

## Funding Women-led Peacebuilding:

### Feminist Solutions for Impactful Financing for Peacebuilding

*Virtual High-Level Roundtable Discussion during the 21st Anniversary of UNSCR 1325*

Concept Note

Date and Time: November 8, 2021 8-9:30 EST

*Via Zoom Online Platform*

#### Background

Around the world, women are at the forefront of building and sustaining peace in their communities.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored that when crises hit, local actors are the first and most effective responders.<sup>2</sup> However, the funding available to local peacebuilders – in particular women – has been even more limited. Between 2017 and 2018, a mere 0.2% of the total bilateral aid targeting fragile countries went directly to women's rights organizations, and this percentage has not changed in a decade.<sup>3</sup>

Lack of adequate, predictable, and sustainable financing for peacebuilding work continues to be a major challenge to inclusive and sustaining peace and the implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. The amount of funding available for peacebuilding is insufficient, and the share of Official Development Assistance dedicated to peacebuilding decreased in recent years.<sup>4</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the funding earmarked for peacebuilding has been shifted to support emergency health and humanitarian response.<sup>5</sup> This creates the risk that the already limited budgets of peacebuilding organizations - especially those led by diverse women - will further shrink following the pandemic, "undermining attempts to 'build back better' in a world where negative conflict dynamics are increasingly apparent."<sup>6</sup>

Sustaining peace requires innovative thinking about new methods of generating resources and fostering connections between diverse stakeholders, including local peacebuilders. However, the current global system of peacebuilding financing is largely centered around bilateral and multilateral donors and international NGOs (INGOs) acting as intermediaries. INGOs often act as intermediary actors, channeling

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<sup>1</sup> For a documentation of women-led peacebuilding initiatives, see, for example: <https://gnwp.org/sustaining-peace-report/>, <https://www.gppac.net/taxonomy/term/11>; [https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/KvinnatillKvinna\\_A-Right-Not-A-Gift\\_digital.pdf](https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/KvinnatillKvinna_A-Right-Not-A-Gift_digital.pdf); Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: Critical Actors in Effective Peacemaking. ICAN, Fall 2020, pp. 14-21, [https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN\\_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf](https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: Critical Actors in Effective Peacemaking. ICAN, Fall 2020, [https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN\\_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf](https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Jen Ross, "Chronically underfunded, women peacebuilders need support more than ever", UN Women, 29 October 2020, <https://data.unwomen.org/features/chronically-underfunded-women-peace-builders-need-support-more-ever>

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Report of the Secretary-General," July 2020, <https://undocs.org/S/2020/773>  
<sup>5</sup> Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and New York University Center for Global Affairs, "The pandemic will not stop us: The impact of COVID-19 on women's peace activism in Colombia, the Philippines, South Sudan and Ukraine", March 2021, [https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/NYU-Research-Policy-Brief\\_March-2021.pdf](https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/NYU-Research-Policy-Brief_March-2021.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> European Centre for Development Policy Management; "International funding for peacebuilding: Will Covid-19 change or reinforce existing trends?"; 2020; available at: <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/ECDPM-Discussion-Paper-280-International-Funding-Peacebuilding-COVID-19-Change-Reinforce-Existing-Trends.pdf>

funds to local peacebuilders, with little funds being accessible either directly to local organizations or in a way that enables most resources benefit the local level.<sup>7</sup> The intermediary model can be a useful instrument to close the funding gap in some cases. However, overreliance on it as the sole financing model for peacebuilding risks making it more difficult for diverse women peacebuilders to sustain their work in the long-term.

### **Opportunity for change**

The international community has recognized the importance of increasing financing for peacebuilding and making it more adequate, inclusive and predictable. In his 2020 report to the UN Security Council on WPS, the UN Secretary-General called for “multiplying by five direct assistance to women’s organizations, currently at 0.2 per cent.”<sup>8</sup> The dual resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace adopted by the UN General Assembly (A/RES/75/201) and the Security Council (S/RES/2558) in December 2020 also underscored that “peacebuilding financing remains a critical challenge.” The resolutions welcomed the decision of the General Assembly to “advance, explore and consider options for ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding.” The importance of civil society and local peacebuilders as actors in sustaining peace has also been recognized. The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) its latest 2020-2024 Strategy committed the Fund to expand partnerships with civil society organizations and to explore new avenues to make funding available for community-based organizations.

