

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 13 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the Kenya presidency, the Security Council will hold a ministerial-level open debate on women and peace and security, on the theme “Investing in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding”, on Thursday, 21 October 2021.

To guide the discussion, Kenya has prepared a concept note for the benefit of members wishing to participate in the debate (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and concept note could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Martin **Kimani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 13 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the annual Security Council ministerial-level open debate on women and peace and security, on the theme “Investing in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding”, to be held on Thursday, 21 October 2021, at 10 a.m.

Objective

1. During its presidency of the Security Council, the Republic of Kenya will convene an open debate on the theme “Investing in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding”.
2. In his previous report on women and peace and security (see [S/2020/946](#)), the Secretary-General proposed goals for the decade ahead which included a call for “a radical shift in the meaningful participation of women in our peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that women are fully involved as equal partners in peace and from the earliest stages in each and every peace and political process that the United Nations supports”.
3. The open debate will provide an opportunity to share insights on progress, trends and challenges, deliberate on some of the best practices and lessons learned and make recommendations on the value of investing in local women and their networks in countries hosting peacekeeping operations and special political missions as well as to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and to ensure sustainable outcomes that also advance gender equality and women’s social, political and economic empowerment and development, and promote poverty eradication and social protection, as well as girls’ access to education during and after peace operations and in mission transition settings.
4. In this regard, the meeting will host, in conjunction with the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), a travelling exhibition by Photoville, entitled “In their hands: women taking ownership of peace”, and will launch its tour of several mission settings in Africa. The exhibition is in recognition of the fact that women across the globe are actively preventing conflict, pushing for peaceful transitions from conflict and building peace as peacekeepers, peacebuilders, mediators, decision makers, change-makers and activists. In showcasing how local women of host countries are working with peace operations personnel in mission settings, the exhibition seeks to advance women’s agency and recognize the centrality of women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and security in peacekeeping and peacebuilding contexts and in processes globally.
5. Integrating this exhibition into the meeting will further exemplify how dynamic and innovative partnerships with various stakeholders, including grass-roots women leaders, United Nations peacekeepers and entities, regional and international peace operation centres, host nations, Member States, women and peace and security champions, civil society organizations and the private sector can contribute to enhancing the role of women in the peace agenda.
6. The open debate will therefore be aimed at recognizing and showcasing local women’s contributions and influence at all stages of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts, as well as at seeking to amplify and increase the visibility of grass-roots women leaders of all ages, human rights defenders and peace signatories,

and at calling for a sustained and greater commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and inclusive peace.

Background

7. In its resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and subsequent resolutions Security Council seeks not only to acknowledge the adverse impact of armed conflict on women but also to recognize the contribution of women in peace and reconciliation processes, as well as the need to promote and protect the rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, as part of the comprehensive implementation of the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda.

8. The Peacebuilding Commission has also successfully promoted gender-responsive peacebuilding through more systematic engagement with women peacebuilders, as well as better mainstreaming of the gender dimensions of peacebuilding into its analysis, advice and briefings to the Security Council.

9. In September 2021, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2594 \(2021\)](#), the first stand-alone resolution on United Nations peace operations transitions, in which it:

(a) Recognized the crucial role peacekeeping plays in creating conditions for stability and lasting peace;

(b) Underlined that transitions of United Nations peace operations should support peacebuilding objectives and the development of a sustainable peace, in a manner that supports and reinforces national ownership, informed by the operational context and the national priorities and needs of the host State and its population, and that includes engagement with the local community and civil society, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the inclusion of youth and persons with disabilities;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to ensure that comprehensive gender analysis and technical gender expertise were included throughout all stages of mission planning, mandate implementation and review and throughout the transition process.

10. In addition, 154 countries have endorsed the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, in which the women and peace and security agenda is identified as one of the key priorities and thematic areas for improvement. In the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, Member States have collectively committed to implementing the women and peace and security agenda and its priorities by ensuring full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of the peace process and by systematically integrating a gender perspective into all stages of analysis, planning, implementation and reporting. This is an implementation action point that needs local partnerships with host countries for successful outcomes.

11. As part of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities for the period from 2021 to 2023, and the commemorations of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), the Secretary-General has issued a new call to action to prioritize and invest in community-based local women's networks; harness data and gender analysis for accountable decision-making; accelerate and leverage women's mobilization to transform peace and political process; systematize women's leadership to inform conflict prevention and resolution, mediation, and protection; and create dynamic and innovative partnerships to enhance women's participation.

