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**TITLE:** “Current status and Global Norms on sexual violence in conflict:  
session in UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict”

**DATE:** July 2 **TIME:** 2:00pm – 4:00pm

**LOCATION:**

**PURPOSE:** provide remarks in the Global Partnership to Combat Sexual Violence in Conflict event

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## **RUN OF SHOW**

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Between 15 and 20 minutes. The DED will speak in a panel, along with UNFPA, the African Union, a *Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* and the *Director of Human Right Program, Roosevelt House*.

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## **TALKING POINTS.**

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Dear **Jessica Neuwirth**, *Director of Human Right Program, Roosevelt House*;

Dear **Dereje Wordofa**, *Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA*;

Dear **Bineta Diop**, *Africa Union (AU) Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security*;

Dear **Heisoo Shin**, *Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Republic of Korea*;

Dear moderator, **Ji-ah Paik**, *Permanent Representative of ROK to the UN in Geneva*;

*Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues*



I would like to thank the Republic of Korea for organizing and hosting this important conference at a time when the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and in particular the issue of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas is in the frontline of the discussions of the international community and that a **profound reflection on how to address the challenges and enhance prevention and protection measures for women and girls** are at the top of our priorities.

The recent years have seen a **global and robust determination not to accept the occurrence of sexual violence crimes and to reinforce the support for women and their organizations**. This determination was materialized, once again, in the recent adoption of **Security Council resolution 2467** on conflict-related sexual violence, or in last year's **Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Dr. Dennis Mukwege and Nadia Murad**.

This effort however started in 2000, **with the approval of the landmark resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security**. After eight additional Security Council resolutions, I could say that **these policy evolutions have provided us all with the tools to respond more adequately** to this phenomenon.

**It is unfortunately not enough**. Conflict-related sexual violence remains widespread in many locations, as the **implementation of the Women Peace and Security agenda remains as a pending task** in the vast majority of conflict and post-conflict areas.

The latest SG Report on CRSV (2018) **was appalling, once again:**

- **Sexual violence continues to be a tactic** within conflict and women and girls are disproportionately affected.
- Sexual violence was used to **displace communities, to seize contested land and other resources or as a repression, terror and control strategy.**
- Moreover, sexual violence was used to **humiliate political opponents** while in detention, or as a **tactic of terrorism.**

### What can we do?

- The **most effective way to end sexual violence in conflict is to end conflict, itself** – and the United Nations is increasingly focused on preventing conflicts before they start. It's essential that **women participate meaningfully in all discussions on peace and security issues, from prevention plans to peace negotiations.** This is the best way to ensure that our solutions meet the needs of the entire population.
- Secondly, **actions to address gender inequality,** are a number one priority. **Sexual and gender-based violence is deeply rooted in gender inequality and women's disempowerment. SGBV is also one of the primary obstacles to social and economic development. It is the whole society which bears the cost of violence not just the one who was directly affected by sexual and gender-based violence.** Research by UN Women found that the loss of productivity cost is bigger than the cost of providing essential services for survivors of violence. In order to address this negative correlation and promote sustainable changes on SGBV

dynamics, gender equality programming and advocacy must be an integral part of the work.

- Thirdly, putting in place a **comprehensive approach to women’s resilience and self-reliance in humanitarian action**, bridging programmatic interventions to respond to SGBV with leadership, livelihood and second chance education initiatives for women affected by crises, is essential to **reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to different forms violence**, in particular in settings where **formal and information protection mechanisms have collapsed**, due to the severity of the crisis.

### What does UN Women do?

UN Women works to address **enhance the prevention through the implementation** of the Women Peace and Security agenda:

1. We **provide predictable funding through a unique fund, the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund**, to local women organizations in Mali, Iraq, Colombia, Jordan and Solomon Islands to strengthen capacities to prevent and respond to violence;
2. We support national efforts to **increase the number of women in military forces**. Research shows that “the presence of female **officers improves access to community members**, thereby amplifying situational awareness and **helping military commanders fulfill their mandates**, including the protection of civilians”. (1325 Global Study).

3. We support national authorities for the design and implementation of **National Action Plans** on Women Peace and Security. These planning frameworks have allowed governments to **identify and address gaps in their prevention and response strategies to sexual violence.**
4. We also provide support to accountability mechanisms with gender expertise: Since 2009, UN Women has **deployed a sexual and gender-based violence investigator or gender advisor to all UN commissions of inquiry and other human rights investigations.**

Beyond our actions in the frame of our mandate in the promotion of gender equality, **UN Women also strongly advocates for collective action** to enhance the implementation of Women Peace and Security commitments, which will have a **decisive impact in the prevention and mitigation of conflict-related sexual violence.**

One of the most effective and coherent approaches for collective action to tackle conflict-related sexual violence, has been the one implemented by UN Action.

United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) is the **United Nation's platform** to enhance prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence through a **system-wide Coordinated, Coherent, Comprehensive and Catalytic (4C) approach.**



Since its inception in 2007, UN Action has been **synergizing efforts from humanitarian, human rights, development, political and peacekeeping actors** within the network to address CRSV, anticipating the modus operandi of other global strategies such as **the “New Way of Working”** based in the premise of **using the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors towards collective outcomes.**

The network has also been instrumental to serve as a **bridge from the Office of the SRSG-SVC to the broader UN system at global and country levels**, and thus, enhancing coherence of the UN’s interventions in the ground.

