

# A GUIDE TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING: DEVELOPING PRACTICAL NEGOTIATION SKILLS AND MEDIATION NETWORKS IN THE AMERICAS



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Cover Image: UN Security Council voting on Resolution 1325. October 31st, 2001. UN/Milton Grant.

# PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

## **The Organization of American States (OAS) Department for the Promotion of Peace**

The Organization of American States General Secretariat recently reviewed its peacebuilding structure and created the **Department for the Promotion of Peace and for the Coordination with Subnational Governments (DPPCSG)** in an effort to play a more proactive role in the prevention aspect of conflict management by identifying the root causes of conflict; detecting at-risk areas and populations; fostering inclusive dialogue; promoting democratic values and a culture of peace; and by strengthening and expanding its training and capacity building opportunities in peace-based mechanisms—such as negotiations, mediation and preventive diplomacy—so that state and non-state actors can develop the skills necessary to resolve conflict non-violently. The Department is also responsible for preserving the vast legacy and institutional memory of the Organization in peacebuilding through the exchange of experiences, best practices and lessons learned, and for coordinating relations between the Organization and the region's subnational governments.

## **The University of Kent's Conflict Analysis & Research Centre (CARC)**

The Conflict Analysis Research Centre (CARC) is a multi-disciplinary Faculty Research Centre based in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent. CARC has a long history of applying conflict research to real-world situations as well as setting new standards in professional mediation training. CARC's policy engagements are underpinned by research in the areas of constitutional design, the nature and evolution of mediation, critical approaches to the study of terrorism and political violence, as well as gender and human rights. Currently, CARC is leading the Mediation and Negotiation Program of the Organization of American States (OAS).

## **The Forum of Federations**

The Forum of Federations is an international "think and do" organization that develops and shares comparative expertise through a global network on the practice of federal and decentralized governance to strengthen pluralism & inclusive and responsive governance in countries around the world. Since its founding, it has supported governments and citizens around the world through capacity building and the provision of expertise and impartial practical education. The Forum's direct relationship with governments on each continent makes it uniquely placed to promote intergovernmental learning by working in tandem with its partner governments. The Forum also supports civil society stakeholders, enhancing understanding and building the capacity of citizens to operate in multilevel systems.

# FOREWORD

Last year, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the main hemispheric reference for the promotion and defense of democracy in the region. The importance of this landmark document, adopted unanimously by the OAS member states, stems from the fact that it identifies a series of components necessary for the full and effective exercise of democracy under the rule of law, including gender equality. Democracy cannot exist without the equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making processes. This principle has become the roadmap for all of us who are committed to securing more rights for more people.

To that end, we must join forces with other institutions and individuals advancing similar agendas so that our collaborative efforts can produce a greater impact. That spirit inspired the partnership that was forged between the OAS Department for the Promotion of Peace and for the Coordination with Subnational Governments, the University of Kent, and the Forum of Federations. This Guide on the Role of Women in Peacebuilding is yet another example of the success of this alliance.

Today, the concept of peace in the Americas is increasingly linked to democratic stability. Women's rights are front and center in conflict and post-conflict settings since women are, on the one hand, particularly vulnerable to violence and, on the other, essential to respond more effectively to the needs of their communities. For this reason, this year's Café Diplomático training program in mediation and negotiation led by the University of Kent, in collaboration with the Forum of Federations and the OAS Peace Department, focused on the role of women in peacebuilding.

The invaluable insights and expertise shared by the leading female voices that comprised the expert panel in the training program, as well as the rich exchanges between the internationally renowned practitioners and the workshop participants, produced a wealth of knowledge which was compiled and summarized to produce this guide as a regional contribution to addressing gender challenges and advancing the inclusion of women at all levels of peacebuilding processes in the Americas.

Luis Almagro  
**OAS Secretary General**

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# INTRODUCTION

On October 31st, 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security to address policy gaps concerning women's roles in peacebuilding processes and the impact that conflict and violent situations have on women specifically. UNSCR 1325 highlights the vital contributions of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and explores the measures that must be taken to achieve women's full participation and involvement in peace processes. The resolution comprises of 4 pillars: participation, protection, peacebuilding, and prevention, and has incorporated a wide perspective in human rights law, criminal law, and refugee law. The Women, Peace, and Security agenda, through Resolution 1325, aims to acknowledge women's participation as an essential component in the consolidation and maintenance of peace and security around the world.

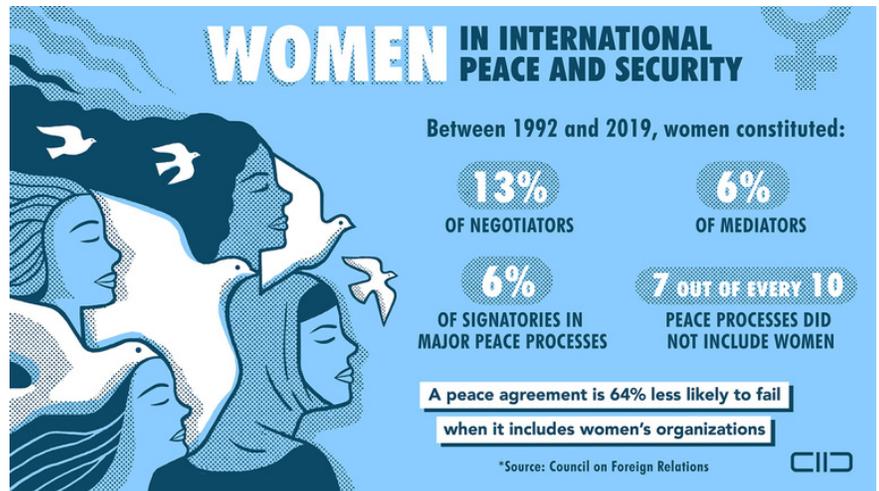


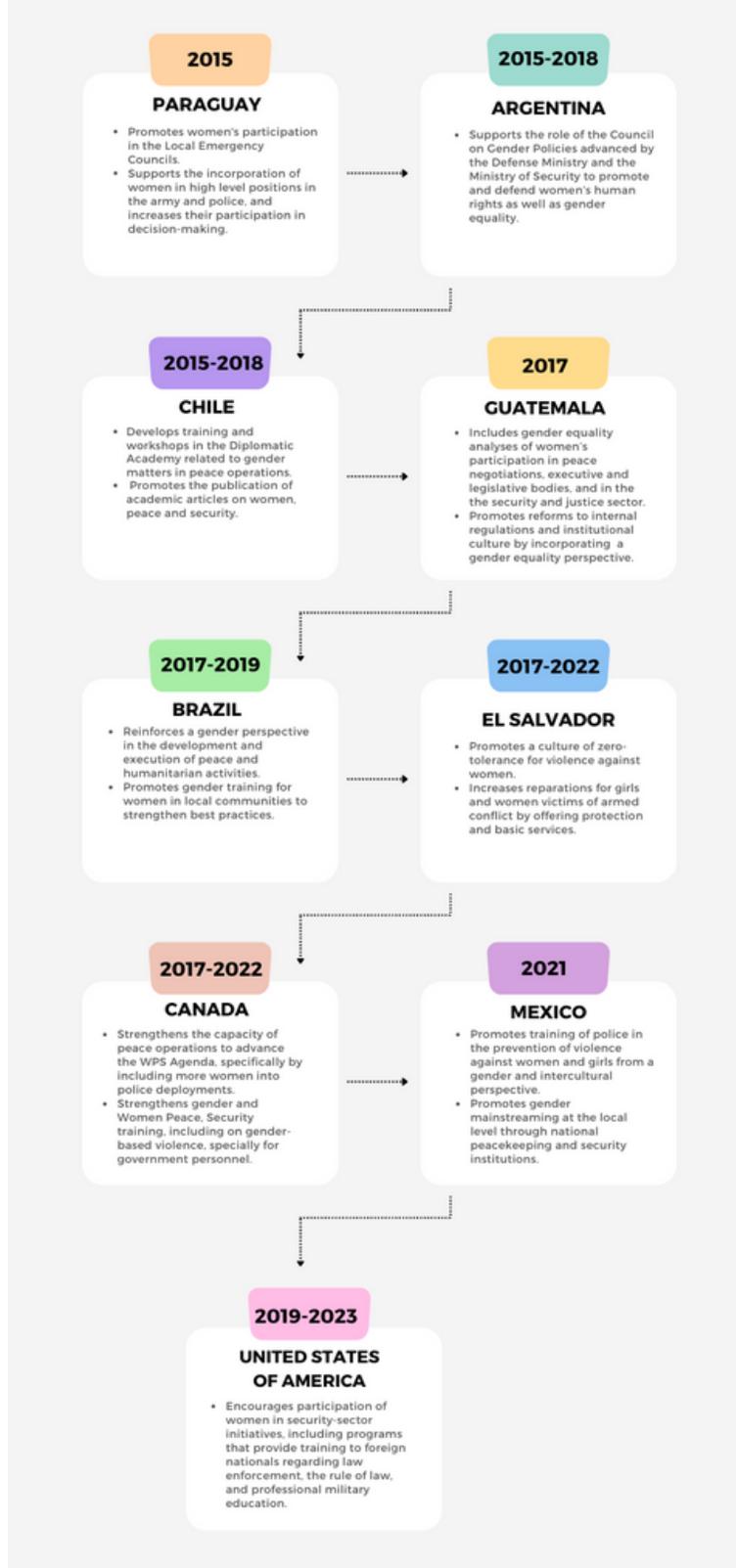
Figure 1: Women in International Peace and Security. Council on Foreign Relations 2021.

