Peacebuilding Commission
Women leadership for Women, Peace and Security agenda and the role of women in the context of climate change
11 November 2022 (3-6 pm)

**Concept Note**

**Background**

This meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission has been developed together with the Women Leaders’ Caucus of Central Asia (CAWLC) and its participating States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to discuss and share experiences on women leadership in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda with a special focus on impact of climate change on women in Central Asia. The meeting builds on and is guided by the Commission’s gender strategy adopted in 2016 and reviewed in 2020, and its associated action plan that was approved in January 2021, and inspired by the gender-specific PBC recommendations in A/74/935-S/2020/645, to deliver tangible support to women peacebuilders around the world. The PBC is calling for the elimination of discriminatory practices, women’s empowerment, and women’s political participation, as part of its efforts to achieve sustainable peace, development, and more resilient and inclusive societies.

The UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions1 on WPS recognized women’s key roles in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The 2010 report of the Secretary-General, as requested by Resolution 1889 (2010), contained a Seven-Point Action Plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding. The important role of women in peacebuilding and the need to increase their participation in peace processes have been continuously reaffirmed for more than 20 years. Since then, the UN system and Member States have committed to implement the WPS agenda in their work, including by working with local women peacebuilders and women’s civil society organizations (CSOs).

Despite the consistent efforts to promote gender equality in Central Asia by the participating states,2 women have not yet achieved significant representation in leadership positions or economic and social life. The WPS index3 shows that the Central Asian subregion has a lower proportion of women in senior leadership positions, and their inclusion in economic and social life is significantly lower compared to other regions. The index ranked Central Asian countries as follows over 2021: Kazakhstan – 59th, Turkmenistan – 60th, Uzbekistan – 74th, Tajikistan – 85th, and Kyrgyzstan – 97th.

According to a consultation conducted by UN Women with women across the region, there is a need to continue efforts to remove barriers to women’s meaningful participation in political and peace processes at

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1 These resolutions are: 1325 (2000); 1820 (2008); 1888 (2008); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2010); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019).


3 The Women, Peace and Security Index, developed by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, incorporates three basic dimensions of women’s well-being — inclusion (economic, social, political); justice (formal and informal); and security (family, community, and societal levels) which are captured and quantified through 11 indicators to create a global ranking of 167 countries: [https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WPS-Index-2021.pdf](https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WPS-Index-2021.pdf)
formal and informal fora, building solidarity and support for women across the region, and facilitating consultative engagements between government institutions and CSOs on expansion of the WPS agenda.

Central Asia is highly vulnerable to adverse effects of climate change. The tangible consequences of climate change for the Central Asian States include shrinking glaciers, destabilized river flow, increasing aridity. Environmental degradation and uneven development could exacerbate existing fragilities and conflict risks in the region, including the tension over access to land and water resources.

It is crucial to integrate gender perspectives into policies addressing consequences of climate change and ensure the full and meaningful participation and leadership of women at all levels of climate change, environmental and disaster risk governance in all Central Asian countries.

Climate change, environmental degradation and disasters have disproportionate and distinct effects on women and girls of the region, in particular those who reside in rural and border areas. Gender norms and power structures influence how women and men of different backgrounds are impacted by, and respond to climate-related security risks. Central Asian rural women often care for livestock, engage in irrigation, or hold other responsibilities related to subsistence agriculture. As such, unreliable water supplies, exacerbated by climate change implications such as heat and cold waves, pose a significant risk to the health, well-being and security of women and their communities.

Women in Central Asia remain significantly underrepresented in the institutions and do not efficiently participate in policy development and implementation process addressing climate change associated risks to the peace and security across the region. For example, transboundary water cooperation does not yet sufficiently consider gender-specific risks of increased conflict over limited water resource and the importance of inclusive decision making. Promoting women’s leadership in decision-making and incorporating women’s knowledge and skills will lead to more sustainable and equitable solutions, since a broader set of socio-environmental and security risks will be considered.

An example of efforts to address these challenges is the Peacebuilding Fund’s support in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan for a shared project to enhance cross-border environmental and socio-economic cooperation between the two countries, including by supporting platforms for cross border exchanges among women and youth through self-help groups and women leaders dialogues, and supporting interest-based platforms (on farming, local entrepreneurship, etc.) that connect communities and enable the exchange of knowledge and coordination among local governments and associations (e.g., water and pasture users’ associations); thereby addressing local disputes over the access to and efficient use of water and pastures.

Women led CSOs have also been active in bottom-up initiatives that enhanced women’s roles in peace and security such as during the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border conflict, a platform of dialogue was created that united civil society organizations from both countries.


