



Concept Note



Taking Practical Action to Implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through Inter-Regional Cooperation

**WPS Focal Points Network Meeting
6-7 December 2022
Pretoria, OR Tambo Building, DIRCO, South Africa**

INTRODUCTION

South Africa and Switzerland in their 2022 co-chairship of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Focal Points Network have a joint ambition to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda through the identification of innovative and transformative strategies. With the aspiration to strengthen collaboration between Network members and to enable the sharing of experiences and ideas across regions, the co-chairs will organize a Network meeting on **6-7 December 2022** in Pretoria, South Africa to foster practical action on the recommendations of the [4th Capital Level Meeting](#), which took place in Geneva on 18-19 May 2022.

BACKGROUND

The theme of the 2022 Swiss-South African co-chairship of the WPS Focal Points Network, “*Partnering for Change – Translating the Women, Peace and Security Agenda into Action*,” embodies the idea of cooperation between states, regional and international organizations and civil society as a source for innovative and transformative strategies to advance the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. As such, the Network meeting in Pretoria, will be held under the theme: “***Taking Practical Action to Implement the WPS Agenda through Inter-Regional Cooperation***.” The meeting will build on the recommendations and strategies outlined in the Geneva meeting and focus on practical implementation through inter-regional collaboration and the sharing of lessons learned and best practices.

The South Africa and Switzerland co-chairship comes at a pivotal moment when both countries have committed to the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) and its Global Acceleration Plan adopted in Paris in July 2021, with South Africa co-leading the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights. The Forum places strong emphasis on the mainstreaming of the needs and rights of women and girls in conflict and humanitarian situations through its [Compact](#) on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. This intersectionality between the objectives of the Focal Points Network and the GEF is critical to ensure a holistic approach to the empowerment of women and girls and gender equality.



OBJECTIVES

The Pretoria meeting will provide an opportunity for South-South learning, as well as the inter-regional exchange of lessons learnt and experiences between Global South and Global North. To date, just over half of UN Member States and territories have [adopted](#) WPS National Action Plans (NAPs) despite rising concerns about human security and the rollback of women's human rights. The Pretoria meeting will be a rallying call for the rest of the world to develop impact-driven NAPs drawing on the rich lessons from the countries that have developed them whilst promoting local and national capacity building initiatives, funding, monitoring and evaluation and peer review of already developed WPS NAPs. The meeting will also focus on the role of local, national and regional women mediator networks in preventing the escalation of conflicts and crises and ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation in ongoing peace processes.

Civil society has been critical in driving the WPS agenda through advocating for the development and implementation of NAPs in various parts of the world. Formalizing their engagement and participation and linking official negotiations with civil society peace initiatives will further strengthen the participation of women in peace processes, as well initiatives to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict. The Pretoria meeting will include a strong focus on providing a platform for civil society and regional communities across the globe to dialogue, share and offer recommendations to further the WPS agenda to address key challenges.

THEMATIC AREAS FOR BREAKOUT SESSIONS

1) *Women mediator networks and their effective operationalization*

Building on recommendations from the Geneva meeting on women's participation in peace efforts, participants will address opportunities, challenges and tools to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. Participants will also identify areas of collaboration between local, national and regional mediator networks across regions.

2) *WPS action plans and responding to conflict and crisis situations*

Building on recommendations from the Geneva meeting, participants will identify concrete actions to sustain financing and civil society involvement in the life cycle of WPS National Action Plans and to build bridges between governments and civil society organizations. This will include sharing best practices that can be applicable not just to Network members but other countries and regions that are yet to join the Network or develop NAPs.

3) *Regional and sub-regional organizations and strengthening WPS collaboration*

Participants will identify opportunities for increased inter-regional WPS cooperation and collaboration between States and regional and sub-regional organizations. This will include the role of regional and sub-regional organizations in supporting the effective implementation of NAPs and operationalizing women mediator networks.

FORMAT

The meeting will be in-person over the course of two days and will adhere to applicable COVID-19 regulations. Plenary and breakout sessions will allow for interactive discussions. A joint communique will summarize the main outcomes and members' commitments.