It emphasizes women's vital perspectives when analyzing conflict and strategies focused on achieving sustainable peace processes.

In addition to UNSCR 1325, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has developed a four-year Strategic Plan (2022-2025) designed to ensure compliance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030. This plan highlights a range of key areas in which further action is required to address the specific needs of women and girls. These include governance and participation in public life, economic empowerment, ending gender violence, and in humanitarian and security concerns.

To effectively implement both UNSCR 1325 and the UN Women's Strategic Plan, National Action Plans (NAPs) have been developed throughout the world, including in many OAS member states. NAPs are typically coordinated with country-specific development agendas and gender equality policies and are designed to promote collaboration with civil society, women's networks and other grassroots organizations to ensure the exchange of information (including best practices and lessons learned in women's rights and empowerment).

# NATIONAL ACTION PLANS IN THE AMERICAS



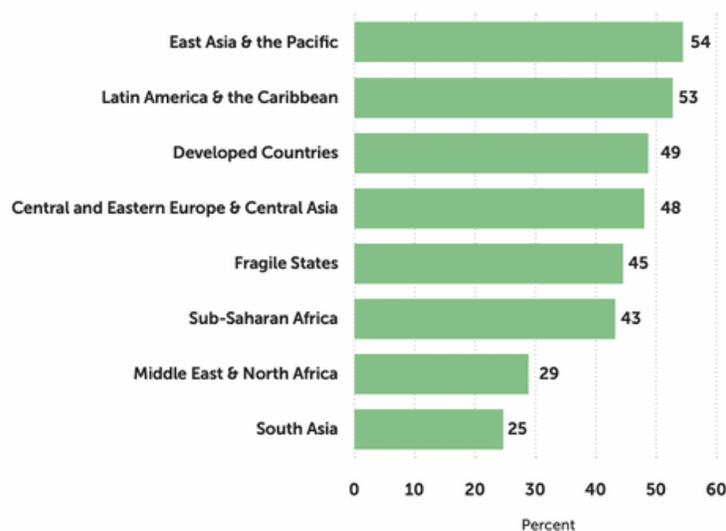
All information was retrieved from each official National Action Plan.

# WOMEN AND PEACE IN THE AMERICAS

With some of the highest rates of violence in the world, the Americas cannot claim to be a peaceful region. The threat of an inter-State war is not the most pressing concern for the countries of the Western Hemisphere, but it is the new challenges and problems that have emerged in the region that threaten daily stability: challenges such as income inequality, exclusion, and discrimination are intensifying the risks of division. Additionally, the narcotics trade, gangs, trafficking of persons, terrorism, and other forms of organized crime are increasingly posing an existential threat to States. Corruption is a scourge that is progressively undermining trust in government and affecting development and investment. And increasingly, the region is falling victim to the consequences of climate change, including natural disasters, limited access to resources, as well as the loss of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Historically, women, and especially women from minority groups such as indigenous populations, Afro-descendants, refugees, displaced persons, LGBTQ+ and people with disabilities are the most affected by conflict and violence. Women and other minority groups in the Americas are no exception to this trend. This already critical regional scenario has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIGURE 5 Share of women working in sectors worst hit by the pandemic, 2020



Note: Data cover 104 countries; hard-hit sectors include accommodation and food services; wholesale and retail trade; real estate, business, and administrative activities; and manufacturing.  
Source: ILOSTAT database and ILO 2020.

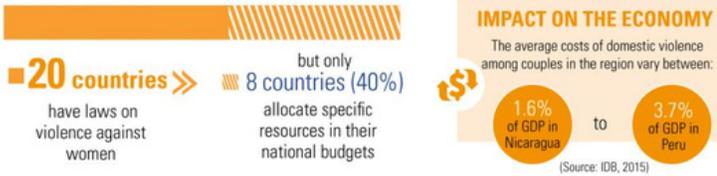
Figure 2: Women Working in Sectors Worst Hit by the Pandemic. ILOSTAT database and ILO 2020.

According to the UN, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a dramatic rise in domestic violence in the region, leading to an increase between of 20% and 100% in cases of intimate partner violence against women and girls in many OAS member States. In addition to the challenges caused by the pandemic, in 2022 the war in Ukraine is threatening hunger and food insecurity everywhere, which has also resulted in uncertainty for the peace and stability of many countries in the Americas.

# WOMEN AND PEACE IN THE AMERICAS

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean must be addressed comprehensively by States, taking into account factors of economic, social and cultural inequality that operate in society and in the power relations between men and women.



20 countries >>> 8 countries (40%)

but only have laws on violence against women

allocate specific resources in their national budgets

Violence against women in private and public spheres hampers their autonomy

### POLITICAL HARASSMENT

In Bolivia, the only country that has specific legislation against political harassment, there were

272 cases of political violence against councilwomen in 170 municipalities in 2014

(Source: AC080L, 2014)

In Peru, 4 out of every 10 female authorities were victims of political harassment of some kind in 2012.

(Source: National Jury of Elections, 2012)



### HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES

The street

Lima

9 out of every 10 women between 18 and 29 years old have been victims of street harassment (2013)

Transportation

Bogota and Mexico City

6 out of every 10 women have experienced some kind of aggression or sexual harassment while using public transportation

Santiago, Chile

6 out of every 10 women have suffered some kind of sexual harassment in public spaces

The main victims appear to be girls and young women who use public transportation (2012)

Source: ECLAC, 2014

### Recommendations

- Oversee the implementation of laws to prevent, penalize and eradicate violence against women.
- Legislate on political harassment to guarantee the egalitarian exercise of women's political rights.
- Move forward on specific legislation against abuse and sexual harassment in public spaces.

Source: ECLAC's Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean - <http://www.cepal.org/orig/default.asp?idioma=IN>

More information on: Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean - <http://www.cepal.org/12conferenciamujer/default.asp?idioma=IN>

## COVID-19's Impact on Latin America's Female Workforce

Women in Latin America have been most affected by COVID-19's labor market impacts.

Women disproportionately work in sectors most susceptible to COVID-19 impacts.



52% of women work in the informal sector, compared to 47% of men.

Latin America's racial and ethnic minority women are especially vulnerable.

Indigenous and Afro-descendent women can earn up to 60% less than men and women of European descent in similar jobs.

Domestic work is primarily performed by indigenous and Afro-descendent women. The sector is under-regulated and unsupported by social security infrastructure.

7 in 10 female domestic workers have experienced hours and wage reductions or job loss as a result of COVID-19.

89% of domestic workers most vulnerable to COVID-19 employment effects are women.

Women in Latin America face job loss, increased domestic responsibilities and changing work conditions.

59% of Central American women and 46% of South American women experienced hours and wage reductions in the initial months of lockdowns.

Women typically spend 3x more time on unpaid domestic responsibilities, and these burdens are magnified under lockdown, including for women also remotely juggling professional obligations.

Job security does not come without new risks. Healthcare workers are at a higher risk of infection than workers in other sectors.

15% 2020 female unemployment rate forecast (up from 10% in 2019)

37% 2020 female poverty rate forecast (up from 30% in 2019)

By: Lucy Hale  
Sources: CEPAL, IDB, ILO, World Bank

Wilson Center

Figure 3: Violence Against Women. Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2015.

Figure 4: COVID-19's Impact on Latin America's Female Workforce. Wilson Center, December 2020.

# IN FOCUS: UN RESOLUTION 1325 IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Since its adoption in 2000, Latin America and the Caribbean have recorded significant achievements towards supporting UN Resolution 1325. For example, in Guatemala and Colombia (two countries that have suffered decades of violence because of their respective internal armed conflicts), women have played key roles in the peace processes and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. Examples include:



Figure 5: UN Women/Ryan Brown. 19 Oct. 2018.

## **Grandmothers of the Sepur Zarco Case:**

The indigenous women who were victims of systematic sexual and domestic slavery at the hands of military forces during Guatemala's internal armed conflict (1960-1996) were finally granted justice by the Guatemalan courts after 22 hearings and 34 years of trials. This achievement came about because of the adoption by Guatemala's Supreme Court of 18 measures of "dignified and transformative reparations for systematic violations in the form of sexual and domestic slavery," including access to land, healthcare, and education.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UN Peacebuilding Fund and UN Women. "The Sepur Zarco Case: the Guatemalan Women Who Demanded Justice in a War-Torn Nation." UN Women, 19 Oct. 2018.

