Concept Note

From Mandate to Mission: Real Life Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Mali

24 May 2020, 09:00-10.30am New York time

Summary


The objective of the meeting is to learn directly from the experiences and insights of women who are participating in and supporting the Peace Process in Mali; to highlight the importance of their role in political and peace processes, including political transition, stabilisation, mediation and conflict prevention; and to strengthen understanding of the challenges and opportunities for ensuring their full, equal and meaningful participation in these processes. It is hoped that the event will support informed and effective decision-making, for increased impacts towards peace and stability.

The event is scheduled to coincide with the International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament. It will also help set the context for the following month’s MINUSMA mandate renewal, demonstrating how strong language on Women, Peace and Security in UN Security Council mandates and resolutions can have a transformative impact on the ground.

The event will draw on the knowledge and experiences of the women delegates of the CSA from the signatory parties, as well as women leaders from the civil society, in order to understand what their priorities are and what they consider the greatest challenges and opportunities for progress on the peace process. The interactive session will allow participants to discuss the crucial contribution of women to local, regional and national peacebuilding initiatives, and to political solutions within a conflict setting. It will be an opportunity to hear from the current transitional government in Mali on how it will continue to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all decision-making processes leading up to elections next year.

Overview

It has been more than twenty years since the first UN Security Council resolution on the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. UNSCR 1325 highlighted the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls and championed the crucial role women play in conflict prevention and resolution. Nine subsequent resolutions on WPS have strengthened the WPS agenda, but more
needs to be done. We must focus on turning words into reality through effective implementation.

Peace agreements, negotiated and implemented with women included, are more likely to succeed. Research indicates that when women participate in a meaningful way in peace processes and raise issues beyond military action, power-sharing arrangements, and territorial gains, namely the need for political and legal reforms, social and economic recovery priorities, and transitional justice concerns, peace agreements can prove more durable.¹

In addition to durability and equality, women’s participation allows for the integration of broader societal issues in peace and security mechanisms to ensure the consideration of specific needs driven by gender, as well as other characteristics, that arise from conflict.

Robust WPS language in the MINUSMA mandate has ensured implementation of prioritised WPS tasks to accelerate progress. The WPS benchmark in MINUSMA’s 2019 mandate supported the hosting of a high-level workshop to develop concrete recommendations for strengthening the participation of women in the mechanisms established by the peace agreement. WPS language in MINUSMA’s mandate has also ensured action taken and progress on women’s participation is closely monitored through the Secretary-General’s quarterly report on Mali. This tracking most recently highlighted a disappointing drop in women’s representation in the transition government (down to 16%, significantly below the legal quota requiring at least 30% of elected or appointed officials be women) but a positive increase in women’s representation in the Monitoring Committee of the Agreement (31%). This event will highlight the importance of the women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in political and peace processes, in line with national legislation, and role of women in the mechanisms for monitoring implementation of the peace agreement.

Format: meeting will be conducted in English/French with interpretation in English/French.

- Opening remarks
  The meeting will be opened by remarks by the Government of France representative (penholders on Mali), Government of UK representative and the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Peace Operations, Government of Mali representative.

- Panel discussion
  The CSA women delegates will present their views.

Interactive floor discussion

The floor will be opened to two women leaders from the civil society in Mali engaged in the peace process, the Special Deputy Representative for the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, Permanent Representative of Norway (co-sponsor), Chairs of WPS IEG (Ireland and Mexico) and then other member states.

**Participants (TBC)**

**Moderator:** TBC

**Opening speakers:** Government of UK representative, Government of France representative, the Under-Secretary-General of DPO, Government of Mali representative.

**Panellists:** CSA women delegates.

**Floor discussion:** MINUSMA representative, Government of Norway representative, Government of Ireland and Mexico representatives, Member States and Malian Civil Society representatives.

**Outcome**

- Meeting will inform discussions on in the upcoming MINUSMA mandate renewal, and share additional context and insight into the impact of WPS language in peacekeeping mandates, including how it has been translated into real progress and achievement at a country-level in Mali.

- Amplification of voices of women who are closest to the reality of the conflict and to the possible benefits that full implementation of the Peace Agreement in Mali; to ensure they are heard by key decision-makers who can support progress.

- Improved understanding of participants of the challenges and opportunities to accelerate the WPS agenda in Mali, with potential to strengthen the impact and co-ordination of WPS investments and policy engagements in Mali.

- Continued engagement with, and support to uphold the UN and the transitional government’s commitments to Malian women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and political processes.