Beyond 2020:-Towards a Transformative Women, Peace and Security Agenda
Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network
(WPS FPN)
Co-hosted by Uruguay and Canada
Wednesday July 15, 2021
08:30 -11:30 EDT/New York
Virtual, hosted on Zoom by WPS FPN UN Women Secretariat

Introduction:

This summary provides highlights from the July 15, 2021 virtual meeting of the Women, Peace, and Security Focal Points Network (WPS-FPN) hosted by Co-Chairs Canada and Uruguay. The event welcomed 126 participants of which 39 percent were from government, 31 percent from civil society and 12 percent from the UN.

Twenty years since the landmark UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), we need a WPS agenda that is fit for purpose to address the broad spectrum of conflict and crisis including in the context of pandemics, climate change, racialized violence and other peace and security challenges. The COVID 19 pandemic has amplified underlying peace and security issues across the world, and once again women are not only severely impacted; they are on the frontlines of our pandemic response and recovery efforts. In crisis there is also opportunity for positive action and transformation. As nations plan and prepare for a more resilient and peaceful future, we must work harder to ensure women are always at the centre of decision-making.

The first session, *"Towards a Transformative WPS Agenda"* invited three experts to share their views on how to achieve a more inclusive WPS agenda that applies to the full continuum of sexual and gender-based violence, insecurity and conflict in societies. The second session, "***Building Trust, Building Peace***", shared four women peacebuilders' diverse perspectives on WPS, working as trusted actors and leaders on violence and conflict prevention, resolution and recovery. The third session launched the new WPS Focal Points Network website as a knowledge hub and collaborative space for Focal Points and civil society partners and other stakeholders ([www.wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org)](www.wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org). The new platform includes Network specific content and links to sites and databases to assist WPS Focal Points and other stakeholders in researching, designing, implementing, and evaluating WPS action plans and strategies.

Objectives of the meeting:
- Enhanced knowledge of Focal Points on the applicability of the WPS agenda in non-armed conflict settings, and on the importance of inclusion in peace and security decision-making;
- Recommendations for concrete actions by the Focal Points and other WPS stakeholders to advance implementation of the WPS agenda at the national, regional and international level; and
- Actions the WPS Focal Points Network can collectively advance to implement a transformative WPS agenda.

Highlights

The following are some of the **key recommendations** proposed for an inclusive and transformative WPS agenda that is more effective, relevant and empowering for all women and their communities impacted by conflict, violence and instability.

- *Inclusive* peace and security policy results in more *comprehensive, effective and sustainable* peace and security.

- Humility is an essential approach for both domestic and international outreach and engagement on peace and security. This includes applying an anti-racist and de-colonial lens to all our efforts and actions to implement the WPS agenda.

- Government and civil society partners must work together through bilateral and regional approaches to apply the WPS agenda to issues that transcend borders (e.g. health crises, disasters, climate change, irregular migration, human trafficking).

- WPS strategies and action plans must address structural violence as a key threat to peace, and recognize that sexual violence occurs on a continuum of interrelated and recurring forms of violence against women and girls (UN Security Council resolution 2467 (2019).

- To be transformational, WPS champions must push beyond traditional limits to prioritize positive peace, actively challenge structural violence, ensure intersectional feminist analysis, and focus on partnership building.

- A transformative, anti-racist approach to WPS must seek to challenge *coloniality* in the WPS agenda itself. We must examine the racial hierarchies embedded within global policy making and practices, including WPS.

- Violence and instability is not only a national but also a regional issue. Peacebuilding efforts are urgently required at regional levels to help resolve the low and declining confidence in politics and governance across the Americas, and around the globe.

- The human rights based approach is a fundamental framework that can work with the WPS agenda for transformative change.

- National action plans are important tools for building peace. These plans must be informed by inclusive national dialogue that gives voice to the aspirations of everyone.

- To achieve transformative goals, WPS regional, national and local action plans need dedicated, sustainable funding. This funding should specifically be included in budgets to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation and successful implementation.

