



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixtieth session

14-24 March 2016

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Mediators Beyond Borders, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

### **About Mediators Beyond Borders and its role in promoting women as equal participants in global mediation and peacebuilding initiatives**

For nations to emerge from violence and political overhaul, highly skilled women peacebuilders are essential to foster and sustain conflict resolution initiatives at all levels: in local communities, civil society, private businesses and political circles. With skilful and continual participation, women can transform their regions into more vibrant, inclusive societies with sustainable peace and development.

Mediators Beyond Borders is committed to building local conflict resolution skills for promoting peace worldwide. We partner with global organizations to ensure women's roles and rights are recognized. Our multidisciplinary teams jointly design and implement projects with local partners and increase local abilities to help heal from severe conflict, reconcile communities, and sustainably transform from conflict. We advocate for all forms of conflict resolution and provide services to the development field, multilateral agencies, and corporations interested in enhancing their work with conflict-sensitive and trauma-informed practices.

Through its International Training Institute, Mediators Beyond Borders empowers women to become more engaged in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and prevention. By selecting community and civil society leaders, the organization has convened three sessions with women from seventeen countries in the Middle East and North African Region, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia. The program emphasizes mediation capacity-building, professional networking, and support for program design and implementation at the local level. In particular, the program trains women in a range of conflict resolution and transformation processes, prepares them to contribute to peace negotiations and to lead civil society efforts to hold institutions and non-state actors accountable for sustainable peace and development. The program also creates sustained women's community of practice networks to leverage collaborative efforts and support peacebuilding projects in the women's home nation.

### **United Nations Resolutions and Reports**

In Security Council resolution 1820 (2008, at 28), the Security Council voiced concern over the absence of women and the resultant failure of peace agreements to deal with women's issues leading to the perpetuation of discrimination against women, their continued marginalization in the post-conflict society and de facto impunity for abuses such as sexual violence during conflict. Peace processes, therefore, need to ensure not only adequate representation of women as participants and observers, but also gender expertise in agenda-setting, substantive talks and implementation.

In 2009, the United Nations Secretary General issued a report ([S/2009/189](#)) on enhancing mediation and its support activities, while describing the need for experienced and knowledgeable mediators and support teams, with women

adequately represented. In the report, the Secretary General recommended the fostering of gender balance and expertise in senior mediation posts.

### **The Group of Friends of Mediation and the United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation**

The Group of Friends of Mediation was established to promote and advance the use of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, participate in conflict prevention and resolution, and generate support for the development of mediation. The members of the Group of Friends of Mediation (currently of 41 United Nations Member States, the United Nations, 7 regional organizations and other international organizations) promoted a culture of mediation in their national, regional and international policies to engage more women in mediation, highlighted the importance of the full and effective participation of women at all levels of peace processes, and emphasized the crucial role of gender expertise in mediation.

Pursuant to the Friends of Mediation Security Council Arria Formula Meeting on 8th March 2012 “Women’s Role in Mediation and Post-Conflict Resolution”, the Permanent Representative of Turkey also recognized the importance of the full participation of women at all levels and stages of conflict prevention and settlement, and underscored the significance of women’s involvement at the decision-making level. “In this context, it is clear that peace agreements must pay proper attention to the different impact of conflict on men and women. They must also give due consideration needs and expectations of women; otherwise, half of the population is neglected.” The Permanent Representative of Turkey highlighted the central role the United Nations plays in setting the standards for the participation of women in peace process, and identified that women’s roles require more inclusiveness: women currently represent fewer than 8 per cent of participants and fewer than 3 per cent of signatories of peace agreements.

The sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly encouraged the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations by adopting General Assembly resolution 68/303 to continue to develop their mediation capacities, use United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation in their efforts, increase awareness of the importance of mediation and to ensure women’s equal and full participation in all forums and at all levels of the dispute settlement and conflict resolution process. This resolution noted that further efforts were necessary to implement all relevant resolutions including those on women, peace and security and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It also recognized civil society actors in mediation, and encouraged their contributions and continued coordination to improve complementarity in mediation activities, when appropriate. Furthermore, it requested the Secretary-General to submit a report during the seventieth session of the General Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations on mediation.

### **Beijing+20 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**

The Conference on Women (Beijing+20), adopted at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, urged Member States to accelerate its full and effective implementation, and to set a deadline of 2030 for achieving gender

equality and women's empowerment. As the international community considers the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will provide an important opportunity to generate momentum to implement the 2030 Agenda towards achieving gender equality and women's rights and empowerment. In addition to mainstreaming gender equality in Goal 5, "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," the targets set out the new sustainable development goals, and cover a comprehensive set of issues, which include the gender dimensions of poverty, hunger, health, education, water and sanitation, employment, safe cities and peace, climate change and security.

### **Mediators Beyond Borders' position and the post-2015 agenda**

Mediators Beyond Borders is encouraged by these developments aimed at prioritizing women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development.

We request that the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women focus particularly on strengthening and recognizing the importance of women's role in mediation, conflict prevention and resolution. In addition, we request the Commission to develop a specific target plan that addresses how to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, and how to transform the underlying structures and gender relations that have given rise to women's discrimination throughout history.

As it was agreed in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, "[w]e must redouble our efforts to resolve or prevent conflict and to support post-conflict countries, including through ensuring that women have a role in peace-building and state-building". It has long been recognized that women's contributions are critical to these efforts, perhaps most notably captured in United Nations' Security resolution 1325 and General Assembly resolution 65/283. Enhancing the participation of women in conflict resolution and prevention roles will help achieve the United Nation's desire of levelling the playing field and will lead to a more likelihood of ensuring that the 2030 goals are met.

To this end, in accordance with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, Mediators Beyond Borders calls on the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the United Nations to:

- Specifically recognize the unique role women play in post-conflict peacebuilding and its link to women's empowerment and community development.
- Enhance dispute resolution capacity building within the United Nations system, with particular emphasis on local and regional capacity building, promoting "equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities" as it is set forth in goal 4.
- Call on the promotion of women to leadership positions within the United Nations system, particularly in decision-making roles.
- Request that women's participation in conflict resolution and conflict prevention be included in the general agenda topics and incorporated into assessments.

- Research further the connection between women's participation in conflict resolution, conflict prevention, and the likelihood of success in resolving particular situations and fostering positive change.
  - Promote professional training and development for women by supporting local, national and international funding mechanisms aimed at strengthening skills level training for conflict resolution, mediation and negotiation.
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