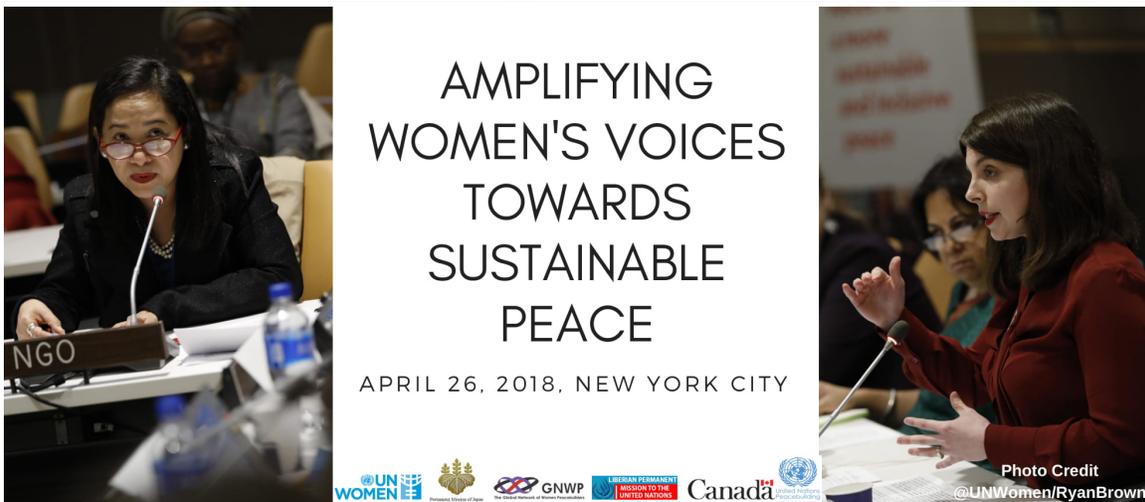


<http://gnwp.org/we-want-to-be-heard-local-women-demand-inclusion-in-the-discussion-and-implementation-of-the-sustaining-peace-agenda/>

We want to be heard! Local women demand inclusion in the discussion and implementation of the Sustaining Peace Agenda



GNWP

In just over a week after the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) lunched its research on the Sustaining Peace agenda, more than 170 women from Canada, Colombia, Liberia, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sweden and Ukraine responded to the survey and participated in focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) to share what “Sustaining Peace” means to them.

The research, coordinated by GNWP with support from UN Women in 15 countries^[1], aims to shed light on what “Sustaining Peace” means to women civil society; the work that is already done by women civil society around the world to sustain peace and that needs to be recognized, highlighted and supported; the challenges women civil society face when sustaining peace; and how the international community can support them more effectively. The high rate of response in the short timeframe clearly demonstrates the determination of local women’s activists to make their voices on sustaining peace heard.

The initial responses gave rise to a number of interesting emerging trends:

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- ***Peace is more than an absence of war***: Development, good governance, culture of peace, or gender equality were mentioned by 100% of respondents when defining “sustaining peace”.
- Despite some progress in women’s inclusion in peace processes, ***exclusion of women; youth; and other marginalized groups remains a key obstacle to sustaining peace***(identified by 40% of respondents as hindering implementation of peace agreements).
- Reasons for exclusion include patriarchy and lack of respect/recognition of women’s contributions (40%); lack of a platform for meaningful participation, such as access to the media, consultation processes etc. (18%); lack of resources (10%); and lack of education or awareness of one’s rights (10%).
- Despite these challenges, ***women civil society’s contributions to sustaining peace*** range from preventing electoral violence and organizing neighborhood watch; through advocacy, awareness-raising and peace education to foster the culture of peace; to supporting those affected by conflict, and working towards social justice and development to address the root causes of conflict.
- There is a ***strong need to improve local ownership of international peacebuilding programs/interventions*** – with 65% of respondents saying that the local civil society was able to influence donor priorities “to a limited extent”; “to a very small extent”; or “not at all”.

Following the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture in 2015, in 2016, the UN General Assembly and Security Council adopted twin resolutions (UNSC Resolution 2282 and General Assembly Resolution 70.262), emphasizing the importance of a broad approach to peacebuilding, encompassing all stages of peace, not only the immediate post-conflict reconstruction. The Sustaining Peace agenda, which has since been elaborated on by the Secretary General^[2], recognizes that efforts to sustain peace are “necessary not only once conflict had broken out but also long beforehand, through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes”, and that multi-sectoral, locally-driven and owned approach is needed to ensure effective peacebuilding and conflict prevention.^[3]

Such an approach reflects this taken by the local women’s organizations and civil society, especially in their efforts to implement the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Recognizing that the civil society are the pioneers and leaders on the Sustaining Peace agenda, GNWP, with support from UN Women, initiated this research project to make sure local women’s civil society voices are represented in the global discussions on sustaining peace.

GNWP presented the initial findings of the research in a panel discussion at the UN on April 26, 2018. The panel was co-organized by GNWP and UN Women in partnership with the Peacebuilding Support Office, and the Permanent Missions of Canada; Japan; and Liberia to the UN on the margins of the High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, convened by the President of the General Assembly. The discussion also featured four women activists – Ms. Maheen Sultan from Bangladesh; Ms. Francy Jaramillo from Colombia; Ms. Sophia Dianne Garcia from the Philippines; and Ms. Ma Annie Nushane from Liberia – joining by phone, since she had been denied a visa to enter the U.S. The speakers provided insights into local women’s work to sustain peace, and the challenges they still face in their countries.

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“Solidarity is the foundation of sustaining peace” – said Ms. Sultan, opening her speech. Ms. Jaramillo, on the other hand, emphasised that Colombia will not see true peace until it can eliminate violence against women, and against human rights defenders. Ms. Garcia – coordinator of the “Girl+ Ambassadors for Peace” in the Philippines and the voice of the youth of the vicious cycle – “war on drugs”. She also spoke about the Marawi Siege that resulted to the destruction of schools in the area, denying youth access to education and making them more vulnerable to recruitment by violent groups. Finally, Ms. Nushane called for greater inclusion of women in justice and security sector to ensure durable peace.

Closing the discussion, Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, GNWP’s CEO highlighted the intersectionality of the Sustaining Peace agenda and the fact that “local populations and local women do not live their lives in mandates and silos” – they experience conflict in a complex and holistic way.

GNWP will continue its work to bring local women’s voices, perspectives and experiences to the global policy discussions on Sustainable Peace. The Civil Society Study is planned to be completed by August 2018. Its findings will be presented in the Fall of 2018, and the final report will be produced by the end of 2018. GNWP also hopes to continue the cooperation with UN Women to bring the discussions on Sustaining Peace agenda to the regional, national and local level, and ensure their implementation through regional conferences.

Please see the full speeches of the panelists:

[Amb. Louise Blais’ Sustaining Peace opening remarks](#)

[Amb. Hoshino’s Sustaining Peace opening remarks](#)

[Sophia Dianne Garcia Sustaining Peace Speech](#)

[Maheen Sultan Sustaining Peace Speech](#)

[Ma Annie Nushane Sustaining Peace Speech](#)

[Francy Jaramillo Sustaining Peace speech \[ESP\]](#)

[Agnieszka Fal Sustaining Peace speech](#)

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[1] These include countries currently experiencing conflict; post-conflict; and those that have not experienced armed conflict in the recent history. The sample includes: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mexico, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sweden, Syria and Ukraine

[2] Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and sustaining peace. S/2018/43, 18 January 2018.

[3] Ibid. Paragraphs 3 and 13.