Addressing the structural barriers faced by local women peacebuilders requires taking practical steps beyond rhetoric support. Instead, a radical re-evaluation of the current global peacebuilding donorship system is critical. Effective solutions for a meaningful transformation of the financing system exist, and have been applied by feminist funds, peacebuilding organizations, as well as some donors. Donors have also made commitments to improving and deepening practical approaches to supporting local women peacebuilders. These practices need to be identified and further supported through policy spaces.

In the lead up to the 2022 High-Level Meeting on Financing for Peacebuilding, a series of expert discussions and dialogues will be held on the necessary strategic, substantive and structural changes needed to make peacebuilding for financing more inclusive, more impactful, and more fit-for-purpose. To support global dialogue, the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), Kvinna till Kvinna, and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) outlined the key practical solutions to address: (1) inadequate overall amount of funding for peacebuilding in light with competing priorities of Member States; (2) scarcity of direct funding to women peacebuilders; (3) persistent presumption of incapacity and risk when funding women peacebuilders; (4) lack of opportunities for women peacebuilders to influence decision-making about financing priorities; (5) short-term, output-driven financing models; and (6) severe scarcity of rapidly accessible and flexible funding for the protection of women peacebuilders. UN Women partners with above mentioned organizations and DPPA/PBSO in order to help highlight and uplift the recommendations persistently put forth by women peacebuilders and women-led organizations and identify concrete actions necessary to implement them.

### **Rationale for the Discussion**

To provide a space for a joint critical reflection on the current state of financing for peacebuilding from a feminist perspective, GNWP, GPPAC, ICAN, Kvinna till Kvinna, WILPF and UN Women organize a high-level

<sup>7</sup> Conductive Space for Peace; “A Global System in Flux”; 2021

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Secretary-General, “Women and Peace and Security. Report to the UN Security-Council”, S/2020/946, 25 September 2020, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2020/946>

panel discussion to discuss feminist solutions for impactful financing for peacebuilding during the 21st Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on WPS in October 2021. This discussion will together local women peacebuilders and representatives of the UN, Member States and civil society. It will provide space to highlight the barriers to sustainable funding experienced by local women peacebuilders, share existing good practices from peacebuilding stakeholders and propose further solutions that can support local women peacebuilding work in a meaningful and effective way.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the roundtable are:

1. To provide space for local women peacebuilders to share their experiences of systemic barriers to effective financing for peacebuilding and good practices that enable them to conduct their work.
2. To create a space for Member States, civil society, UN actors, academics and other key stakeholders to critically reflect on and share the best practices in financing for women-led peacebuilding, progress in addressing key structural barriers thus far, and a way forward for a more inclusive, impactful and fit-for-purpose financing.

### **Questions for the discussion**

- What are the key persistent barriers that local women peacebuilders face in accessing funding for their work? What are the limitations experienced by donors and what are some of the ways to address or overcome these limitations?
- What are some of the best practices in supporting local peacebuilding work? What makes them good practices? How can other actors replicate or support such initiatives?
- What concrete steps can Member States and UN actors take to ensure that local women peacebuilders' priorities and recommendations are represented at the High-Level Meeting on Financing for Peacebuilding, and that actions to realize these recommendations are sustained beyond the High-Level meeting? How positive action can be sustained beyond the High-Level Meeting?

### **Provisional agenda**

<b>8:00 – 8:15 EDT</b>	<b>Welcome remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Anita Bhatia, UN Women</li><li>- Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, Chief Executive Officer, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (on behalf of civil society co-sponsors)</li></ul>
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8:15 – 9:25  
EDT

**Moderator:**

Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Executive Director, International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

**First discussants (local women peacebuilders):**

- Abir Haj Ibrahim, Co-founder Executive Director, Mobaderoon, Syria
- Justice Kumche, Executive Director, Women in Alternative Action (WAA) Cameroon
- Robinah Rubimbwa, Coalition for Action 1325, Uganda

*Each discussant will speak for no more than 5 minutes. This will be followed by responses/reactions from the Member States and UN representatives*

9:25AM –  
9:30 AM

**Closing remarks**

Petra Tötterman Andorff, Executive Director, Kvinna til Kvinna