“Marginalized Women in Fragile and Conflict Settings – how to make their voices count”

65th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

18th March 2021 (10:00 - 11:30am EST)

Event hosted by Germany, United States, Chile and Women for Women International.

2020 was set to be a big year for women’s rights - a celebration of historical achievements and political milestones, bringing much needed focus on bolder actions that challenge the status quo and deliver on commitments for all women.

Instead, the COVID-19 pandemic brought disease, lockdown, unemployment, poverty, domestic and intimate partner violence, an increase in unpaid care work and severe isolation. While almost everyone was affected by the pandemic, it is clear that the impacts of the pandemic are deeply gendered – and some women bear the brunt even more: those who were already marginalized before this crisis - women in conflict and fragile settings, women in displacement settings, women with disabilities, socially excluded women, women with diverse sexual and gender identities. These intersecting factors of marginalization and discrimination make the participation of women in decision-making even more challenging. Their right to have a say in the decisions that affect them is often ignored, and the potential of their experience and expertise is lost. Governments, civil society, and the UN system must work together to create an enabling environment to empower women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination to play key leadership roles in decision-making.

The event will consider key challenges and gaps that compound the exclusion and hinder the empowerment of marginalized women in fragile and conflict settings. It will take a look at cross-regional policy developments, implementation and coordination mechanisms that further meaningful inclusion, representation and visibility, intersectional and rights-based approaches and a focus on women as agents of change. It will highlight the voices and standpoints of marginalized women to be heard by the international community.
Key questions:

• Why are many women still unseen and unheard? What factors contribute to their exclusion from international frameworks and agendas?
• What are the concrete challenges faced by marginalized women in conflict settings? Who is most disproportionately affected?
• What role can various stakeholders play in implementing UNSCR 1325 and 2475 to ensure that women with disabilities can be empowered and participate in decision making at all levels?
• What concrete action can local actors take to end marginalization and use women's potential as agents of change?
• How can the international community support them, to make them heard, to be meaningfully included in decision-making processes?
• How can the international community ensure that the work we all do to address the barriers facing women who are marginalized from an empowerment perspective versus a victim-centered approach?
• What concrete follow-up is needed? How can marginalization be reflected in the Commission on the status of women especially with this year's themes, Generation Equality Process, the WPS agenda and the SDGs?

Format:

• Moderated by Bastian Hartig, Broadcast journalist and correspondent
• Keynote speaker TBC
• Contributions by H.E. Mr Niels Annen - Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs for Germany, H.E. Elisabeth Millard - Acting ECOSOC Representative for the United States and H.E. Ms Monica Zalaquett - Minister for Women and Gender Equality for Chile.
• Statement by Anita Bhatia, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women
• Moderated discussion among global and grassroots activists
  ○ Anthonia Olieh - Social Empowerment Manager for Women for Women International in Nigeria
  ○ Erika Rodriguez Gómez - Feminist activist, lawyer and human rights defender from Colombia
  ○ Hajer Sharief - Co-Founder of Together We Build It and advocate for the Kofi Annan Foundation from Libya
  ○ Nayyab Ali - Leading transgender activist from Pakistan
  ○ Nujeen Mustafa - Youth and disability rights activist from Syria