- Encourage, make investments, and provide sustainable funding for Indigenous women around the world to integrate traditional and wise practice into mainstream systems.

- Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) is a concrete action Member States can take towards restoring the power and place of the original peoples of the land.

- Young women are not just an audience, we need their active participation as part of post conflict resolution and peace-building activities. We need safe spaces to engage with young women peacebuilders, to listen and let them know the government is there and on their side.

Summary

Opening remarks

Moderator **Martin Vidal,** Uruguay's Ambassador to Canada**,** welcomed participants to the event on behalf of Co-Chairs Uruguay and Canada. Canada's WPS Focal Point **Gwyneth Kutz** underscored the importance of the WPS agenda's big idea that *more inclusive* peace and security means more *comprehensive, effective and sustainable* peace and security. International outreach and engagement on peace and security and the WPS agenda must also include humility; we all have peace and security issues to address in our countries and can learn from each other. Uruguay's WPS Focal Point **Noelia Martinez-Franchi** emphasized that without the support of the Focal Points Network, Uruguay would not be ~~launching~~ completing ~~their~~ its first national action plan~~ ~~ in 2021~~in 2021~~. She noted that Uruguay and other countries in the Latin American region face challenges in applying the WPS agenda to the full spectrum of action on peace and security, because many see it confined to "armed conflict" or "post-armed conflict" situations. At the same time, the region has the highest rates in the world of violence due to gender inequality. Since Uruguay and Canada co-hosted the first regional WPS Americas workshop in December 2019 in Montevideo, Uruguay has focused on the challenge of how to apply the WPS agenda beyond armed conflict and post-armed conflict situations.

Maria Noel Vaeza (UN Women Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean*),* emphasized that we do not need a war to demonstrate that social concerns will increase when there is no dialogue, and particularly no equal dialogue. More Latin American countries are following the WPS agenda more closely, and she thanked Uruguayan leadership on WPS in the region. She invited all Focal Points to take a WPS approach to security challenges that cross borders (including climate change and forced migration) to strengthen alliances on through regional and sub-regional strategies on WPS.

Session 1: Towards a Transformative WPS Agenda

- *What do we mean by a* <u>*transformative*</u> *WPS agenda?*

Katrina Leclerc *(PhD Candidate; Co-founder, Canadian Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security; Board Member, WPS Network Canada*) shared a framework for a transformative WPS agenda by focusing on three important aspects:

- the conceptualization of peace and security, including our understanding of structural violence;
- integrating and prioritizing intersectionality; and
- collaborative WPS partnerships.

When we visualize the WPS agenda, most see women in peacekeeping operations, women in peace negotiations or women in post-conflict recovery forums. It is important to prioritize WPS initiatives and approaches that push the application of this agenda *beyond* the limited focus on militarized security responses and formal ("Track 1") peace processes.

In I969, Johan Galtung introduced the concept of *structural violence* and defined *negative peace* as the absence of personal violence and *positive peace* as the absence of structural violence. This conceptualization of positive peace supports the importance of inward-focused (domestic) WPS policies as well as outward facing (international). The WPS agenda must move beyond traditional security approaches in order to address structural violence as a key threat to peace – following the principles of the *continuum of violence* outlined in UN Security Council resolution 2467 (2019).

Intersectionality is a term first coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 within the context of *critical race theory*. In practice, intersectionality is a specific analytical lens understanding that power intersects with facets of our identities. It goes beyond race, gender, age, class, dis and abled-bodied, sexual orientation or other identity determinants. It requires us to understand – or seek to understand – how all of these identities affect our daily interactions, our lives, and experiences. In the context of the WPS agenda, intersectional feminist analysis requires us to consider and target these various layers of our identities.

The third aspect for a transformative WPS agenda is partnership building. This is also one of the pillars of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, which should be integral to new, progressive, transformational WPS approaches. To be truly transformational, peace and security frameworks should focus on collaboration between thematic areas – including women, young people, children, and others.

Partnerships must be collaborative, not competitive: no one wins when we work in silos. One of the key ways to strengthen partnerships is through working more closely with civil society. For example, the WPS Advisory Group for Canada's second National Action Plan brings together civil society, government officials and other key stakeholders to assist with implementation. This is a positive example of co-leadership of the WPS agenda.

