase the **inclusion of young women** in the debate and integrate the youth, peace and security agenda.

Commitments and Announcements

A number of Network members made announcements on future actions that they will be taking in their efforts to fulfil the commitments of the women, peace and security agenda.

- Germany, current Chair of the WPS Focal Points Network, reaffirmed its commitment to the WPS agenda as a **priority issue during Germany’s term on the Security Council (2019–2020)** and as **co-chair of the Security Council Informal Experts Group on WPS** in 2019.
- Namibia, Chair of the WPS Focal Points Network in 2019, will **host the 2019 annual capital meeting of the Network in Windhoek, Namibia on April 10–11**. The priority theme will be “*Women, Peace and Security: Towards full participation*” and the sub-theme, “*Mainstreaming the WPS agenda in the programmes of Regional Economic Communities.*”
- Canada and Uruguay will jointly **co-chair the WPS Focal Points Network in 2020**.
- Canada plans to appoint a Women, Peace and Security ambassador.
- Spain and Finland will launch a “**Commitment 2025**” initiative to ensure women’s full participation in peace processes by 2025.
- The Union for the Mediterranean is developing a regional programme with the United Kingdom on “Enhancing the civic and social engagement of women and youth in preventing violence and extremism.”

About the WPS Focal Points Network

Launched in 2016 by the Government of Spain and currently chaired by Germany, the WPS Focal Points Network is a cross-regional forum for Member States and regional organizations, which collaborates with UN agencies and civil society to share experiences and best practices in advancing the implementation of Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security. UN Women serves as the secretariat of the Network, which is currently composed of over 80 members.