# IN FOCUS: UN RESOLUTION 1325 IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## Peace Agreements Colombia:

The inclusion of a gender perspective and the rights of women in the peace process in Colombia between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was possible due to the participation of women in the various stages of the negotiation process. During the regional roundtables, women represented 46% of the participants, as well as 60% of the delegations of victims who traveled to La Havana, Cuba to talk about their experiences and the impact the conflict had on them, as well as their expectations and proposals for the restitution of their rights.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 6: Gender Approach in the Colombian Peace Agreement. Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz Colombia, 2016.

<sup>2</sup>Güezmes García, Ana. 100 Measures That Incorporate the Gender Perspective in the Peace Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP to End the Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace, UN Women Office: Colombia Country Office, 2018.

# IN FOCUS: UN RESOLUTION 1325 IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## Women's Association in Southern Tolima, Colombia:

Women's increased presence in the strengthening of regional and territorial development policies, through the consolidation of rural-urban links, have been essential in the advancement of various collective forms of peacebuilding in their communities.<sup>3</sup>

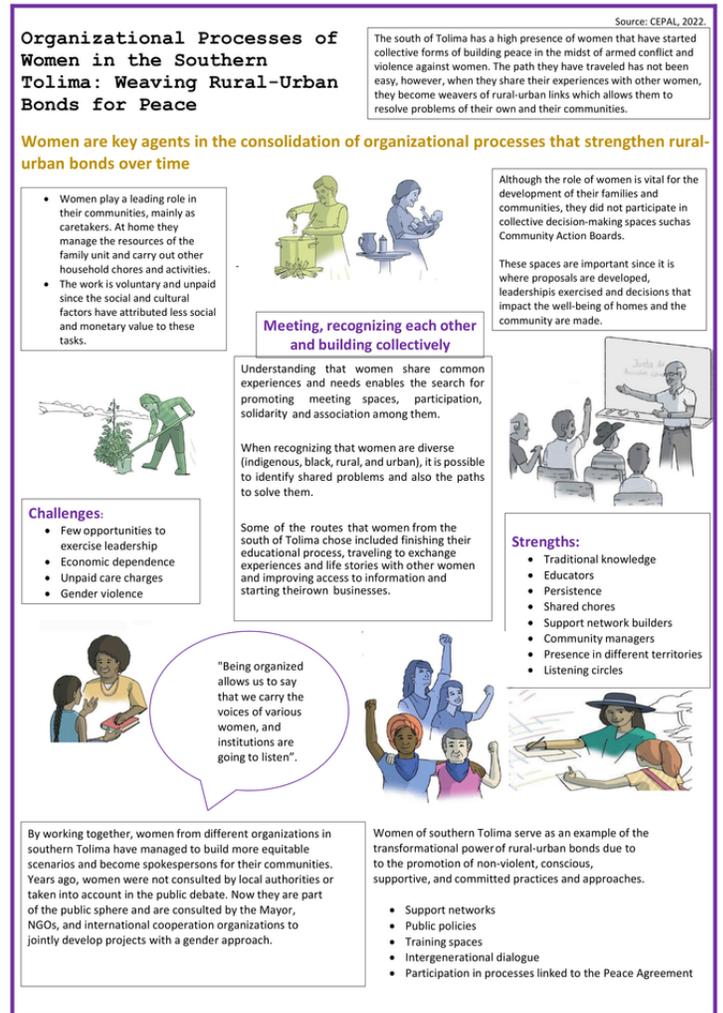


Figure 7: Organizational Processes of Women in the Southern Tolima. ECLAC, Bogota Office, Dec. 2019.

<sup>3</sup>Ramírez, Juan Carlos, and Olga Lucía Acosta. *Rural-Urban Links and Territorial Fabrics for Inclusive Development in Colombia Analytical and Conceptual Framework*. ECLAC, Bogota Office, Dec. 2019.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325 IN THE AMERICAS

## OAS MEMBER STATES RESOLUTION 1325

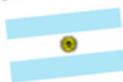
### CONTRIBUTIONS

#### ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



-Implemented the regional UN Human Security Trust Fund joint initiative with UN Women, FAO, ILO and UNDP to empower women and youth in small business sectors, while advancing gender-perspective development.

#### ARGENTINA



-Drafted a National Plan to implement Resolution 1325 and incorporated specific policies for the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) on sexual violence against women in situations of armed conflict.

- The NAP addresses the issue of gender from the planning stage of activities in the field of reconstruction and peace-building.  
- Calls for cooperation of Member States to increase the participation of women in the field as civilian, military or police personnel.

#### BARBADOS



-In 2020, participated in the launch of the "Regional Spotlight Initiative Programme" which seeks to eliminate all forms of family violence, specifically against women and girls across Eastern Caribbean.

#### BELIZE



-Launched a *Women, Peace, Security (WPS) Program* in 2020.

-The program focuses on educating and training women.

-It includes 3 pillars for WPS initiative: creating equal opportunities in leadership positions, commitment to fight against sexual and gender violence, as well as implementing the different policies with a gender perspective.

#### BOLIVIA



-Developed a joint program: *Supporting Dialogue and Human Rights for the Construction of Peace in Bolivia*, aimed to train women leaders of vulnerable communities to strengthen non-violent capacities and promote spaces of dialogue to consolidate peace after the socio-political crisis of 2019.

## OAS MEMBER STATES UN RESOLUTION 1325

### CONTRIBUTIONS

#### BRAZIL



-The Brazilian Joint Center of Peacekeeping Operations includes training with a gender perspective, for the military to be employed in peacekeeping operations.

-Brazil's Federal Constitution promotes non-violent forms of conflict resolution and seeks to address human rights violations in at-risk areas.

#### CANADA



-Canada's National Action Plan (NAP) (2017-2022) focuses on the role of civil society, especially local women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights.

-It also addresses discrimination and violence against indigenous women.

-In 2017, Canada adopted the *Feminist International Assistance Policy*, which focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, along with human dignity, environment and climate action, as well as peace and security.

#### CHILE



-Focuses on the inclusion of a gender perspective and leadership functions in the context of the Chilean armed forces.

- Developed its National Action Plan in 2009 and 2015, which emphasizes gender perspective, human rights, women participation and coordination.

#### COLOMBIA



-Launched its most recent research report on disarmament and women in Colombia, which contributes to the development of a successful Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Process with a gender perspective.

-Included over 100 items on gender issues in the 2016 peace agreement.

-Created a specialized gender unit of seven women leaders of organizations of rural women, victims of armed conflict and civil-society organizations.

#### COSTA RICA



-Considers that the incorporation of a gender perspective is an indispensable tool to fight and prevent violence against women.

-Adopted UN Resolution 1960 which calls for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict, particularly against women and girls.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325 IN THE AMERICAS

## OAS MEMBER STATES UN RESOLUTION 1325

### CONTRIBUTIONS

#### DOMINICA



-Dominica's Second National Policy and Action Plan for Gender Equality is in reviewing stage, and focuses on identifying gaps in climate resilience within the government's gender-related policies.

#### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



-The Ministry of Women launched a National Plan for Gender Equality (2007-2017) which aims for gender equality in health, employment, education, justice, etc.  
-UN Women Training Centre, which delivers high quality training for gender equality, is now based in the Dominican Republic.  
-Contributes to the promotion of social protection from a gender perspective as a joint initiative with UN and UNDP.

#### ECUADOR



-Established the Ecuadorian Armed Forces Gender Policy, based on non-discrimination against women and focuses on the inclusion of women in the military sphere, with equal rights.  
-Participation of women in the Ecuadorian Armed Forces has quadrupled since the 10th anniversary of the adoption of Resolution 1325.  
-Co-sponsored Resolution 2538 (2020), which aims to the implementation of the System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

#### EL SALVADOR



-Adopted its National Action Plan in 2017 to strengthen women's participation in all decision-making levels of peace processes.  
-Training programs on Resolution 1325 have been implemented, particularly for members of the Armed Forces of El Salvador.  
-Created the Network of Women Human Rights Defenders, a mechanism to defend and promote women's rights within the Police department.

#### GRENADA



-Designed the *Grenada Spotlight Initiative* to help end family violence and all forms of violence against women and girls in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

## OAS MEMBER STATES UN RESOLUTION 1325

### CONTRIBUTIONS

#### GUATEMALA



-Guatemala's National Action Plan was implemented in 2017 to promote women's rights.  
-The National Plan for Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Domestic and Public Policy Against Sexual Violence were created for the period 2019-2029.  
-The "*Isabel Claudina*" alert system was created to search for disappeared women.

#### GUYANA



-Throughout a partnership with the Florida National Guard, the first workshop in Guyana directed to women, peace and security issues was developed in 2021. It focused on exploring and understanding women's response, integration and recruitment.

#### HAITI



-Since the earthquake, Haiti's Ministry of Women's Affairs along with the UN, have been working closely with civil society and women's organizations to ensure that women and girls receive equal early recovery efforts.  
-A Rapid Gender Analysis was developed to analyze the impact the earthquake had on women.