Overall: to be transformational, those who champion WPS must push beyond traditional limits. We must prioritize positive peace, actively challenge structural violence, ensure intersectional feminist analysis, and focus on partnership building.

Addressing Discrimination and Racism in Peace and Security Systems and Structures

- *What does an anti-racist and de-colonial approach to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda look like?*

Dr. Toni Haastrup *(Senior Lecturer in International Politics at the University of Stirling, UK)* explained that a *de-colonial approach* to WPS seeks to challenge *coloniality* that is manifested in 3 modes:

- coloniality of power;
- coloniality of knowledge, and
- coloniality of being.

Coloniality of power refers to the persistence of colonial worldviews that have continued into the current 'postcolonial era' via the hierarchical relations of exploitation and domination between Global North and Global South. This relationship is replicated in global institutions, the structure of the state and in the practices of global normative frameworks.

Global power hierarchies are reproduced and reinforced by the *coloniality of knowledge*: how colonial societies have systematically banished Indigenous forms of knowledge. What knowledge is being used when we think about the philosophies of humanitarian interventions? Whose knowledge is being integrated when we think of models of best practices, of how we investigate and do research? Who determines the scope of inquiry? To what extent is Indigenous knowledge being integrated into the practices of the WPS agenda?

An anti-racist approach to WPS must seek to challenge coloniality in the WPS agenda itself. It is urgent to unpack how racial hierarchies are embedded within the practices of the WPS agenda. Where Global North countries dominate or dictate the practices of the WPS agenda in poorer ones, they tend to reinforce an *otherness* that is problematic and unwarranted. Women from the Global South drove the creation of the WPS agenda. Despite this, there is a common perception that only certain types of women are in need of WPS intervention; invariably these women reside in the contexts of the Global South.

Wealthier countries have often positioned themselves as *better placed* to respond to the challenges around gender discrimination. In their attitude and policies wealthier countries often fail to consider the racialized legacies of colonialism that lead to the conditions of gender discrimination in developing economies.

A *transformative WPS agenda* must consider how racism is or may be imbued in practices of global policy-making and invariably the implementation of WPS. To formulate a decolonial and anti racist WPS agenda, we must ask big questions, including:

- What conditions of international politics create the gendered vulnerabilities that the WPS agenda is designed to deal with?
- How can we ensure we include knowledge from minoritized "others" who are on the margins?
- How can global South practices inform our knowledge?
- How do domestic conditions connect with international? For example, to what extent is WPS localised in the global North? To what extent is the WPS agenda consistently applied across foreign policies?
- When we look at the architecture for action on WPS: who is represented?

Strengthening WPS Connections Across Agendas and Regions

- *Beyond armed conflict settings, how does the WPS agenda apply to the continuum of violence, insecurity and conflict? How is WPS a triple nexus agenda?*

Hilary Anderson (*Senior Gender Specialist for the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) at the Organization of American States*) highlighted the serious problem of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the Americas. Three main conceptual aspects of SGBV clearly intersect: public security, violence against women, and the WPS agenda. However, these aspects are separated from each other, and are typically addressed by distinct government entities that rarely interact.

National security plans must reflect the present situation and reality of security in the Americas and the rest of the world. We see less armed conflict and more short or longer term crises and instability driven by cross-cutting factors including transnational organized crime, natural disasters, water insecurity, and forced migration (caused by drivers including political instability and climate and environmental degradation).

The violence against women agenda needs to address spectrum of violence, including domestic *intra family* violence, and public violence against women, for example in politics. The Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM) has found it a challenge to integrate the WPS agenda into discussions at the Organization of American States (OAS). To help remedy this, it is important for OAS Member States to include WPS in their political agendas.