The five Central Asian governments, supported by the UN system and CSOs continue to be engaged in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and WPS agenda and advancing peace through gender equality and social inclusion. For instance, Kyrgyzstan has been actively working to implement the WPS agenda and, as a result, the country achieved a significant increase in women’s financial inclusion and women’s perception of community safety between 2017 and 2021.\textsuperscript{6} Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have both adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS,\textsuperscript{7} while Uzbekistan is in the process of developing the framework.\textsuperscript{8}

To spearhead these efforts, the Women Leaders’ Caucus of Central Asia (CAWLC) was launched on 23 December 2020 to promote the role of women in advancing peace and sustainable development in the region through high-level dialogue and multilateral efforts, including research, analysis, advocacy, public engagement, and partnership development. The CAWLC is composed of senior representatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, and is supported by the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.\textsuperscript{9}

The CAWLC has already made notable strides in attaining its goals, including the advancement of the WPS agenda across the region. The Caucus’ advocacy efforts, bolstered by support of regional women associations and networks, rendered issues pertaining to women’s political, social and economic participation as one of the priorities of the regional co-operation. The Joint Statement adopted at the Heads of State Summit in August 2021 in Turkmenistan reflects the CAWLC advocacy accordingly.

The CAWLC’s has ambitions and potential to effectively contribute to addressing the whole spectrum of WPS matters in the region, including challenges associated with adverse implications of climate change for the region. Since its establishment, the Caucus has organized several events and fora with the aim of strengthening cooperation towards implementing WPS priorities.

For example, in December 2021, representatives of the CAWLC and other women CSO representatives jointly with UNRCCA organized a regional forum on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) in Central Asia to discuss and consolidate joint efforts to implement the WPS agenda. As a result of the forum, the meeting participants identified the following regional priorities in this regard: increasing women’s participation and representation; prevention of gender-based violence, increasing the role of women in addressing climate change, and the adoption and financing of National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 (2000). The CAWLC also reiterated their commitment to continue its efforts to implement the WPS agenda at the regional and national levels towards strengthening peace and security of countries in the region.\textsuperscript{10}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{6} “Kyrgyzstan’s Performance on the Women, Peace, and Security Index,” Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security: https://giwps.georgetown.edu/country/kyrgyzstan/.
  \item \textsuperscript{7} “National Action Plan,” Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom: https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/
  \item \textsuperscript{10} “UNRCCA co-organizes regional forum with civil society organizations on implementation of UNSCR 1325 ‘Women, Peace and Security’ in Central Asia,” UNRCCA, 20 Dec 2021: https://unrcca.unmissions.org/unrcca-co-organizes-regional-forum-civil-society-organizations-implementation-unscr-1325-%E2%80%9Cwomen.
Under the chairmanship of Turkmenistan in 2022, the Caucus has further expanded the spectrum of its advocacy and policymaking work across the region by focusing on the impact of climate change on the situation of women, empowerment of women in the political, economic and social spheres, increasing the intellectual leadership of women by initiating evidence-based research in political, trade, socio-economic and other fields and cooperation between women of the region in the fields of science and education, digital technologies, education, culture, art and sports, as well as in supporting youth and developing tourism. On 15 February 2022, with support of UNRCCA, UN Women and UNDP, the CAWLC hosted the regional consultations in preparation for the 66th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change. The event resulted in the adoption of the draft agreed conclusions of the 66th session of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW66) and formulated initial regional recommendations on policies and programmes aimed at achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies. The consultations emphasized, among other, the importance of addressing climate change-induced water scarcity and promoting inclusive decision-making for more effective water cooperation.

**Purpose of the meeting:**

The meeting seeks to promote meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding and the implementation of the WPS agenda in the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, with a particular focus on women’s political participation and leadership more broadly, and in challenges related to the role of women in the context of the climate change in particular. Representatives of the Central Asian Women Leaders Caucus as well as women and youth CSOs from Central Asia will also be invited to share their experience on how greater regional cooperation can support their national and local efforts in implementing the WPS agenda, specifically the efforts on strengthening the role of women in addressing climate change and achieving social cohesion, peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the region.
Agenda:

- Opening Remarks by the Chair of the PBC (03 minutes)

- Briefings by: (05 minutes each)

1. Ms. Natalia Gherman, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Asia and Head of UNRCCA (05 minutes)
2. H.E. Ms Dunyagozel Gulmanova, Chairperson of the Committee on protection of human rights and freedoms of the Halk Maslakhaty of Milli Gengesh of Turkmenistan
3. H.E. Ms. Tanzila Narbaeva, Chairperson of the Senate of Oliy Majlis, Uzbekistan
4. H.E. Ms. Jamila Isaeva, Vice-Speaker of Zhogorku Kenesh (Parliament) of Kyrgyzstan
5. H.E. Ms. Hilobi Qurbonzoda, Chairman of the Committee of Women’s Affairs and family, Tajikistan
6. H.E. Ms Aigul Kuspan, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security of Mazhilis of Parliament of Kazakhstan
7. Ms. Zamira Naimanbaeva, Civil Society Representative, Kyrgyzstan

- Interventions from the member States – PBC members and member States from Central Asian region (03 minutes each)

- Interventions from the civil society representatives of Central Asian region (03 minutes each)

- Intervention by Awa Dabo, Director and Deputy Head, PBSO (03 minutes)

- Follow up comments from SRSG & CAWLC leaders

- Concluding remarks by the PBC Cahir