A diverse range of interventions intended to prevent and address CRSV, in the frame of the overall WPS agenda, have been put in place by the UN Action entities, **through a dedicated UN Action MPTF which has been critical for resource mobilization:**

- Support to **women’s engagement in conflict prevention activities, peace negotiations and post-conflict recovery processes**, to ensure that sexual violence related issues are taken into account by relevant institutional stakeholders (police, security forces, justice and civil society) **before and after conflict.**
- Provision of essential services including **health and legal services, as well socio-economic reintegration and reparations** to survivors of sexual violence required to **build resilience and pave the way to longstanding recovery.**
- Promotion of **women’s leadership and participation**, in the view of strengthen their voices in public affairs and providing access to

**decision-making positions**, as a strategy to advance in gender equality and women's empowerment.

UN Women has participated in different initiatives, let me provide three examples of our engagement:

1. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and IOM implemented a project aimed at providing care, support and access to justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. In particular, the intervention was successful in **improving the quality and access to free legal aid services for CRSV survivors, and to enabling preconditions for economic empowerment programmes** through the provision of income-generation opportunities for survivors.

In 2018, thanks to the project, **two coordination bodies**, gathering institutional counterparts and civil society organizations were created and mandated to **monitor and maintain the outcomes of the project, as the documentation of best practices** that could be replicated in other areas.

2. In **Iraq**, UN Women and UNDP implemented an initiative directed to the **enhancement of protection from CRSV and response to survivors** and at-risk women and girls through **capacity building activities towards key national stakeholders** (governmental and CSOs). Moreover, access to justice was increased for CRSV survivors based in IDP camps **using centers and mobile teams to deliver legal aid and psychosocial support services**.

As outcome of the project, **five investigation units were created, over 800 IDPs benefitted of legal aid and social services.** In 2018, the project was gradually **transferred to the Directorate for Combating Violence Against Women (DCVAW).**

**3. In Jordan,** UN Women and UNICEF implemented a UN Action-funded project aimed at **finalizing the 1325 National Action Plan,** and in that way, uplifting the protection from SGBV at the institutional level. Furthermore, the project developed the **technical capacity of security actors in Jordan** on protection against SGBV through training activities and workshops.

The **NAP 1325 was effectively finalized and adopted,** which allowed to commit, **under an institutional framework,** relevant stakeholders including Government agencies, local communities, media and civil society in actions related to **sensitization** against GBV and CRSV, development of **response mechanisms, Standard Operating Procedures** and referral pathways, and SGBV-related prosecutions.

This leads me to the conclusion of my remarks:

The organization of this international conference is very timely, welcomed and will certainly be important to continue coordinating our efforts to **implement the Women Peace and Security agenda and thereby to, prevent, mitigate and reduce sexual violence** in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Conflict has a significant negative effect on gender relations since it largely undermined women's authority within the society. During the conflict, violence against women and girls, particularly rape and sexual violence, is often widespread. However, **violence of this nature does not cease with the end of the conflict**; evidence-based conflict resolution approaches must come to post-conflict communities.

In Papua New Guinea, UN Women already witnessed that violence can be reduced in a post-conflict setting, in a much shorter timespan than we expected. Only after a year of community engagement intervention, **preparation of physical violence was reduced by 17%**. With proper investments and interventions, ending violence against women is no longer just our dream.

The trends of sexual violence are not diminishing but unfortunately, evolving in a way of **using technologies**. The reality shows that **we are still facing a widespread issue in several contexts and we also know that the consequences of this warfare tactic destroy the social tissue of communities and survivors and constitute an important challenge to international peace and security**.

We need to deepen our efforts to **effectively and appropriately respond to sexual violence**. We need to sharpen our approaches with **evidence on what works**. This is our basic and mandatory commitment with survivors and persons at risk. We also need to **address the root causes** that permit that different forms of violence against women persist in development contexts and that **escalate exponentially when crisis or**

**insecurity** emerges. This is the **most practical and powerful prevention strategy and it's sadly underfunded and underrecognized.**

**Collective action is another key issue.** UN Action has showed us how the complementary work between UN actors from different backgrounds, can bring to the table **innovative, sustainable and government-led solutions.**

When **humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors break the silos of their mandates** and focus on addressing a problem using their expertise and experience, there are few matters that require additional attention, **since the whole development-peace-humanitarian nexus is covered.**

And, in many conflict and post-conflict situations, **gender equality and women's empowerment, give us this opportunity to break the silos.** United Nations' strategic and planning frameworks include outcomes on gender equality and women's empowerment: **we can find references in UNDAF, Peacebuilding Priority Plans or Humanitarian Response Plans.**

However, we sometimes assume these frameworks as independent issues, and **fail at establishing the linkages and complementarities between them. We are then failing at responding to women's protection, needs and capacities.**

UN Women stands-ready to make use of its triple catalytic mandate in coordination, policy and programmes to work alongside the UN partners to address these gaps.

I thank you all for your attention.

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**3 DATA POINTS** *Relevant statistics which substantiate context & results with sources, country-level work, relevant normative references, UN Women's role, links with other UN system programmes, citations from UN Women publications*

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- *Since 2009, UN Women has partnered with the International NGO Justice Rapid Response (JRR) to provide the international community with expertise to investigate and prosecute sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). UN Women and JRR seek out the best qualified experts from every part of the world and then specifically train these professionals to investigate and properly document SGBV as an international crime. Today, the JRR-UN Women SGBV Justice Experts Roster is comprised of more than 200 experts, who can be deployed to national and international investigations and justice processes around the world. UN Women has deployed experts to investigate crimes in countries including Burundi, South Sudan and Syria.*
- *Historically UN Women has received 3,104,812 USD as resources from the UN Action Fund for joint-projects of. This constitutes 7% of the **42,854,405 USD** that the Fund has allocated since its creation (2008)*

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**OTHER ISSUES** *Please highlight related sensitive issues, if any. How would UN Women tactfully address these issues?*

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**Annexes:**

*Please attach the event's agenda and concept note*

**BRIEFING NOTE FOR AN EVENT**



*Prepared by: Alejandro Sanchez*

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