#### HONDURAS



-Implemented the initiative "Safe Cities for Women – Tegucigalpa", which promotes a culture of peace and economic development to reduce violence against women and girls.  
-Supports women's organizations and Municipal Offices to carry out gender-based violence prevention strategies in Tela, Chomba and San Pedro Sula.

#### JAMAICA



-Jamaica has ensured the participation of women in peace and security by the recruitment of women police officers to peacekeeping missions.  
-Jamaican women peacekeepers have acted as role models in their local communities by demonstrating disadvantaged women and girls that achieving equality is possible.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325 IN THE AMERICAS

## OAS MEMBER STATES UN RESOLUTION 1325

### CONTRIBUTIONS

#### MEXICO



-Created 15 specialized police units focusing on the prevention, investigation and prosecution of violent crimes against women.

-In 2014, gender parity was increased to a constitutional level for candidacies to Federal and State Congress.

#### NICARAGUA



-Joined the UN Secretary-General's UNITE to End Violence against Women campaign by 2030.

-On January 2021, a reform was made to Law 779, establishing life sentence for those who commit crimes of ex rape and femicide.

#### PANAMA



-In 2020, the Panama Canal formalized its commitment to gender equality and women's economic empowerment by signing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

-Panama was of the first countries to partner with the Equal Pay International Coalition.

#### PARAGUAY



-With the support of International IDEA, Paraguay implemented the initiatives called "School of Political Training for Women Leaders" to provide political training for women, aiming to promote their political empowerment and leadership with the support of International IDEA.

#### PERU



-Implemented several policies aimed at guaranteeing women a life free of violence, including the National Policy on Gender Equality.

-Since 2016, Peru had institutionalized a gender approach at all levels of the administration of justice.

-The "National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change in Peru", has been launched in 2021 with a gender and intercultural approach.

## OAS MEMBER STATES UN RESOLUTION 1325

### CONTRIBUTIONS

#### SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS



-In 2018, launched a National Gender Equality Policy to provide a framework that will assist the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis in facilitating gender equality and empowerment.

#### SAINT LUCIA



-Supported the European Union Gender Action Plan III - for the Caribbean 2021-2025, to accelerate progress on empowering women and girls on gender equality since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration.

#### SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



-In 2014, a National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence was developed with UN Women support.

-Contributed to a National Report on Progress in the Application of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda, within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030.

#### SURINAME



-In 2021, Suriname launched the first forum of senior leaders held by U.S. Southern Command's (SOUTHCOM) Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Program, to strengthen the role of women in the Defense Force.

#### THE BAHAMAS



-The Bahamas has been ranked 62 out of 187 nations in a recent World Bank report analyzing countries where women are fully equal to men under the law.

-Established the Department of Gender and Family Affairs (DGFA) to promote gender equality and the empowerment for women.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325 IN THE AMERICAS

## OAS MEMBER STATES UN RESOLUTION 1325

### CONTRIBUTIONS

#### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



- The National Policy on Gender and Development was developed to promote gender equality and equity, social justice and sustainable development.
- Women have held high-level decision making positions such as the President, Speaker of the House and President of the Senate.

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



- The US is partnered to the "Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies", to mitigate and provide accountability for gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies.
- Developed an implementation plan in the United States Government Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda to address barriers that prevent women's participation in peace and political processes.

#### URUGUAY



- Support the incorporation of women into the armed forces, reflected in the increase number of women who are deployed in the armed forces as well as in the Uruguayan police and in the formed police units of peacekeeping operations.
- Implemented the "Program for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" to strengthen the Response System to Gender-Based Violence of the Uruguayan National Institute of Women for adult women, including migrant women and trafficked women.

#### VENEZUELA



- In 2021, Venezuelan political leaders and civil society designed the initiative "Mujeres por la Democracia en Venezuela" as an effort to join forces towards a democratic transition that includes female leadership.

# IN FOCUS: INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT, AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## Convention of Belém do Pará:

The *Inter-American Commission of Women*, known by its acronym in Spanish **CIM**, was established in 1928 by the Pan American Union (the predecessor of the Organization of American States) as the first inter-governmental agency created to promote women's rights and gender equality. One of its landmark accomplishments is the Convention of Belém do Pará.<sup>4</sup> In 1994, the Convention recognized that "violence against women pervades every sector of society regardless of class, race or ethnic group, income, culture, level of education, age or religion and strikes at its very foundations." The Convention also condemns all forms of violence against women and calls the States Parties to "pursue policies to prevent, punish and eradicate such violence." The CIM has carried out research on the applicability of the Convention in cases of crisis and conflict. This includes a comprehensive review of State obligations under the intersection of the Convention with a series of resolutions on women, peace, and security issues adopted by the UN Security Council. The Convention further defines violence against women and girls as "any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere." The success of the Convention lies in its binding nature, as States bear obligations to prevent, investigate, and gather data with respect to violence against women, as well as to implement a gender perspective in these efforts.

The infographic is titled "INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN" and "Convention of Belém do Pará". It features several sections: "Adopted in 1994" with a photo of a conference; a text box defining violence against women; "ARTICLE 4" with a quote and a photo of three women; and "ARTICLE 7" with a list of state responsibilities and a photo of a courtroom scene. The infographic uses a pink and white color scheme with decorative elements.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### Convention of Belém do Pará

**Adopted in 1994**

Defines and criminalizes all forms of violence against women, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence perpetrated by State actors and even third-party actors.

Has been signed and ratified by 32 out of 35 member States of the Organization of American States and translated into 13 indigenous languages.

**ARTICLE 4**

"Every woman has the right to the recognition, enjoyment, exercise and protection of all human rights and freedoms embodied in regional and international human rights instruments."

**ARTICLE 7**

States Parties are responsible for:

- Policies to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women.
- Applying due diligence to investigate and impose penalties.
- Establishing fair and effective legal procedures for victims.

Figure 8: Convention of Belém do Pará. *GW International Law and Policy Brief*. March 29 2022.

<sup>4</sup>Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), June 9 1994.

# IN FOCUS: INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT, AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In 2004, OAS member States adopted a continuous and independent evaluation process designed to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. The Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) analyzes State efforts to implement the Convention, using a multilateral evaluation methodology based on technical cooperation.

As part of its recommendations, the MESECVI's Committee of Experts has urged that States eliminate mediation and conciliation in cases of violence against women, and more specifically, in cases of intra-family or domestic violence. The Committee argues that mediation and/or conciliation are often harmful to women victims of violence because the necessary conditions are not present for them to participate in negotiations on equal terms with their aggressors.<sup>5</sup>

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## Selected Applications Convention of Belém do Pará

**Castro-Castro Prison v. Peru (2006)**  
The Peruvian Court applied the Convention for the first time during an armed conflict between the Peruvian police and Maoist guerrilla groups, indicating that the State had violated the Convention by using excessive use of force in the Miguel Castro operation, against the guerrilla group including 135 women, three of whom were pregnant during the attack.

**Women and Girls  
González et al. "Cotton Field" v. Mexico (2009)**  
The Gonzalez case holds the Mexican State responsible for a series of irregularities and delays in the investigation of the disappearances and deaths of 3 women, after they were reported missing, and weeks later found in a cotton field with signs of sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment.

**Indigenous Women  
Rosendo Cantú et al. v. Mexico  
Fernández Ortega et al. v. Mexico (2010)**  
In 2010, the Convention was applied in these two cases where indigenous women were raped by Mexican military officials, addressing the due diligence and the particular vulnerability of indigenous women and girls who are victims of sexual violence.

**Las Dos Erres Massacre v. Guatemala (2009)**  
Between December 6 and 8, 1982 a specialized group of the Guatemalan armed forces executed 251 members of the "Las Dos Erres" community. Among those killed were women and children, who were also raped and subjected to forced abortion. The Guatemalan Court denounced the State's use of sexual violence against women as a method of war. The Guatemalan State failed to investigate the events with due diligence and punish acts of violence against women. The Court ordered the State to provide several forms of reparation including: restitution, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition.

**LGBTI community  
Vicky Hernández et al. v. Honduras (2021)**  
The Court also considered that there were sufficient elements to conclude that her death was due to her gender identity as a transgender woman and highlighted the State's reinforced obligations to investigate when a crime is linked to a victim's gender identity.  
*This case marked the first time the Court addressed the possibility of applying the Convention of Belém do Pará to members of the LGBTI community, specifically transgender woman like Vicky Hernández.*

**Journalists  
Bedoya Lima et al. v. Colombia (2021)**  
Between 2000 and 2003, journalist Jineth Bedoya Lima was kidnapped, tortured and raped. In 2021, the case was heard, and concluded that the Colombian State had a strict due diligence to prevent and investigate, not just because she was a woman, but also given her work as a journalist.

**Brisa Liliana de Ángulo Lozada v. Bolivia. (2020)**  
In this ongoing case, Brisa de Ángulo, a Bolivian human rights lawyer, has denounced the lack of protection, prevention, investigation and punishment around the sexual violence that she suffered as a child.  
*This case will make history as the first time an international court has reviewed the legal concept of "Etiopiro", a discriminatory law that reverses recognition of the crime of rape against adolescent girls.*

<sup>5</sup>Rodriguez, S. *Violence Against Women: Landmark Cases and Legal Standards in the Inter-American System*. GW International Law and Policy Brief. March 29 2022.