Additional Questions for Panelists and Audience in the MentiMeter survey

- *What actions can member states, civil society and other stakeholders take to ensure the WPS agenda is transformative?*

Attendees recorded the following responses: Listening to local voices, civil society actors, indigenous women, youth, and non-elite opinions; increasing accessible funding for civil society and local organizations; disarming, demilitarizing and reallocating military spending to urgent social and environmental needs; ensuring a safe space and avenue for collaboration with human rights defenders; integrating intersectionality and de-colonization into approaches; dismantling traditional exclusionary power structures; centering marginalized community experiences; addressing structural violence; developing and implementing high-impact and inclusive NAPs with clear commitments and monitoring processes; focusing on prevention rather than resolution; increasing synergies between different areas of governments in NAP design and implementation; increasing meaningful participation of women in peace processes; co-producing frameworks with marginalized groups;

- *What are some actions governments, civil society, and other stakeholders can take to ensure WPS policy and programming is de-colonial and anti-racist?*

Attendees recorded the following responses: Genuinely addressing biases; redesigning peace tables; acting humbly and having uncomfortable discussions about power balances; recognizing who is not in the room and why; investing in the leadership of indigenous women; making amendments for the past; localizing the implementation of the WPS agenda; linking WPS policy beyond silos horizontally and vertically; soliciting and including non-elite opinions; recognition and prevention of the normalization of violence against BIPOC and marginalized communities; conducting gender and conflict analysis with an intersectional perspective; actively involving minoritized groups in a non-tokenistic way in policy development; supporting local and decolonial peacebuilding; changing power dynamics between the global north and global south; not relying on the traditional peace and security structures to be de-colonial and anti-racist; respecting indigenous knowledge; engaging political will and multi-sectoral coordination of the WPS agenda and critical assessment of NAPs and NAP implementation based on representation recognizing class, race, sex and gender.

- *What are some international and regional agendas that could benefit from stronger links to the WPS agenda?*

Attendees recorded the following responses: Youth, Peace and Security; Demilitarization, Denuclearization and Disarmament; Foreign Policy Reforms; Ending Gender-based Violence; Global Warming and Climate Action, the Triple Nexus Agenda (Humanitarian, Development and Peace); Migration; International Accountability Mechanisms; Peacekeeping Missions; Sanctions; HRC Events; DNP SALW; Natural Disaster Responses; Sustainable Development Goals; SADC; AU Gender and WPS Strategies; Silencing the Guns; EU Gender Action Plan; Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict and UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Katrina Leclerc noted there must be core funding to build capacity for local feminist movements and organizations if we want them to be transformational. We must eliminate barriers to funding to expand eligibility for diverse groups of women, including support for proposal writing and project reporting. She

noted also that civil society's requests for "meaningful inclusion" is really a request for co-development of planning, not just consulting by governments after the fact. Ask civil society, especially at the local level, what they need. It is also ok not to have all the answers: when we work together to find them together, we show humility and can be more transformational.

Toni Haastrup said transformational work will take time. If we want to change a system that has been in place for centuries, we can't do it within the current two-year programming framework. Civil society partners will need resources for a new and transformational, de-colonial approach, that is balanced with the funding that goes to the current status quo (for example military spending continues to increase while development aid is cut). National Action Plans need to reach out to all communities to be transformative, to new partners and experts and grassroots peacebuilders, and this takes time and effort.

Hilary Anderson reflected that regional organizations like the OAS need to be more intentional to include the WPS agenda, which has existed for over two decades now. In the Americas countries have moved away from military dictatorships but the promise of prosperity through reconstruction has not been fulfilled and so there is a lot of frustration. Most states view protests as a security problem that requires increased police and military response. The underlying problems are social: poverty, violence against women, lack of transparency, and corruption. A more effective response requires humility and time. It is difficult in our current approach of short-term project cycles to implement anything with long term impact. We need to break down silos in government and engage with civil society partners on this. Moderator Ambassador *Martin Vidal* added to this that opportunities like the Summit of the Americas should be harnessed to help advance the WPS agenda.

