



Women Global Leaders, Reykjavik, Iceland

Side-event 19 November, Rima A, First floor, Harpa

Hosts: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Nordic Women Mediators, Iceland and UNU-GEST

Title: The Women, Peace and Security agenda - a platform for transformative change

Introduction:

The first UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was the result of women's mobilisation and strategic call for action. Almost 20 years after its adoption, women continue to be excluded from formal peace processes. As a part of a global movement, women mediators have mobilised and joined forces to advocate for women's increased and meaningful participation in all phases of peace processes. The outcome was the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks with an overarching goal to create a common platform to advocate for the influence of women in peace processes as well as gender-sensitive peace agreements.

The side event of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Nordic Women Mediators in Iceland and UNU-GEST will explore the mobilisation and strategic action of women mediators to create change and sustain transformative Women, Peace and Security gains.

Agenda

1. Opening remarks
2. Dialogue between three teams of conversationists (45 min).
 - Using the WPS agenda as a platform for transformative change towards social justice and equality.
Conversationists: Ms. Atifete Jahjaga, former President of the Republic of Kosovo, and Ms. Magnea Marinósdóttir, former advisor on WPS to UN Women in Kosovo.
 - The Role of Parliamentarians as Mediators in Peace Processes.
Conversationists: Ms. Catherine Gotani Hara, Speaker of the Parliament, Malawi, and Deputy Speaker of Parliament Tuula Haatainen, Finland.
 - How to create and sustain WPS gains? The role of women's mobilisation and strategic action in creating the conditions for change from the perspective of the WPS agenda - the role of the Regional Women Mediators Network and the Global Alliance.
Conversationists: Prof. Rangita de Silva de Alwis, University of Pennsylvania and Aud Lise Norheim, Ambassador of Norway to Iceland.
3. Q and A (15 min)
4. Concluding remarks: Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, Nigeria (7 min)

Moderator: Kristín A. Árnadóttir, Ambassador for Gender Equality, Iceland/Ann-Sofie Stude, Ambassador of Finland, Iceland

Background- Concept Note

Side event hosted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland and the Nordic Women Mediators – Iceland - at the Summit of the Women World Leaders, 19th November 2019 at 10:40-12:00 am.

Concept note: *The role of women as mediators and change makers and the global alliance of regional women mediator networks in delivering the transformative promises of the women, peace and security agenda.*

The side event hosted in cooperation between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland and the Nordic Women Mediators-Iceland will explore three things. Firstly, the role of women as change makers using mediation as a tool to realise the transformative promises of the WPS agenda. Secondly, the mobilisation and strategic action of women as a means to creating solidarity and support to each other's common goals with reference to the role of the regional women mediator networks and their global alliance. Thirdly, how to sustain transformative WPS gains will also be discussed.

Women human rights advocates in every corner of the world are seeking equal rights and status between women and men. The point of departure are the principles of universal human rights and equality. The women, peace and security (WPS) agenda is based on these principles. Women's mobilisation and strategic call for action brought about the first WPS Resolution. It does address the culture of impunity around the gendered atrocities committed against women and girls in times of war, redress to survivors of conflict related sexual violence and prevention of armed conflicts. However, while the WPS agenda is inherently transformative, its core nature has been met with resistance or adaptation such as by increasing the number of women in militaries and peacekeeping forces as opposed to or without addressing the need for and the harm caused by militarised security for women and men alike. Thus, women engaged in the universal pursuit for gender equality, justice and peace continue to navigate the militaristic patriarchal terrain and engage in challenging conversations with its guardians on all fronts, in their private or personal life as well as public life.

The Nordic Women Mediators (NWM) network was established in 2015. The NWM members share a commitment to sustaining peace through the inclusive and meaningful participation of women in all phases of peace processes. As such, the NWM serves as an instrument for the involvement of women in advocacy and operational engagement reaching out to actors engaged in peace processes, transitional processes and post-political settlement processes and institutions. The NWM also aims to make women's competence and meaningful engagement more visible, to counter arguments about the shortage or low availability of women with mediation expertise. For that reason, the NWM-Iceland hosted a side event at the 63rd Session of the Commission of the Status of Women on the meaningful contribution of women to peacebuilding from Iceland, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Kosovo and Northern-Ireland. In the work of the NWM, interacting with other similar women's networks has always been considered to be of instrumental importance as a means to obtain common goals. In that spirit, the NWM became one of the founding members of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks created in 2019 as a connecting and collective voice platform to amply shared goals. As such, both the regional networks and the Global Alliance are evidence of the role of mobilisation and strategic action in delivering the promises of the WPS agenda.