Figure 9: Selected Applications of Convention of Belém do Pará. GW International Law and Policy Brief. March 29 2022.

# CAFÉ DIPLOMÁTICO: CAPACITY BUILDING IN NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION

The OAS's constructive role and reputation as an experienced and impartial third party is an important asset in its ability to act as a constructive conduit for the international community to support political dialogue and facilitate potential future dialogue and negotiations between stakeholders in the Americas. While the OAS has many experiences in mediation efforts, the Organization has limited institutional resources to attend all the needs of its member States. Conflict scenarios where governmental and nongovernmental authorities are inadequately prepared to confront crisis have the potential to escalate with sub-regional and regional consequences.

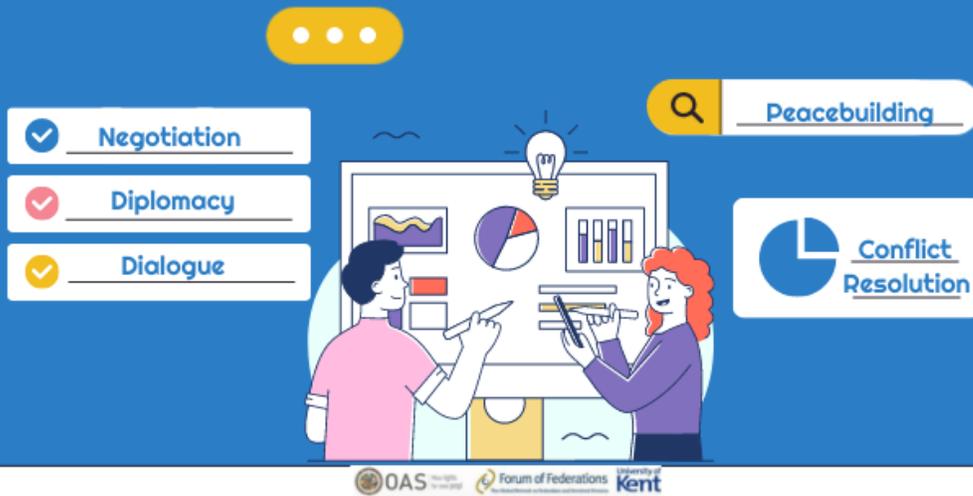
To play a more proactive role in the prevention aspect of conflict management, as well as to address these new challenges to regional peace and security, the OAS recently reviewed its peacebuilding structure and created the Department for the Promotion of Peace and for the Coordination with Subnational Governments. One of the main responsibilities of the department is to strengthen and expand its training and capacity building opportunities in mediation and other peace-based mechanisms so that state and non-state actors can develop the skills necessary to resolve crises and conflicts non-violently. While investment in the prevention of conflict is astoundingly limited, studies have repeatedly revealed that targeting resources toward conflict prevention could save millions of dollars, not to mention lives.<sup>6</sup> The undertaking of shifting the attention and resources towards conflict prevention is a demanding task which must involve the concerted efforts of all sectors of society, the staunch support of the global community, as well as long term-commitments and investments. Consequently, the OAS Department for the Promotion of Peace, the University of Kent, and the Forum of Federations established a strategic alliance to jointly implement programs directed at proactively promoting peace at the national and subnational levels. By combining the knowledge, the skills, and the resources of a diverse range of experts, these three partners aim to strengthen the institutional capacity of the OAS member states in the use of peace and conflict resolution mechanisms, including mediation, preventive diplomacy, consensus building, facilitation, and dialogue.

Negotiating peace agreements and successfully managing crises to prevent them from escalating into violence is not an easy task and requires a range of skills and preparation. One of the most successful initiatives that has resulted from the partnership is the annual Café Diplomático High-Level Training in Mediation and Negotiation (Café Diplomático). A unique training experience, Café Diplomático is designed to provide capacity building to the OAS member States in the field of conflict management and is led by Professor Neophytos Loizides, Director of the Conflict Analysis Research Centre at the University of Kent. The ultimate purpose of this activity is to better prepare relevant actors for future participation in managing conflict, peace negotiations, and peacebuilding in the region.

<sup>6</sup> See: Bellamy, A.J. "Conflict Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect." *Global Governance*, 14 (2): 135-156, 2008; Chalmers, M. "Spending to Save? The Cost-Effectiveness of Conflict Prevention." *Defence and Peace Economics*, 18(1): 1-23, 2007; World Bank, "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Violent Conflict.", 2008.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN  
NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION

# What is Café Diplomatico?



Café Diplomatico follows the life of a female diplomat and challenges participants to reflect on a series of 'real life situations' and simulations inspired by leading negotiating training programs.

*“Café Diplomático is a series of simulations that provide a comprehensive understanding of major negotiation settings. It helps participants develop their own negotiations learning mind-set”*

**Professor Neophytos Loizides**

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**Think outside the box**

In your foreign service exam, this question was asked: attempt to draw four straight lines that connect nine dots below without lifting your pen. (Learn about: thinking outside the box)



**Cooperation or defection?**

Your country reaches a bilateral agreement on a fair trade regime on coffee exports. You benefit from cooperation but defection from competitors is likely. Can you maintain/restore cooperation across time? (Learn about: reiterated prisoners dilemma)



**Ethics of Negotiation**

An embassy colleague makes a blunder and prints 1 million packages of coffee using a photo of a Hollywood company without securing a copyright. Should he pay US\$1 million on copyright or destroy US\$4 million in coffee? (Learn about: ethics of negotiation)



**Bridge of Spies**

You are sent to a foreign country to negotiate the exchange of a foreign spy arrested in your country with a pilot that was shot down in the enemy's airspace. You were told not to care about a PhD student arrested. (Watch: *Bridge of Spies* starring Tom Hanks)



**Job Salary Negotiation**

You are promoted to a new capital city and are excited about the move but the salary is set by the ministry and is low compared to the cost of living. (Learn about: negotiating a job salary)



**Best Alternative**

You would like to negotiate the purchase of a new car (or a new house) as part of settling in at your new post. (Learn about Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement, BATNA)



**International Peace Settlements**

You are dispatched to the OAS to help prepare a two-page memo on how to negotiate a peace settlement between two member States. (Learn to apply Harvard's four principles of negotiations)



**Irrational Escalation**

Represent your administration at an auction of a US\$10 worth fighter aircraft with the condition that any amount suggested has to be paid to the seller. (Learn about irrational escalation)



**Interests vs. Positions**

Kids at your diaspora community school celebrate Halloween and you were asked to purchase 100 pumpkins, one for each kid. The farmer has only 100 and refuses to sell them all, even if you pay more. Why? (Learn about interests vs. positions)



**Shadows of Negotiation**

You got the pumpkins and diaspora community members took you out for drinks to thank you at 'Café Diplomatico'. Most left money for the bill but there is a US\$200 shortfall. (Learn about: Long shadows of negotiation)



**Multi-party Negotiations**

Corovia faces ethnic conflict and you are asked to represent foreign donors. You are given a BATNA and asked to reach a peace settlement in forty minutes across five issues with five parties. (Learn about handling 'complex' multi-issue multi-party negotiations)

**? What are the main objectives of this high-level training?**

Since its launch in March 2021, more than 120 senior diplomats from 32 OAS member States have received high-level training in mediation and negotiations skills through the *Café Diplomático High-Level Training in Mediation and Negotiation*.

- To familiarize participants with the key concepts and practices of negotiations emphasizing the development of personal life skills.**
- To help participants develop their own negotiations 'learning mindset' as well as adapt to the challenges and opportunities of negotiating both in person as well as in cyberspace.**
- To introduce new online techniques/simulations that provide a comprehensive understanding of all major negotiation settings including contextualizing gender aspects in mediations and negotiations.**

OAS Organization of American States Forum of Federations Forum of Federations of the Americas University of Kent

*“Peace processes that involve the meaningful participation of women at all levels are more likely to be durable, as well as responsive to needs and issues that might otherwise be neglected.”*