Session 2: Building Trust, Building Peace

Inclusive Peacebuilding and Mediation

- *What are some practical examples of how local, national and regional mediator networks (including Indigenous women's networks) are trusted actors and a critical element of building and sustaining peace and security?*
- *What actions can governments, civil society and other stakeholders take to support women mediators and mediator networks towards more inclusive and successful peace processes?*

Elizabeth Solomon (*Peace Mediator; Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth; Industrial Court Judge, Director of the Mediation Board of Trinidad & Tobago*) noted that discussions on the importance of transformative peacebuilding are timely in this a "perfect storm of social upheaval". We have an opportunity to create a more inclusive response to conflicts and crises.

Violence is largely considered a national problem and not a regional factor. Peacebuilding approaches are urgently needed. The state of non-peace is becoming more strained and there is a crisis of governance in the Americas and around the world with low and declining confidence in politics. There is a dominant belief that government works for only small number of elites, and low levels of trust.

In the Americas we have cross-border security issues to deal with including the movement of trafficked drugs weapons, women and children. Xenophobia is on the rise, climate change is resulting in more unpredictable and destructive storms and waves of refugees. All these issues are interlinked. We must

advocate for a regional peace architecture, and a regional peace dialogue. The Summit of the Americas is an ideal forum for this.

It is time to dust off the human rights based approach as a framework for change. Empowering the most vulnerable lifts up our fellow human beings to equality and builds trust. National action plans are important tools that must be informed by inclusive national dialogue that gives voice to the aspirations of everyone. National governments and regional organizations can actively clear the path for women peacebuilders. We must recognize and value their work as well as help nurture young women peacebuilders.

Indigenous Women's Perspectives on Trust and Peacebuilding

- *Why is it important for Indigenous women to lead on conflict and violence prevention, response and recovery?*

Diane Redsky (*Executive Director, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Manitoba, Canada)* explained how Indigenous women's leadership is about restoring balance. The evidence is clear: when you change a woman's life you immediately change her family, her community and her nation. We require significant transformative change in all our countries to restore balance.

In Canada ("Turtle Island"), Ms. Redsky noted that the recent Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Inquiry concluded that systemic violence against Indigenous women and girls amounts to genocide. Indigenous women and girls are reclaiming their place and moving from "surviving to thriving" but there must be political will to ensure change. She urged all countries to have a National Action Plan on WPS where Indigenous women and girls play an important role and there is adequate funding to ensure women are able to reclaim their power and place. Indigenous women have specific skills and traditions of peacebuilding and human rights.

- *What are some concrete actions that that we (governments, civil society actors, individuals) can take to support Indigenous women's leadership?*

Ms. Redsky said when Indigenous women come together from different countries: they have a deep connection. She noted, "We don't need colonial frameworks to work together: we know how". The main way Indigenous women are hurt is through taking their children away. In connection with Maori women in New Zealand, Ms. Redsky and other Indigenous women in Canada are restoring the tradition and common practice in their communities of the "family group conference". This enables Indigenous families to share in decision-making on the care and raising and protection of their children. Positive impacts have included fewer days with children in care, less trauma from family separations, and 98% of children returned to their families with a cost savings of nine million dollars annually to the Canadian child welfare system. For every dollar invested into the family group conference approach there is a three-fold return on investment. We must encourage, make investments, and provide funding for Indigenous women around the world to implement traditional and wise practice into mainstream systems.

Ms. Redsky also noted that we already have international instruments that support more inclusive peace and these should be utilized. Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) is a concrete step Member States can take towards restoring the power and place of the original peoples of the land and help connect Indigenous groups across the world.

Building trust through regional approaches to WPS: case study of the WPS Regional Action Plan for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines

Helen Rojas, *Supervising Political Affairs Officer III and Chief of Staff of Member of Parliament Bainon Karon, Philippines*

Aniyyah Fatmah A Guinar, *Young Women+ Leaders for Peace Program, Marawi, Philippines*

- *How can WPS Regional (and sub national, localized Action Plans) help address regional peace and security issues?*

Helen Rojas explained that the Philippines national action plan on WPS and the regional Bangsomoro plan have helped build trust at the national and local (regional Bangsomoro) level. The Philippine WPS national action plan is implemented through inter-agency coordination and by a WPS steering committee chaired at the national level and local levels. The national level WPS steering committee is chaired by the office of the Presidential advisor on the peace process and in the Bangsomoro autonomous region by the Bangsomoro Women Commission. The steering committee includes different major governmental agencies with the participation of civil society. At both the national and local levels, the steering committee includes members of the security sector, armed forces of the Philippines and the national police to confirm their important role in the protection of women and girls.

