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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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

On the occasion of the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Mediators Beyond Borders International wishes to highlight the importance of innovation and technology as critical tools for the advancement of peace, security and women's effective participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution. We recognize that women's effective participation pursuant to the United Nations' Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security can be propelled by eliminating barriers that connect, educate and equip women. Effective participation also requires nations to invest in women's innovative and entrepreneurial development, science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, and improved access to technology and tools.

Mediators Beyond Borders International is a non-governmental organization of people building peace. Mediators Beyond Borders International believes that building skills and competences in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and negotiation lays foundational factors that can improve political and economic gender gaps and engage women. In addition, investment in women's leadership and negotiation skills propel positive change by equipping life-long skills that apply to many contexts, including in public office and private sector leadership positions.

Mediators and peacebuilders play a vital role in assisting to design national and international peace processes, including grassroots capacity building of women mediators. There are tangible recommendations that the international community has assembled to support mediation design to propel inclusivity of women's voices and effective participation and representation at all levels. UN Women provides specific recommendations to help propel voices: inclusivity, equality by law, security from violence, and access to knowledge and training.

Mediators Beyond Borders International believes sustainable peace is often a derivative to peace foundational pillars such as strong legal structures, sound government, a strong and growing business environment with equal opportunity, and other positive pillars of peace (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2021). A commonality to accessing and embracing the "pillars of peace" in the 21st century is reliable, unrestricted and private access to technology including internet, Wi-Fi and cellular infrastructure. In many rural, remote and even some urban areas where women often reside, access to such technologies can be intermittent, or even scarce. Nations should invest in full national infrastructure to maximize communication and technology access for all residents and also make equipment and services affordable to enhance access. Technology is essential to document and disseminate women's participation in peace processes and has also been a tool by oppressive regimes to restrict or crush women's voices. Mediators Beyond Borders International calls for the international community to ensure borderless, global access to open and unrestricted communication and internet technology to allow for freedom of expression, early warning communication of conflict germination, and freedom from state sponsored censorship.

The public and private sectors play an important role in the development and investment of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and math, an area where women continue to be underrepresented from opportunity and advancement opportunities. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics education can lead to opportunities in professions such as engineering, medicine, law, academia, and computer science. Women and girls who excel in science, technology, engineering and mathematics also have the potential to utilize their talents to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in their nation and beyond, and also to propel innovation and entrepreneurship for the benefit of their families and

communities. Inherent in such leadership is the advancement of gender equality, and the realization of SDG Goal 5.

Mediators Beyond Borders International's Women in Mediation Action Group of the United Nations Multilateral Working Group and our International Peace Training Institute empower women and girls by providing support, mentorship, and training in negotiation and conflict resolution. This is done by video conferencing and accessible around the world by internet or Wi-Fi connection. In doing so, the basis for increased participation by women in leadership, political and economic forums can be developed. The goal is to develop the knowledge and tools the trainees require to advance their ability to reduce intra- and inter- community conflict, develop community safety and family health, to lead conflict resolution and transformation processes in their country, to develop connections with other women peacebuilders locally, regionally, and internationally and to contribute to peace negotiations locally, regionally, and internationally. These programmes align with the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration "Women and Armed Conflict" E.4 "Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace" which calls for peaceful conflict resolution and peace, reconciliation and tolerance through education, training, community actions and youth exchange programmes, in particular for young women."

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in multiple shifts in society and affected how our systems and structures interact with each other, creating tremendous technological connections and constraints. Special attention must be paid to supporting women and girls working or learning in industries experiencing unprecedented digital transformation.

Recommendations:

Mediators Beyond Borders International provides the following recommendations to the 67th session of the Commission of the Status of Women for consideration:

1. Encourage private-public sector partnerships for the development and investment of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and math, an area where women continue to be underrepresented from opportunity and advancement opportunities.
2. Nations should invest in full national infrastructure, including rural and remote internet, Wi-Fi and cellular infrastructure access to ensure all residents have equal access to technology, especially women.
3. Enhance training of women in technology and innovation to engage effectively in peace processes such as peace building, which can also help to amplify women's voices in peace processes whose voices maybe lost in physical spaces.
4. Investment in the use of technology and training for peacebuilding and promoting peace, especially to counter radicalization, and incitement of violence
5. Advocate for a human-centered and innovative design approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding is needed to create culturally relevant and critical multicultural education.
6. Recognize that for the effective participation of women in peace processes and for their increased and meaningful inclusion, it is crucial to build gender awareness within the local communities and organizational structures.
7. Recognize that peacebuilding efforts have to be mindful of the social and cultural processes that are important to the local communities which are driven by people's intersectional identities and values. However, there are multiple barriers for the inclusion of women around their capacity to have specialized knowledge and tools

to participate in mediations or negotiations. The women and girls' ability to participate could face institutional challenges limiting them to contribute to the best of their abilities.

8. There is a need for digital solutions targeted at capacity building of the women mediators.

9. Recognition that violence against women and girls includes technology-facilitated violence. Peace processes have to use the gender-responsive frameworks and build knowledge around the need to protect women's human rights online as well as off-line (Human Rights Council resolution [32/13](#)). We need to support local initiatives to enhance the digital inclusion of women and girls.

10. There is a specific need for increased financing to increase and strengthen women and youth participation in such peace processes, including micro-financing for technology and innovation.
