



CONCEPT NOTE

Advancing the Sustainability and Adaptability of the WPS Agenda

WPS Focal Points Network High-Level Side Event
78th Session of the UN General Assembly
Thursday, September 21, 2023 | 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM EDT
New York, UN Headquarters, Conference Room 4
In-Person: [REGISTER HERE](#)

Interpretation in English, French and Spanish

Introduction

As 2023 Co-Chairs of the WPS Focal Points Network (WPS-FPN), the United States of America and Romania, in partnership with troika members South Africa and Switzerland, and UN Women as Secretariat, are pleased to invite the Focal Points to meet in-person on the margins of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Drawing from discussions at the Fifth Capital-Level Meeting of the Network, held in Washington, D.C., from June 6-9, 2023, this annual side event will invite Network members at ministerial and senior level to share their reflections and practice on the themes and outcomes of the Washington, D.C., meeting, as well as their experiences in developing, coordinating, and implementing sustainable policies and practices for the WPS Agenda which are adaptable to existing and emerging security challenges.

Background

The theme of the 2023 U.S.-Romania Co-Chairship of the WPS-FPN is, *“Advancing the adaptability and evolution of WPS as a framework for implementing policy change.”* As Co-Chairs, we developed this theme to advance meaningfully the WPS Agenda through multi-sectoral engagement on existing and emerging security issues and coordinate existing efforts to truly enact inclusive, long-lasting, policy change.

The Capital-Level Meeting in Washington, D.C., built upon the efforts of past WPS-FPN Co-Chairs and the Network to address the global pushback on gender equality and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The meeting also highlighted and recognized the expertise of the WPS Focal Points and shared unique avenues to advance the core tenets of the WPS agenda. Following the Capital-Level Meeting, the WPS-FPN issued a [joint communiqué](#) reflecting recommendations developed around the 2023 Co-Chair priorities. Priorities are: 1) Advancing the shared solidarity and expectations of the National Focal Points; 2) Adjusting WPS efforts and actions to meet global requirements through a national focus on WPS and continued support for WPS National Action Plan (NAP) implementation; and 3) Increasing and improving the adaptability and evolution of WPS to advance an inclusive, coordinated, approach and address intersectional power dynamics.

Objective

Two main challenges in developing policy and implementing the WPS agenda are the need for coordination on existing efforts and addressing the issue of sustainability. The WPS agenda was developed to ensure women's leadership and their full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making processes, and to address multiple security concerns – including but not limited to climate change, disaster relief and response, arms control, conflict cycles, peacebuilding efforts, and power dynamics – with an intersectional and adaptive lens.

To advance WPS as a sustainable framework policy development and implementation, progress and success must be measured/monitored through achievable goals, metrics, and evaluation methods, with a particular emphasis on multi-sectoral engagement and coordination on existing and future efforts throughout the WPS community, including centers of excellence. This side event will provide an opportunity for Ministers, Senior Officials, and Heads of regional organizations, along with civil society and diverse sector partners to highlight best practices and discuss challenges and opportunities for advancing the WPS agenda in a meaningful and impactful way including addressing unique avenues for advancing WPS to address the global backsliding on gender equality and women and girls' exercise of their human rights.

In advance of the session, the Secretariat has provided the following guiding questions for the interventions focused on the priorities of the U.S.-Romania Co-Chairship:

- Considering that conflict prevention and women's meaningful participation in decision-making processes is at the heart of the WPS agenda, what specific conflict prevention actions can Network members take to advance peace and security through an inclusive approach?
- How have Network members utilized WPS NAPs and strategies in whole-of-government efforts to respond to armed conflicts, climate change, disaster relief and response, arms control and disarmament, and cyber insecurity?
- How can Network members collectively ensure the sustainability of the WPS agenda given slow progress in implementing WPS commitments and the global backsliding on women's rights and gender equality?

Program

Opening Segment
Moderated by Ms. Katrina Fotovat, Principal Deputy Office Director, Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State and United States WPS Focal Point <i>and</i> Lieutenant-colonel Manuela-Elena Bercea, Chief, Gender Management Office, Ministry of Defence and Romania WPS Focal Point
Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mr. Antony John Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State- Ms. Luminita Odobescu, Romania Minister of Foreign Affairs- Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)- Dr. Sima Sami Bahous, UN Women Executive Director

Interventions (2-3 minutes each, maximum)
(U.S. and Romanian WPS Focal Points moderate)

- Ms. Yoko Kamikwa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of **Japan**
- Ms. Lois Frankel, U.S. WPS Caucus Co-Chair, **U.S. Congressional Representative**
- Mr. Thomas Gürber, Ambassador, Deputy State Secretary and Head of UN Division, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, **Switzerland**
- Mr. Dritan Abazovic, Prime Minister, Government of **Montenegro**
- Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, **Namibia**
- Mr. Gordan Grlić Radman, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, **Croatia**
- Mr. Musa Timothy Kabba, Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Sierra Leone**
- Ms. Helga Maria Schmid, Secretary General, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (**OSCE**)
- Mme. Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy on WPS, **African Union Commission**
- Ms. Belén Martínez Carbonell, Managing Director for Global Affairs, European External Action Service, **European Union**
- Ms. Angeles Moreno Bau, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Spain**
- Ms. Heidi Hulan, Assistant Deputy Minister for International Security, Global Affairs Canada, **Canada**
- Mr. Ole Thonke, Deputy State Secretary of Development Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **Denmark**
- Ms. Luise Amtsberg, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance, **Germany**
- Ms. Jooyeon Kang, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Republic of Korea**
- Ms. Melinda Bohannon, Director General, Humanitarian and Development, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, **United Kingdom**
- Mr. Eduardo Jaramillo Navarrete, General Director for the United Nations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Mexico**
- Ms. Karen Burbach, Head of the Taskforce, NL MFA Taskforce Women's Rights and Gender Equality, **the Netherlands**

Centers of Excellence (2-3 minutes each, maximum)

- Ms. Ahood Al Zaabi, Director of United Nations Department of MOFA, **United Arab Emirates**
- Dr. Vjosa Osmani Sadriu, President of the **Republic of Kosovo**¹

Civil Society Responses (2-3 minutes each, maximum)

- Ms. Kaavya Asoka, Executive Director, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG)

¹ Reference to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

- Ms. Mavic Cabrera Balleza, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)

Closing Remarks and Reflections

- Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, Ambassador-at-Large, Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State



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