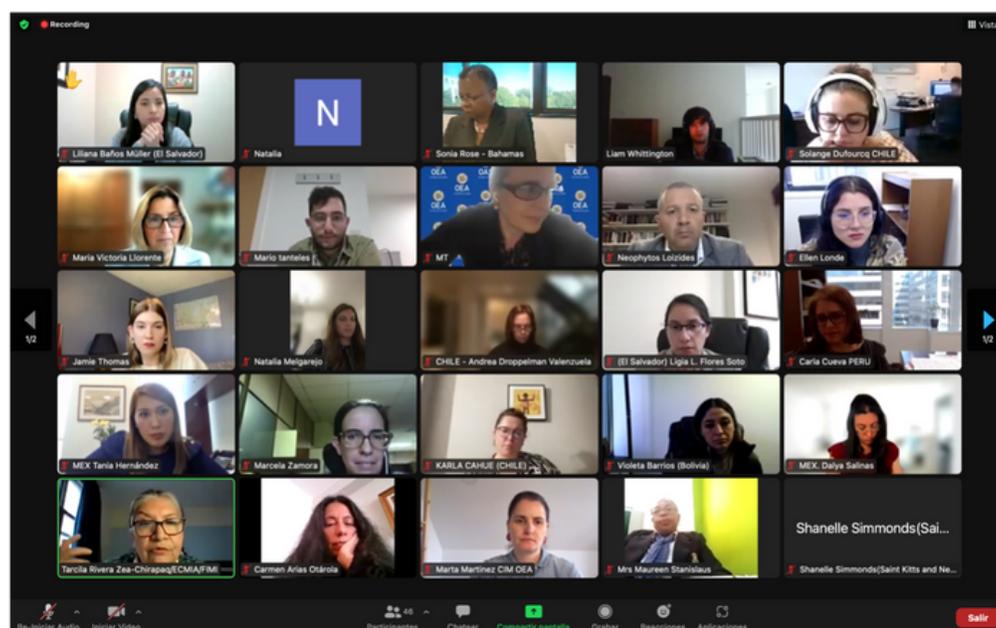
**Liam Whittington**

# WOMEN IN PEACE MEDIATIONS: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

High-level mediation & negotiation training workshop 2021



High-level mediation & negotiation training workshop 2022



Maintaining peace and preventing conflicts in the Americas is critical to improving the lives of those living in the hemisphere. Yet OAS member states in Latin America and the Caribbean continue to be involved in conflict situations. Although women have been fully engaged in conflict as combatants, as victims and as informal peacebuilders at the grassroots level, their perspectives and concerns are excluded from peace and reconstruction processes, and little regard is given to their actual and potential roles in building sustainable peace.

Recognizing the invaluable role that women play in peacebuilding and conflict management and the importance of including women at all decision-making levels within the global and regional peace and security agendas - aligning with UN resolution 1325 - the 2022 *Café Diplomático Workshop* focused on *Women in Peace Mediations: A Gender Perspective*.

The program included two components: an introductory panel session featuring leading female voices in the field of peacebuilding from the Americas, followed by interactive training simulations led by CARC's Director, **Professor Neophytos Loizides** and **Professor Ayşe Betül Çelik** of Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey. The negotiation exercises were drawn from those of the leading negotiation programs and handbooks and the training included the use of online tools to help participants better familiarize themselves with key negotiating strategies.

The goal of the *Women in Peace Mediations* workshop was to promote and reinforce the full involvement of women in conflict resolution and in formal peace and reconstruction processes at all levels (local, subnational, national, and regional) and to integrate a gender perspective in these processes. Furthermore, it aimed to:

- Provide senior authorities from the OAS member States with the knowledge and skills required to integrate a gender perspective in mediation, negotiation, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and to follow up on the implementation of post-conflict agreements.
- Create a support network of individuals able to promote and reinforce initiatives for ensuring women's participation and inclusion in peace and reconstruction processes at all levels.

The expert panel, moderated by Liam Whittington, Senior Program Manager at the Forum of Federations, brought together three leading voices from the Americas who shared their expertise and individual experiences on the role of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution from different perspectives. Panel speakers included: Tarcila Rivera Zea from the Quechua-Chanka Nation of Peru, a leading indigenous activist and recognized defender of the rights of indigenous girls and women in the Hemisphere and beyond; Maria Victoria Llorente, Executive Director of the most relevant think tank on peace and security issues in Colombia, the Ideas for Peace Foundation; and Magdalena Talamas, Director of the OAS Department for the Promotion of Peace and former Special Representative of the OAS Secretary General for Belize-Guatemala Affairs.

# THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING

Tarcila Rivera Zea, President of the Indigenous Cultures of Peru Foundation, addressed the challenges that the approximately 28 million indigenous women in the Americas face to gain representation in peacebuilding tables at all levels. Indigenous women face these barriers despite the importance of their inclusion to defend both the individual and collective rights of indigenous women and girls, which are indivisible and complementary to each other, in the same manner that violence and other systemic social issues are indivisible. Ms. Rivera Zea stressed the importance of indigenous women having their own voice in all spaces, a process that began at the First World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 and since then has been evolving and growing in international fora. She noted that the eradication of “violences” in a plural form is a priority for indigenous peoples because they have historically suffered collective violence against their race and culture, but also gender violence that girls and women have faced in their communities and in conflict settings.

Some of the most common forms of violence against indigenous women are racism, misogyny, and servitude, as well as exclusion, inequality, malnutrition, and extreme poverty. The lack of access to land, to a healthy environment and to education are also forms of violence that affect the rights of indigenous peoples in general and indigenous women in particular. In Ms. Rivera Zea’s view, the eradication of these expressions of violence in the policy sphere is thus critical for the wellbeing of indigenous peoples, as these decisions disproportionately impact indigenous women negatively. She further argued that in conflict settings, power is used with a racist mentality to disregard the rights of indigenous peoples. Consequently, discussions regarding post-conflict and transitional justice should also address both the contemporary and historical experiences of indigenous women. She highlighted how indigenous women approach peacebuilding by incorporating it into their daily lives and by engaging in ongoing efforts to promote peace within societies. In this vein, feminist movements and feminist empowerment play a supporting role in peacebuilding, starting locally and moving up to the global level, for example through the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas and the International Forum of Indigenous Women, respectively.

*“For us, talking about peace is about what we are doing to contribute to building peace in our lives, in our societies and in our countries”*

**Tarcila Rivera Zea**

Finally, Ms. Rivera Zea addressed the need to advance the concept of interculturality and to promote inter-cultural dialogue to exchange ideas and propose solutions to global problems from different perspectives. This is increasingly important since issues such as sexual and reproductive rights and choice of sexuality (among many others) which were formerly extraneous to indigenous cultures, are now equally important to indigenous peoples and indigenous women in particular. Similarly, she expressed the need to include indigenous peoples and indigenous women in debates on other priority issues such as climate change, since they can provide unique perspectives on how to address these challenges differently. Moreover, interpreting information in diverse ways can provide creative and alternative solutions, which is in turn conducive to a more comprehensive approach to peacebuilding.

Specifically, indigenous peoples can make valuable contributions because of their knowledge and experience and must thus be part of the solution to the shared problems of the region. In 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which affirms the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples and individuals. However, the extent to which the principles enshrined within this landmark multilateral document can be realized depends on the advances made in respecting diversity and observing human rights across the board at the national and local levels. Moreover, for democracy to work, it must be inclusive and a real expression in governing and the exercise of power. Both indigenous and non-indigenous people play a key role in this regard. Ms. Rivera Zea concluded by highlighting the added challenges that indigenous peoples face because of recent problems that have emerged, including migration, the COVID-19 pandemic, and expulsion from their own communities.

## WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS IN COLOMBIA

The Executive Director of the Ideas for Peace Foundation in Colombia, Maria Victoria Llorente, noted that in the last few decades, there has been a growing participation of women in peace matters in the country. In fact, in Colombia, women's participation in peacebuilding efforts has been diverse and has influenced key public policy. A good example is the implementation of the Victims and Land Restitution Law adopted in 2011 to assist and compensate the almost 10 million victims of the armed conflict, half of them being women. Ms. Llorente explained that during the negotiations of the Peace Agreement signed between the Colombian State and the FARC in 2016, many important women played key roles (for instance, the individual responsible for writing the agreement was a woman), but their participation mainly took place behind the scenes. One of the innovative and unique aspects of the peace agreement was that it managed to mainstream a gender perspective, including in the follow-up actions related to the implementation of its provisions.

Nonetheless, multiple challenges remain, especially in terms of translating these achievements from paper to practice, ensuring that building peace at the territorial level not only includes women as subjects of public policy, but also as agents of transformation by empowering them via different means. Women can be empowered in this regard through their appointment to important political and high-level decisionmaking positions; by acknowledging additional gender challenges related to ethnicity and migration; by targeting them in rural development programs; through addressing their lack of access to credit and land ownership; and by recognizing their capacities and expertise at the local level. In 2020, four years after the Peace Agreement had been signed, only 30% of the gender provisions had been implemented.

Ms. Llorente also observed that the armed conflict had a differentiated gender impact. For example, while lethal violence mostly affected men, ninety percent (13,000) of the victims of sexual violence were women and girls.

*“Women played a key role in including gender in the peace agreement signed between the Colombian State and the FARC in 2016... However, we still have multiple challenges and gaps, especially in translating these achievements from paper to reality and practice, ensuring that building peace at a territorial level includes women not only as subjects of public policy but also as agents of transformation.”*

### **Maria Victoria Llorente**

Another form of victimization that had a disproportionate effect on women was forced displacement. Half of the victims in Colombia were women who became the heads of households during the armed conflict, compelling them to face additional challenges and responsibilities that they were not prepared for because of their limited training and education, as well as discrimination in the labor market. This in turn reinforced the feminization of poverty. In the same manner, 20% of the 700 social leaders and human rights defenders who have been killed since 2017 after the demobilization of the FARC were women who were advocating for local causes such as coca substitution, land restitution or the protection of the population amid crossfire between armed actors.