The first cycle of the Philippine NAP included local regional consultations to ensure local security issues were included in the implementation of the plan. Now in the second cycle, the NAP focuses on regionalization, and this led to the Bangsomoro regional action plan on WPS (RAP WPS). The process of creating this regional action plan for Bangsomoro engaged diverse actors including civil society, academia and religious leaders. The process also consulted women in conflict affected and conflict vulnerable communities.

WPS action plans are integrated into both the gender and development plans of the national main ministries and local government units. At the national level there is a joint memorandum circular that directs activities in conflict affected and conflict-vulnerable areas will include the WPS agenda. In addition, the regional Bangsomoro government issues omnibus guidelines for gender and development (GAD) planning including a provision for integrating the WPS agenda. In other words, Ms. Rojas observed, using a gender and development plan is the law, and she sees this as a "Magna Carta" for women's rights in the Philippines. At least 5% of local budgets must be spent on gender and development, and there is regular monitoring and evaluation of the gender and development plans to ensure implementation.

- *How has the Regional Action Plan for BAARM integrated an intergenerational approach to ensure that young women and girls are not left behind?*
- *How can regional governments and organizations improve their support and protection of women peacebuilders through Regional Action Plans?*

Aniyyah Fatmah A Guinar said that for too long young women have been overlooked and their contributions undervalued, but this is improving. There are small but powerful changes, including through the RAP WPS in Bangsomoro that utilizes a gender sensitive approach for inclusive peacebuilding, investment in women's rights and gender equality across the region. Strategic planning workshops raise awareness on the role of women in sustaining peace in local communities and there is an increase in women's meaningful participation in local peace and order councils in conflict-affected communities.

Youth groups are working hand in hand with government, civil society and other key community stakeholders including religious leaders to implement the regional action plan in Bangsomoro. Young women are not just an audience; we need their active participation as part of post conflict resolution and peace-building activities. We need safe spaces to engage with young women peacebuilders, to listen and let them know the government is there and on their side. We also need to amplify the voices of Indigenous women in our communities.

Session 3: Closing Plenary

Launch of the new WPS Focal Points Network website (*www.wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org). The Network has a new virtual home in 2021*. The website serves as a global knowledge platform on women, peace and security with features that include a tracker and database of the most recently adopted national action plans, individual webpages for all 89 Network members to share updates on their WPS work, summaries and outcome documents from past Network meetings, a community of practice dashboard with separate features for Focal Points and the public, a multi-media page, and a repository of curated WPS resources and reports. The website seeks to avoid duplicating existing WPS websites and fills an outstanding gap for a one-stop portal on women, peace and security with information on WPS progress publicly provided by member states who bear the greatest responsibility for the implementation of WPS commitments. Harriette Williams-Bright (Coordinator, WPS Focal Points Network Secretariat) thanked Canada for funding support for the development of the new website.

Closing remarks

WPS Focal Point for South Africa**, Charlotte Lobe** *(Chief Director, Transformation Programme and Organisational Development, Department of International Relations and Cooperation, MOFA)* thanked and congratulated Co-Chairs Uruguay and Canada for keeping the Network dynamic and lively over 2020 and 2021 and helping us learn new ways of engaging. She expressed her appreciation for them taking on the co-chairship in 2021 during the pandemic and making sure business continued despite the challenges. South Africa is excited to take on the co-chair ship in 2022 and help develop transformative approaches and make strong contributions to advancing the WPS agenda. During 2022, South Africa and Switzerland will host regional meetings – one in the south and one in the north. Ms. Lobe noted there is a need for us to show unity of purpose as global north and south.

