

**Ensuring women's political and economic empowerment after conflict and crisis;
Gender in peace deals and COVID-19 responses**

**Launch & Panel Discussion on the findings of the research practicum organized
by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), New York University
Center for Global Affairs (CGA) and UN Women**

Good morning, afternoon, evening everyone!

I am Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, the founder and chief executive officer of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP).

Before I continue, please join us for a minute of silence in solidarity, reflection, and respect for the Black community and all people of color in the United States and globally, in the struggle for racial equality and justice. We, as an intersectional, feminist, peacebuilding organization strongly condemn police brutality and institutional racism. We also express our grief and solidarity with everyone who lost a loved one due to COVID-19. Thank you!

Welcome to the panel discussion Ensuring women's political and economic empowerment after conflict and crisis; Gender in peace deals and COVID-19 responses that GNWP is co-organizing with New York University Center for Global Affairs (CGA) and UN Women.

During this COVID-19 crisis, many functions of governments, UN and other institutions slow down or cease. The implementation of peace agreements is one of the processes that have been negatively affected as we've seen in countries like Colombia, the Philippines and South Sudan. Financial, human and technical resources for the implementation of peace agreements are shifted to COVID-19 response. However, this is a self-defeating strategy, since conflict and violence amplify the impacts of the pandemic and conversely, the pandemic is also a conflict multiplier. Furthermore, we are also aware that despite the alarming threats posed by COVID-19 crisis and the global calls for ceasefires, the fighting continues in different countries including Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, and the cumulative impact of the Israeli occupation continues to devastate the Palestine (—as raised by women's organizations in those countries.)

We at GNWP believe that peace cannot wait. Together with our local partners we continue our peacebuilding work to ensure that peace will not be a casualty of the pandemic. We see this moment as an important time to re-examine our collective achievements as peacebuilders particularly in our advocacy for the integration of gender perspectives in peace agreements. This is why we are extremely grateful for our partnership with the NYU Center for Global Affairs that enabled us to analyze the implementation of peace agreements particularly the gender provisions in them and their impact on women's political and economic participation. We are honored and happy to have this discussion today wherein we will launch the key findings of this research.

We are also grateful to UN Women's continued commitment to support women's

participation in peace negotiations and the implementation of peace agreement. We are honored to be co-sponsoring this discussion.

Last but not the least, I want to express our deep gratitude to the student researchers who conducted this research under the supervision of Dr. Anne-Marie Goetz, my co-moderator today, and co-authored the research report: Jillian Abballe, Emma Grant, Foteini Papagiotti, Dorie Reisman, Nicole Smith.

The findings of the research, and the advocacy messages developed by our GNWP team are of critical importance today – as we not only face an unprecedented global pandemic, but also approach the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and Generation Equality Forum that commemorates 25 years of the Beijing Platform for Action. A reflection on women’s meaningful participation in peace processes cannot be missing from these historical processes!

Today’s discussion will contribute to such critical reflection. We will hear from formidable women activists and former negotiators on opportunities and barriers for women’s ‘meaningful participation’ in peace processes and implementation of peace agreements. We invite you all to join the discussion through the “chat box” feature. We also hope to solicit greater support from Member States, the UN, and the rest of the international community for women’s engagement in peace processes, the implementation of peace agreements, and post-conflict political and economic recovery;

Additionally, we hope that this discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on peace processes and implementation of peace agreements will generate ideas on what gender and conflict-sensitive crisis response should look like.

We have a lot to discuss and we have a formidable line up of speakers. Therefore, without further ado, I will now turn it over to our brilliant moderator Dr. Anne Marie Goetz, Clinical Professor at NYU CGA. I remember when we first sat in the Vienna Café in UN HQ over a year ago and discussed this research. We are so proud of what this partnership has already achieved, and look forward to the discussion today! Please join me in giving a virtual round of applause to Anne-Marie!