



**United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform
& United Nations Group of Friends of Gender Parity**

***High-Level Dialogue on
Gender Parity and Security Sector Reform:
Promoting Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development***

Wednesday, March 13, 2019 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Institute of International Education,
809 United Nations Plaza, 12th Floor (1st Avenue between 45th and 46th street)

I. Background

The United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform – co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa – emerged in 2007 as a platform for Member States and international organizations to deliberate actions needed to advance the United Nations security sector reform agenda, which fosters the building of effective and accountable national security institutions on the basis of non-discrimination, full respect for human rights and the rule of law. Policy dialogues organized under its aegis bring together national and international partners to build a shared understanding of national reform processes and best practices, which are also discussed by Member-States in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The Group of Friends for Gender Parity – co-chaired by Ghana and Qatar – emerged in 2017 around collective advocacy efforts for the election of a woman at the helm of the United Nations and evolved into a coalition of Member States committed to advancing women's leadership as a pre-requisite for enhanced international peace and development. Gender parity means the equal representation of women and men in all areas of society and it is a key step to achieve gender equality.

In the context of consultations held between the two Groups of Friends, the SSR Unit within the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peace Operations, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Taskforce, developed a concept note to capture potential areas of collaboration and the nexus between gender equality, gender parity and gender-responsive security sector reform in the framework of relevant UN policies and guidelines, including Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2151 (2014).

II. Objective

United Nations norms¹ point to the utility and importance of linking gender parity and security sector reform as part of broader efforts to build inclusive institutions and promote peace. The United Nations Secretary-General stated that investing in sustaining peace means investing in basic services, building effective, accountable and strong institutions, protecting human rights, promoting social cohesion and diversity, ensuring

¹ The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2151 (2014) and Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security call for the inclusion of women in all levels of security sector reforms processes. Full and equal opportunities for men and women in all areas of society are also human rights protected under international laws, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995).



the meaningful participation of women and girls in all areas of society². At the same time, there is a wide recognition that building inclusive security institutions, where both men and women are equally represented, is vital to enhance the Member-States ability to deliver security services to all segments of society, as enshrined in Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The high-level dialogue will assess options to strengthen the linkages between gender parity and security sector reform agendas as means to advance the Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and implement the Security Council Resolution 2151 (2014), which calls for “women’s equal and effective participation and full involvement in the security sector reform process, given their vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding”.

Despite calls for women’s participation in the security sector, institutions (such as army, police, correction, immigration etc.) in many countries around the world continue to be predominantly formed by male. The small proportion of women in the national security services has repercussions in terms of their participation in United Nations’ peace operations. In some contexts, insufficient funds are allocated to gender mainstreaming in the security sector and women are also subject to discriminatory practices, including confinement to traditional roles and lack of access to higher ranks.

In this regard, the high-level roundtable aims to generate an understanding of the importance of a gender balanced security sector on promoting peace and inclusive societies for sustainable development. It will (i) identify challenges and opportunities to enhance women’s full and equal participation in national security services as *sine qua non* for the effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness of institutions; and (ii) explore targeted measures aimed at removing barriers and creating incentives for women’s participation including through United Nations programmatic and advocacy efforts. The co-chairs will produce a summary note with relevant recommendations.

² Secretary-General remarks at the High-level Dialogue on “Building sustainable peace for all: synergies between the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and sustaining peace”, 24 January 2017.