Notwithstanding these crimes, and despite the dominant patriarchal structures in the country, Ms. Llorente also highlighted that some important progress has been made regarding the gendered provisions of the peace deal, with the support of national and international actors. In most areas that were directly affected by the conflict, several women’s organizations have been effectively working on territorial peacebuilding, whereby community leaders collaborate with academics, private entities, and civil society organizations with the objective of developing the territory through dialogue, and participatory planning and evaluation. While diverse groups of women (indigenous, Afro, rural farmers, migrants) have mobilized various agendas to include gender

approaches---for example by building community kitchens, protecting routes for female social leaders, overcoming socio-economic vulnerabilities, as well as by working on more strategic issues on the security and peace agenda- Ms Llorente noted that there are considerable and sometimes historical tensions between these groups which sometimes prevent progress to achieve a common gender approach. The Office of Equity for Women of the Vice President of Colombia has played a vital role in promoting the acceleration of the implementation of the peace agreement's gender provisions, as have several gender secretariats and offices at the regional, subregional and local levels.

Ms. Llorente further argued that while Colombia is a country with an advanced regulatory and public policy framework on issues of equity for women, in practice it has not materialized beyond the normative. It is yet to be reflected in terms of budgets, programs, and actions in development plans. Gender is also used for political and electoral purposes. This was the case during the referendum on the peace agreement in 2016 where the gender approach that had been incorporated into the agreement was misrepresented as a gender ideology. This distortion had a critical impact on the outcome of the referendum in which the agreement was rejected by 50.2% of voters two months after it was signed by the conflicting parties. Finally, Ms. Llorente added that peace in Colombia will depend on a healthy relationship with its neighbor Venezuela ---regardless of the governments in power – as well as on how the humanitarian and security issues at the border between the two countries are addressed.

## **GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN THE BELIZE-GUATEMALA PEACE PROCESS**

In 2000, the governments of Belize and Guatemala restarted talks under the auspices of the OAS on their long-standing territorial differendum. Less than two decades later, following a series of efforts to create a climate of confidence at the political-diplomatic level and through a civilian peace-keeping mission, the case was submitted to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for final settlement. The success of the process lies in great part to the comprehensive approach of its plan of action, which included specific gender considerations. Magdalena Talamas, discussing her past role as the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Belize-Guatemala Affairs (SRSG) overseeing the peacekeeping mission on the ground in the Belize-Guatemala Adjacency Zone, described the different programs implemented within the process to ensure a more systematic integration of gender perspectives.

These included: the implementation of cooperation and development projects at the local level that involved the active participation of women, empowering them, building their self-esteem and allowing for a more meaningful participation in the development of their communities; training and capacity building programs that helped women develop specialized technical skills, which in turn provided them with a viable source of income and, in some cases, financial independence; and resettlement programs that improved the standing and dignity of the women in the relocated households as a result of their inclusion in the property titles of the lands where they resettled, which also facilitated their access to credit and consequently their income-earning capacity.

Ms. Talamas also addressed the advantages of working with other women to build trust in the communities located in the Adjacency Zone, especially since women usually tend to be more comfortable opening up to other women. She further described different gender-sensitive inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, including with the military---a necessity given the lack of female representation within the armed and security forces. Likewise, when the time came to hold a referendum to decide whether the ICJ would settle the dispute, Ms. Talamas explained how the OAS worked with various women’s organizations, professional associations, and gender networks in both countries to ensure that women’s voices were heard on an issue of such critical national importance and to guarantee informed and inclusive results in both countries. She also noted the disproportionate security risks and vulnerabilities that female mediators are confronted with, especially when working in settings in which violence against women and girls is commonplace, and where spoilers threaten and undermine female mediators by attacking their reputation and credibility. Ms. Talamas concluded her presentation by highlighting the fact that women represent only 6% of global mediators and 13% of negotiators, and emphasised that men in positions of authority play a critical role in empowering women and promoting gender-equality.

*“Gender sensitive programs are highly effective, especially in conflict settings. They not only empower women by building their confidence and self-esteem but also result in income generating activities and, in some cases, help women achieve financial independence.”*

### **Magdalena Talamas**

One important effort undertaken at the global level to increase the number of women mediators is the establishment of networks of women mediators at the regional and subregional levels to link the experiences and expertise of women who have worked in peacebuilding, peace keeping and postconflict settings. Ms. Talamas concluded her presentation by announcing that, under their partnership, the OAS Department for the Promotion of Peace and Coordination with Subnational Governments, the University of Kent, and the Forum of Federations are seeking to design a similar network of women mediators for the Americas.

# WOMEN MEDIATORS NETWORKS

Networks of women mediators serve as an invaluable tool for the exchange of information and ideas and to develop relationships and contacts with vertical and horizontal impacts. The emphasis of these networks is to work at multiple levels not only to increase the number of women involved in peace processes but also to have an impact in terms of achieving better outcomes in peace processes. Professor **Ayşe Betül Çelik**, a founding member of the Turkey Antenna of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, discussed her own experiences and knowledge about women mediators' networks and women's roles in peacebuilding processes during the *Café Diplomático Training Program*.

Professor Çelik identified two main objectives of women mediators' networks:

- 1) To push for the inclusion of women in official peace negotiations;
- 2) To influence the outcomes of peace processes.

According to Professor Çelik, these networks serve to improve the skills of women mediators and help enhance their visibility. Furthermore, women mediators' networks increase the level of trust in society and assist in building peace from the bottom up rather than the top down. They can also teach their members ethics of care, validating mediation as being less about hierarchies and more about facilitating understanding amongst those who do not agree. The emphasis on building relationships in these networks makes women an invaluable part of the peace process in terms of both vertical and horizontal impacts.

Professor Çelik noted, however, that in order to increase the meaningful involvement of women in peacebuilding, there are two challenges to overcome: 1) there is a need to bring the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda to the state level to increase women's participation and access while providing a forum for state-level peace actors to engage with national bodies seeking to advance peacebuilding agendas; 2) there is a need to develop more gendered perspectives in more areas of peace processes. In terms of creating similar networks elsewhere, Professor Çelik expressed the importance of not repeating the work that has already been done by other organizations; that it is necessary to be clear about objectives and goals; that selecting membership into the network should be a strategic effort (representation from different sectors of society is important); and that it is critical to build a strong sense of trust among participants to overcome any existing societal tensions (e.g., via social capital building discussions and exercises). She concluded by highlighting the importance of working with women who come from civil society backgrounds, especially organizations that work on women's rights, human rights, and environmental issues.

# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL WOMEN MEDIATORS NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS

- Avoiding a duplication of efforts and repeating the work that is already being carried out by other organizations. Goals should be clearly defined, and membership selection should be strategic, diverse, and inclusive with representation from all sectors of society.
- Conflicts in many regions are long-lasting with multiple complex issues that are challenging to address. Mediation and other peacemaking efforts need to provide comprehensive conflict mapping, visualizing the layers of these issues and considering the specific needs of the parties in the conflict. A variety of issues are relevant to all phases of peace processes, including mediation, ceasefire agreements, constitutional reforms, communication, and inclusive strategies. The network can offer country-specific expertise with a focus on the gendered aspects of these processes, for example on how to achieve a gendered ceasefire agreement (as has been advanced by the Nordic Women Mediators Network).
- There is usually a tendency to undermine Track 2 and 3 peace work, which involves civil society and community and grass roots participation, as well as to resist women's presence at the peace tables. When efforts are made to foster women's inclusion, such as when the Global Alliance of Women Mediators Networks presented to the United Nations a list of women to be deployed in peace processes, it is important to ensure that these efforts also include powerful women from civil society who can help in many aspects of gendered conflict. However, extra care and consideration will be required in countries where there is pressure on civil society organizations and where civil society actors are undermined as important peace actors.
- Many women working at the grassroots level are invisible. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) toolkit on Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes states that "links between informal peace initiatives ...and OSCE-supported official processes remain weak and decrease as they move from Track 1.5 to Track 3."<sup>7</sup>It indicates that even though many peacebuilding initiatives are community based, they are not linked to Track 1 processes. Women Mediators Networks are good assets to facilitate these links since they bring together civil society members, practitioners, high-level bureaucrats, and diplomats. This can support a more holistic, multilevel approach to peacebuilding, involving local, subnational, and national stakeholders in the process, and avoid the weaknesses that a peace process based purely on a Track 1 'elite deal' can encounter.
- Another way to link Track 1 with other tracks is by forming working groups at the international level. By linking different peacebuilding levels with each other, experts can exchange ideas on how to synchronize their work and better collaborate. Civil society encourages a bottom-up engagement with society itself and promotes the need to create a common language and the use of empathy to establish dialogue so that policies to address violence can be developed.

<sup>7</sup>OSCE (2019). *Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes: A Toolkit*, p.28. Available at <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/440735>.

