Concept Note | Short Online Course | Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Women's Participation in Peacebuilding Processes | 14 to 18 March 2022

1. Background

Although women play varied roles in conflict and conflict resolution, their contributions are often not adequately acknowledged. Conflict prevention processes, management and post-conflict outcomes can significantly be improved through the inclusion and participation of women in peace processes. Women, however, are mostly excluded from formal peace processes, which negatively impacts outcomes of peace processes. Nilson (2012)[1], through a statistical study, demonstrates that the participation of civil society groups, including women groups, increases the durability of peace outcomes noting that peace agreements are 64 percent less likely to fail. This notwithstanding, it is documented that "between 1992 and 2019, women constituted, on average, 13 percent of negotiators, 6 percent of mediators, and 6 percent of signatories in major peace processes around the world"[2].

The participation of women remains woefully low, and women continue to face a myriad of challenges finding space in participating in peace processes. A cursory look into some of the landmark declarations and resolutions on women points to a stark reality of disparity between the aspirations of those declarations and resolutions. For instance, it has been 42 years since the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was made, 38 years since the United Nations Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Cooperation and 21 years since the passing of Resolution 1325. Yet, despite these remarkable declarations, we continue to witness that women's participation in peace processes remains an unfulfilled aspiration on the women peace and security agenda.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 has been ground-breaking because it explicitly addresses the impact of war on women and calls for women's full and equal participation in peace processes. Since its declaration, the discourse on and participation of women have gained currency. However, more needs to be done to remove the barriers that hinder women's

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[1] Nilson, D (2012). **Anchoring the Peace: Civil Society Actors in Peace Accords and Durable Peace, In, Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Research,** *International Interactions,* **Vol.38 (2).**

[2] Council on Foreign Relations: https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/

participation in peace processes, be it at the community, national, regional, or global level, and these efforts must be concerted.

At the regional level, the Africa Union has been making a studious effort to ensure the participation of women in peace processes. The Africa Union has committed to enhancing the role of women in mediation through FemWise-Africa[3], which aims to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts. Such networks provide a platform for women to enter the domain of male-dominated peacebuilding spheres.

While many policy frameworks have been developed to support women in peace processes, their implementation has been challenging. Therefore it is important to move beyond institutionalisation – norms promulgation - towards achieving the actual inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes. It is imperative to bridge the gap between the structures created and the reality on the ground to increase the participation of women in mediation processes. By addressing the structural and deeply rooted socio-cultural difficulties hindering the inclusion of women in peace processes, institutions (like the UN and AU) and states can lessen the challenge of gender equality and inclusive peace.

The short course on "Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Women's Participation in Peacebuilding Processes" will introduce participants to the role of women in peacebuilding.

2. Course Objectives
After the completion of this course, participants will:
- Be able to analyse the role of women in conflict resolution and conflict prevention, and in particular, their role in mediation processes;
- Grasp an overview of the AU's policies to enhance and support the role of women in mediation;
- Understand the principles of inclusion of women in mediation processes; and
- Discuss how to improve gender-sensitive mediation at national, regional and international levels.

3. Course Structure and Methodology
The training is structured as a five (5) day online course, with a participatory and self-reflection learning approach.

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[3] Operationalisation of FemWise: https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/final-concept-note-femwise-sept-15-short-version-clean-4-flyer.pdf

The pedagogical approach will combine lectures, group discussions, and practical applications through case studies. In addition, participants admitted into the training programme should be prepared to present short technical reports on their own experiences on the course theme.

4. Target Audience

The course targets experts and African professionals, for example, those working at the AU, RECs, or African civil society organizations. International applicants working for governmental, inter-governmental or multilateral agencies with a keen interest in African peace and security issues are equally encouraged to apply.

5. Admission Requirements

Applicants must have:

- At least five years of work experience in the fields of peace, security and development, democracy and governance issues, or related fields;
- A minimum of a first degree; and
- Good command of the English language, **which is the medium of instruction**.

6. Date

14 – 16 March 2022

7. Tuition Fee

500 USD

8. Application Deadline

1 February 2022

9. Contact Person

For any inquiries, please contact the Programme Coordinator, Mahlet Fitiwi: mahlet.f@ipss-addis.org