12. Over the past 20 years, greater attention has been given to women's roles and representation in United Nations peace operations, the Security Council has adopted increasingly robust mandates on women and peace and security, and there has been a

greater understanding of the need to use gender expertise, gender analysis and systematic engagement with women's civil society organizations to implement these mandates. The proportion of women in military and police components has also begun to increase at a faster rate in recent years.

13. The latest report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2021/827) highlights how, in order to achieve gender-responsive peacekeeping and peace operations, the Department of Peace Operations created strategic opportunities for local women leaders to influence peacekeeping, which culminated in a new call to action by the Secretary-General, urging peacekeeping partners to invest in grass-roots women's networks and support women's mobilization for peace. The report also contained various examples of how United Nations peacemaking and peacekeeping operations are ensuring women's direct participation in political transitions in countries that are hosting peace and special political missions.

14. However, much more needs to be done to ensure that the women in host nations take ownership and can meaningfully, equally and fully participate in peace and political processes. To this end, meaningful partnerships between local women leaders and United Nations peace operations personnel during and after peace operation and transition settings are important.

15. In addition, in his report, the Secretary-General indicates that one of the actions for realizing commitments on women and peace and security would be more extensive, extensively reported and regularly scheduled engagement with women's organizations. It is also important to ensure follow-up on the outcomes of such engagement, which should be reinforced by investments in strategic partnerships with local women leaders and networks.

Guiding questions

16. The following questions will serve to guide the debate:

(a) What are the trends, factors and obstacles that need to be addressed to ensure meaningful investment in local women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping settings, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected countries?

(b) As of 2020, there are 62 active multilateral peace operations, 21 of which are being led by the United Nations. How best can the United Nations, Governments, regional organizations and the private sector work in partnership to ensure that local gender expertise, gender analysis and gender balance is guiding or informing the planning and implementation of mission transitions?

(c) Beyond reflecting language from the women and peace and security normative framework, what are some of the ways in which United Nations peace operations mandates could contribute to the implementation of the full range of women and peace and security commitments, including local women's participation in peace processes at the local and national levels?

(d) How can United Nations peace operations mandates better support grass-roots, women-led conflict prevention initiatives and gender-sensitive programmes to reduce community violence in order to ensure their sustainability in post-peace operation and mission transition settings?

(e) How can United Nations peace operation mandates be strengthened to reflect gender-responsive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes that include the disengagement of women ex-combatants as part of the transition process?

(f) What role can the United Nations play in the context of peace operations to support Member States to devote resources to gender-responsive security sector

reform and institutions, while enhancing local women's access to justice in conflict-affected countries?

(g) In the previous report on women and peace and security (S/2020/946), the Secretary-General called for a radical shift and tangible results in women's participation in peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts over the next 5 to 10 years. What bold ideas and building blocks must be put in place in order to make this possible?

Participation and format

17. The open debate will be at ministerial level and will be chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya, Raychelle Omamo.

18. In accordance with the note by the President of the Security Council dated 30 August 2017 (see S/2017/507), all participants and members of the Security Council are encouraged to deliver succinct statements focusing on specific examples, commitments, achievements, challenges, identification of gaps and solution-oriented recommendations.

19. Modalities for the participation of Member States that are not members of the Security Council and the participation of observer States are still under consideration. The option of submitting written statements remains available for all. Such statements should be of approximately 500 words and should be submitted, in Microsoft Word, to the Security Council Affairs Division by close of business on 21 October 2021, to be included in the compilation document.

Briefers

- Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of UN-Women
- Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop
- Representative, Colombian non-governmental organization

Expected outcome

20. A declaration of commitment is expected. The latest report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security underlines that the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is the responsibility of all Member States, including Governments and conflict parties. In this regard, the presidency of Kenya calls upon Member States to use their national statements to pronounce or renew their political commitment to ensuring greater and more comprehensive investments so as to:

(a) Achieve local women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and political processes, in line with the Secretary-General's call to action on women transforming peace;

(b) Ensure inter-mission partnerships are forged, lessons and experiences are shared, and local women networks are enhanced;

(c) Empower and facilitate local women in countries hosting missions during and after peace operation and transition settings.