WPS Focal Point for Switzerland**, Talia Wohl** *(Senior Gender Adviser, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Directorate of Political Affairs, Human Security Division: Peace, Human Rights, Humanitarian Policy, Migration)* also thanked Canada and Uruguay for their flexibility in chairing over two years that allowed the Network to continue during the pandemic. Switzerland is delighted to join the co-chairship with South Africa in 2022 and to demonstrate solidarity with South Africa during these challenging times.

Moderator and Uruguay's Ambassador to Canada, **Martin Vidal**, concluded the meeting, noting that the Network will be in good hands with South Africa and Switzerland as new co-chairs. He reflected on how much we have learned together as a Network over the last two years. In particular, after today's discussion on a transformative WPS agenda, there are many new ideas for us all to think about and process. It is important that we have used the word "humility" throughout these discussions. Although what say and hear from each other may sometimes be difficult, speaking the truth and listening is important to create the trust we need to build peaceful communities at home, and internationally. Without truth, there can be no trust.

Background

The Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network was launched in September 2016 as a unique forum for national and regional representatives (Focal Points) to share best practices and lessons learned on the WPS agenda. There are 89 members of the Network from UN member states and regional organizations. The Focal Points are responsible for WPS implementation (frequently through national action plans and strategies on WPS) within their respective governments and regional organizations. The UN and civil society also play an active role in the Network, with UN Women serving as Secretariat. Canada and Uruguay are Co-Chairs of the WPS Focal Points Network for 2020 and 2021. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual capital-based Network meeting has transitioned to a series of online engagements over the spring, summer and fall. These online sessions focus on two main themes for: supporting and protecting women peacebuilders, and the power of impact-driven national action plans.

This friendship symbol celebrates the partnership of Canada and Uruguay as Co-Chairs of the WPS Focal Points Network in 2020 and 2021 and represents the spirit of collaboration and cooperation. Designed by Uruguayan graphic designer, Gabriel Benderski, the symbol is also inspired by the indigenous Bunchberry flowering plant found in all regions of Canada and the combined color palette of the Canadian and Uruguayan national flags.

Katrina Leclerc – PhD Candidate, St. Paul University, Canada; Co-founder, Canadian Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security; Board Member, WPS Network Canada

Katrina is a Francophone young woman from Western Canada, currently pursuing her PhD in conflict studies at Saint-Paul University with a focus on the synergies between the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas. With extensive expertise in peacebuilding in conflict-affected areas, Katrina has been coordinating the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders' (GNWP) WPS-YPS programming in Eastern Africa since 2016. She is the former Parliamentary Affairs Advisor to a Canadian Senator, current Steering Committee member of the Women, Peace and Security Network - Canada (WPSN-C), and co-founder of the Canadian Coalition for YPS. Katrina also sits on the boards of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) and the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW).

Toni Haastrup - Senior Lecturer in International Politics at the University of Stirling

Dr. Toni Haastrup is Senior Lecturer in International Politics at the University of Stirling. A feminist researcher and teacher, her work seeks to understand prevailing global power hierarchies that inform cooperation and conflict within the international system. Her work has explored the politics of knowledge making in the context of the Women, Peace and Security, Global South perspectives on Feminist Foreign Policy and the gendered and racialised nature of and responses to contemporary crises. Toni's current research provides feminist analysis on the foreign practices of Global North actors in the Global South especially around the WPS agenda. Much of this work is centred on the activities of formal institutions like the African and European Unions, and she has published extensively in these areas. Toni is an Editor in Chief of the Journal of Common Market Studies, and on the executive board of Women Also Know Stuff. She is an experienced speaker and an occasional media commentator.

Hilary Anderson, CIM-OAS, Senior Gender Specialist for the Inter-American Commission of Women at the Organization of American States

Since finishing her studies in gender and development at McGill University in Montreal, Hilary has worked with the Pan American Health Organization's Gender and Health Unit and with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW, now part of UN Women). In 2009, Hilary joined the staff of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) at the Organization of American States (OAS), where she works as a Senior Specialist on key women's rights and gender equality issues in the region. From this position she has led the development of knowledge and capacity-building tools to support closing the gap between the international legal framework on women's rights and national-level laws and policies.

