

“Women’s participation in peace and security: Conflict prevention and the security sector”

Meeting in the margins of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly

September 21st, 2017

3:00-6:00 pm

CR-12, UNHQ New York

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Focal Points Network

In the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly, Spain, in collaboration with Germany, Namibia and UN Women, is organizing a meeting of the Focal Points Network on WPS as a follow-up of the first meeting which took place in Alicante (Spain) on April 26-27th 2017. It will focus on:

- “Women’s participation in peace and security: conflict prevention and the security sector and its integration in National Action Plans (NAPS) and National Strategies on WPS”
- “Network’s operational achievements and challenges”

The Focal Points Network is a cross-regional forum aiming to provide space to exchange experiences and best practices on women, peace, and security. In the September 2016 joint communiqué at the Foundational Meeting of the WPS National Focal Points Network in New York, members affirmed their commitment to advance women’s participation in decision-making in peace and security, as well as women’s participation in national and regional-level peace and security policies and programs.

To further realize this commitment, the first meeting of the National Focal Points Network, held in Alicante from April 26-27th, 2017, focused on National Action Plans (NAPs) for Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). After its launch in New York last September, the Network has established some of its operational elements, such as the Presidency and the Secretariat. Spain is holding the presidency of this Network in 2017. Germany and Namibia will do so in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

The capital-level meeting of the focal points in 2018 is scheduled to take place in spring 2018 in Berlin. Since the 1st of September, UN Women – Peace and Security Unit serves as the Secretariat of the Network. Other elements remain to be discussed and decided by its members.

Goal of the meeting in New York

National Focal Points will have the opportunity to discuss among themselves and with representatives of the UN Secretariat and civil society good practices to enhance women’s participation in peace and security, particularly in the security sector as well as to decide on specific operational issues on the functioning of the network.

Following the Network meeting, and as a result of the Network’s discussions and conclusions, UN Women, in collaboration with UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), will develop recommendations on the measures to increase women’s participation in the security sector /

peacekeeping operations, and the operational challenges and mechanisms for the Network. These recommendations will then be forwarded, along with a Communique, in the weeks following the meeting.

Measures to increase women's participation in the security sector

In July 2017, the heads of the armed forces of around 100 countries met at UN Headquarters in New York to discuss several issues including increasing the number of female peacekeepers and integrating a gender perspective. Several measures were proposed including the expansion of the rank for Military Observers for women Warrant Officers and Lieutenants with five years of experience; the choice for women with children under seven years of age to deploy for 6 months not 12 months; the designation of women-only posts for during a pilot of two years for posts with a strong link to the participation of local women in the mission area; and the re-allocation of posts of Member States who do not meet the 15% target of women officers to Member States who are meeting that percentage.

In June 2016, the Chiefs of Police from 110 countries gathered for the first time at the UN Headquarters and discussed among other issues the operational necessity of gender-sensitive policing, the nomination of gender focal points and women's participation in UN policing.¹ They stressed that gender underrepresentation within UN Police creates a significant operational gap and acknowledged the need to reinvigorate efforts to nominate women officers.²

At the national level, positive practices are taking place through capacity building and skills training as well as the use of temporary special measures to encourage women to join the police and military. Nevertheless, these efforts are still not sufficient.

Operational achievements and challenges:

As one of the conclusions of Alicante's meeting, Spain announced the organization of a follow-up meeting in New York and the importance of advancing in the building of a *real* network. In order to achieve this goal, several steps have been taken related to the functioning of the Network:

UN Women – Peace and Security Unit serves as Secretariat of the Network and has included personnel (P3) in its staff that will coordinate the Networks' functioning. Amongst its tasks, the secretariat will distribute regular newsletters to promote research, best practices, funding and capacity building opportunities and will map national and regional WPS initiatives and actions. The Secretariat will also provide technical and logistical support for the biannual and expert meetings.

The former and current Presidency and the following country to host the Network and Presidency will work as a Troika in order to monitor and follow-up on the Network's duties, and identifying the topics for the meetings of the Network.

¹ United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit, Chair's Note, 3 June 2016, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/sites/police/documents/UNCOPS-Chairs-Note_EN-final.pdf

² In 2015, the Police Division developed a *UN Police Gender Toolkit: Standardised Best Practices on Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping* that provides comprehensive guidance on recruiting and retaining female police officers in the police and other law enforcement agencies and strategies for their deployment to peacekeeping. In 2016, the Police Division trained over 700 female police officers from seven Member States on the basic proficiency levels on language, driving and shooting enabling over half to pass the UN examination and subsequently deploy to peace operations. In 2017, the Police Division is developing a preparatory course for female senior police officers to help them succeed in the recruitment process for leadership positions. It will be rolled out to 200 officers via four regional training courses and those who pass the courses will be considered for a talent pipeline for recruitment to leadership posts called the Senior Female Command Cadre.

Following the commitments announced in Alicante, Spain has distributed a National Focal Points Database that shall be updated by the Secretariat as the Network grows.

Guiding questions for the discussion among Focal Points:

Focal Points are invited to share recommendations and best practices on specific questions as the following ones.

On women's participation and gender mainstreaming and its limitations:

- How do women and women's organizations contribute to conflict prevention and the security sector?
- How can gender mainstreaming be integrated in the political-diplomatic spheres and in security sector institutions, strategies, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
- What are the mechanisms to address gender inequality and discrimination in national peace and security institutions?
- From your national pre-selection criteria and processes, what are the barriers that prevent women from getting selected, nominated and deployed to peace operations?

On specific measures:

- What specific strategies/special measures are being/can be put in place to increase women's participation in the defense and security sector?
- What best practices/lessons learned/specific strategies/special measures/ are being/can be put in place to increase women's nomination and deployment to peace operations, including in outreach and national pre-selection criteria and processes?
- What are (if any) the national and regional targets set in place for women's participation in the defense and security sector and peacekeeping?
- How do the Member States Military Gender Advisors and Police Gender Adviser/Focal Point and National WPS Focal Point work together? How can member states increase women's leadership within the defense and security sector, particularly in operational positions?

On the Network operational issues:

- What coordination mechanisms must be established between the Secretariat and the Troika?
- How can the Network and its Secretariat promote funding and capacity building opportunities? Can the Member States use the Network as a platform to present and seek support for their projects in the WPS area?
- What mechanism can be put in place for the Network to receive information to map national and regional WPS initiatives and actions?
- The Networks is in charge of organizing experts meetings. What areas would be of special interest for the Network for the first meeting in 2018 in Berlin?