Elizabeth Solomon - Peace Mediator, Industrial Court Judge, Director of the Mediation Board of Trinidad & Tobago, and Member, Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth (WMC)

Elizabeth Solomon is an Industrial Court Judge and an experienced mediator in a wide variety of political, post-conflict and commercial context around the world. She is a Director of the Mediation Board of Trinidad &Tobago, Former Executive Director of the Dispute Resolution Centre and the Caribbean Centre for Human Rights and then Founder of Dialogue Solutions. Elizabeth had a full career in journalism before joining the United Nations, spending the next 20 years as a conflict prevention and peacebuilding practitioner in various conflict context, including in the role of Deputy Coordinator of the UN Good Offices team in Cyprus. Elizabeth's work has focused on design and implementation of social cohesion and inclusive peacebuilding processes and in supporting local efforts to build resilient democratic national institutions in Kosovo, Bosnia, Somalia and Sierra Leone. Her work on human rights and development stretches from The Netherlands to Brazil, India and Guyana

Diane Redsky, Executive Director, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Diane Redsky is Executive Director of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre. As a nationally renowned, visionary thinker and community leader, she has long worked to address the myriad of issue's facing Winnipeg's urban Indigenous community in all areas, including health, justice, education, and social services.

Since 1993, she has served in both a professional and volunteer capacity within the social services sector, and has become a strong advocate for Aboriginal, children's and women's issues. She has helped create numerous innovative programs that have supported the building of healthy communities. She believes in an approach that consists of shared values, and that is culturally appropriate, while focusing on attention to detail.

	Diane has been instrumental in the development of resources for sexually exploited and trafficked girls, including a safe house and a rural healing lodge in Canada. In 2013-2014, she led the Canadian Women's Foundation National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada, which made 34 recommendations to end sex trafficking in Canada. She has returned to the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg to bring leadership and a voice on Indigenous issues.
	Helen M. Rojas - Supervising Political Affairs Officer III and Chief of Staff of Member of Parliament Bainon Karon. Philippines Helen M. Rojas is currently the Chief of Staff of Member of the Bangsamoro Parliament and concurrent Chairperson of the Bangsamoro Women Commission Hadja Bainon G. Karon. Before joining MP Karon, Ms. Rojas was Head of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS) Secretariat of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) from 2015 to 2019. In 2009, she was part of the Preparatory Committee which drafted Philippines NAPWPS, the first action plan in Asia. As part of sharing implementation experience of the Philippines on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Rojas delivered presentation at the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +25 Review held at Bangkok, Thailand. Her most recent international engagements as Resource Speaker on Philippine NAPWPS were during the 2021 ASEAN Regional Forum hosted by the Government of Thailand and the 2020 International Conference on Women, Peace and Security hosted by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. As Chief of Staff, Ms. Rojas led the team that coordinated the formulation of the first Bangsamoro Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (RAPWPS) which was launched last October 30, 2020, in time for the 20th year of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. She currently leads a team which coordinates Gender and Development (GAD) Planning and Budgeting as well as Gender Mainstreaming in the BARMM.
	Aniyyah Fatmah A. Guinar - Young Women+ Leaders for Peace Program, Philippines (Marawi) Aniyyah Fatmah A. Guinar is a member of Young Women Leaders for Peace, a program of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, from Marawi, Philippines. Along with her fellow Young Women Leaders for Peace, she mobilized 4000 youth belonging to different religions from more than 60 schools in over 30 provinces in the Philippines through peace fora on gender equality, women's rights, human rights, and sustainable peace. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, she quickly mobilized to distribute relief goods, face masks, hygiene products, school supplies. She also raised awareness of the gendered impacts of the pandemic by discussing the increase in sexual and gender-based violence including child, early and forced marriage, and teenage pregnancies in her communities. She has also led social media

	campaigns to counter fake news, misinformation, and disinformation about the pandemic and share critical, life-saving information to prevent the spread of the virus.