Membership of identity-based, human rights or environmental civil society organizations (CSOs) in particular teaches collective struggle for similar concerns and empathy in the case of dissimilar concerns. Women at higher levels also need to be connected to grassroots levels because working for or being in touch with civil society socializes one into the norms of listening, understanding, and reciprocating. Consequently, international organizations need to emphasize that in the selection of women peacemakers a background in civil society is crucial.

- One of the pillars of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is “prevention,” where the international community is urged to prevent all forms of gender-based violence. This requires identifying interlinkages between different forms of violence and gender-based violence. Especially in countries facing diminishing gender inequality and experiencing conflicts, women’s roles in mediation cannot be distinct from a gender equality perspective because gender issues cannot be delinked from conflicts and democratic practices. One way to increase both women’s presence and discussion of gender issues in mediation practices is to emphasize an integrated approach to understanding violence. By highlighting how violence is interlinked with gender issues, governments will be compelled to include more women in every aspect of peace issues and emphasize the need for “everyday peace.”

## CURRENT UNSCR 1325 NATIONAL ACTION PLANS AND SUBREGIONAL NETWORKS IN THE AMERICAS

In 2004, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) emphasized the significance of implementing Resolution 1325 of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda at a national level through National Action Plans (NAP), and highlighted the importance of collaborating with civil society, particularly with local and regional women’s networks and organizations. Since then, several NAPs for UNSCR 1325, which focus on the prevention of violations of women’s human rights in conflict, have been developed throughout the Americas.

### **Argentina: Federal Network of Mediators with a Gender Perspective**

Argentina adopted its first National Action Plan in 2015 by developing a proposal to establish a quota of 33% for women at all levels within the armed forces and committing to establish a Gender Auditor to incorporate a gender perspective in all proceedings completed by the armed forces. In 2017, Argentina achieved a 15% participation of women peacekeepers as military observers and officials in peace operations.

In 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice created the “Federal Network of Mediators with a Gender Perspective” to increase women’s participation in peace processes by providing specific training in the field of mediation and conflict management with a gender perspective.

Since then, the Argentina Network and NAP have been working to include a gender perspective in all peacebuilding activities and humanitarian aid missions to identify the challenges that female excombatants (women and girls) face in social reintegration processes, as well as to detect gender violence and human trafficking victims and to protect them from further acts of violence.

As part of the National Action Plan, the Network has also enforced and implemented the Gender Parity Law in political representation, which has increased women's participation in legislative and provincial lists between 2016 and 2019. According to the Federal Network's guidelines, mediators can be selected from all the 23 provinces in the country.<sup>8</sup>

### **Canada and the Caribbean: Commonwealth Women Mediators and Peacebuilders Network**

The Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC) Network was created in 2018 and is supported by the United Kingdom government. This network connects 49 members from 22 different countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas. It focuses on exchanging good practices and expertise through meetings, peer-to-peer opportunities, and the continuous support of women across different mediation situations and geographical areas. At a national level, WMC's main objectives consist of working closely with women mediators to create accessible funding to develop and engage in different peacebuilding programs, including mentoring and career opportunities, as well as mediation trainings to support younger mediators, women mediators, and mediation of indigenous conflicts. An important aim of this network is to encourage diversity in the Commonwealth community by implementing a platform for peer learning in the different areas of mediation activities. The WMC Network focuses on connecting civil society at the local level with both national and international peace processes through different mechanisms, such as the support of different informal community networks which facilitates participation, especially from women in rural areas. As of today, the Commonwealth Women Mediators and Peacebuilders Network has almost 50 women members, including activists and peacebuilding professionals involved in both national and international peacebuilding and mediation processes.<sup>9</sup>

### **Regional Network of Mediators of the Southern Cone**

In 2021, the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay signed the Constitutive Act of the Regional Network of Mediators of the Southern Cone (RNMSC). This initiated the official development of the RNMSC with the aim of emphasizing not only women's critical function in preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation, but also their role as agents of change. This initiative has received the support of the regional economic organization MERCOSUR, which facilitates close collaboration among several countries in the region, specifically to train women in mediation with a gender perspective to enable them to participate in different peace processes and humanitarian crises, as well as in conflict and post-conflict situations. Through this initiative, the Southern Cone countries seek to contribute to UN Sustainable Development Goal 16: to create more inclusive and peaceful societies. The RNMSC's main objectives include the exchange of good practices and lessons learned within its member States, the implementation of international mediation trainings, and cooperation with other regional networks worldwide.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "Argentina's National Action Plan." UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans, UN Women, 2021, <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/argentina/>.

<sup>9</sup> Turner, Catherine. *Women Mediators: Bridging the Peace Gap. Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth*, Sept. 2020.

<sup>10</sup> "Launch of the Regional Network of Mediators of the Southern Cone (RNMSC)." Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship Argentina, July 2021.

## Mexico: Network of Women Peacebuilders MUCPAZ

In 2021, the Mexican government implemented the National Action Plan (NAP) primarily to involve more women in the armed forces and eventually develop a women peacebuilders network. The National Women's Institute in Mexico created the Mujeres Constructoras de Paz (MUCPAZ) Initiative to include more women in the different peace processes.<sup>11</sup> MUCPAZ works jointly with public institutions to prevent gender violence by identifying risk factors, to promote gender equality in the socio-political agenda, and to foster a culture of peace in the region. The Mexican government funds and provides ongoing support the MUCPAZ initiatives by: opening channels of dialogue within different authorities at local and national levels; facilitating collaboration with security and military forces to strengthen protocols against violence; and addressing deficits in infrastructure and equipment for inclusive dialogues and peace processes.<sup>12</sup> Through MUCPAZ, 217 sub-networks were created in 107 municipalities in 27 states. As of 2022, 3,510 women activists for gender equality constitute MUCPAZ.<sup>12</sup> With the support of the network, these women identify the primary conflicts in their communities to develop strategies to address them in the future. The Government of Mexico recognizes the lack of women from minority communities holding high-level decision-making positions and therefore emphasizes the importance of contextualizing security strategies specific to local communities.<sup>13</sup>

## Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas

The Continental Network of Indigenous Women (ECMIA) was founded in 1995 and includes indigenous women from North, Central and South America. Currently, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, United States, Guatemala, Guyana, French Guiana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Suriname, and Venezuela have been contributing to ECMIA by participating in debate forums and policy development within several UN agencies to fight for the recognition of indigenous people's rights.

Since its foundation, the ECMIA has aimed to promote the participation and visibility of indigenous women and youth within the framework of the Beijing World Conference on Women: the 4th World Conference on Women organized by the UN, at which 189 countries agreed on a global agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment. Likewise, the network has been focusing on the empowerment of individual and collective rights to achieve full recognition and respect for the rights of women, youth, children, and indigenous peoples.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Las Mujeres Construyen Paz En América Latina y El Caribe: Aniversario 21 De La Resolución 1325 De Las Naciones Unidas Sobre Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad." ONU Mujeres – América Latina y El Caribe, Oct. 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, Gobierno de Mexico. Mucpaz. Redes de Mujeres Constructoras de Paz. March, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Pandal de la Peza, Ana. "Peace in Mexico – the Women Who Make It Happen." Release Peace, Analysis and Background Stories on International Affairs , 14 Apr. 2022.

<sup>14</sup> CHIRAPAQ Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru. Violence and Indigenous Women Document Presented to the CSW57 March 2013. Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas ECMIA, 2013.

The continental meetings and debates have enabled ECMIA to coordinate actions in three subregions and consolidate the network as an instrument for the defense and promotion of the rights of indigenous women, youth, and children. Similarly, several delegates and members of the network have participated in the the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and in drafting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. ECMIA has participated in several Indigenous issues forums organized by the United Nations to place the rights of indigenous peoples on the socio-economic agenda of the hemisphere. Additionally, ECMIA focuses on trainings and workshops concerning the rights of women, youth, and indigenous peoples, to strengthen leadership capacities and prepare Indigenous women for participation in political and public decision-making areas.<sup>16</sup>



Figure 10: Indigenous Women of the Americas. CHIRAPAQ Center for Indigenous Cultures of Peru and the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas – ECMIA, December 2020.



Figure 11: Indigenous Women in Some Countries of Latin America. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2010

<sup>16</sup> Binet. "Continental Link of Indigenous Women of the Americas." ECMIA, Binary Networks Development, 2021, <http://ecmia.org/index.php/quienes-somos>.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The unique insights and data provided by the experts and practitioners who participated in Café Diplomático 2022 provide a valuable resource of hemispheric efforts to address gender challenges in conflict scenarios. The following conclusions and recommendations -- derived from the experiences and expertise shared -- have been identified as a contribution to advancing the inclusion of women in peace processes and highlighting the importance of their role as mediators and peace builders.

1. The role and inclusion of women in state and peacebuilding processes is crucial to reverse longstanding unjust practices of exclusion and discrimination.
2. The substantive inclusion of women in peace and state building processes has become an increasingly significant area of work in conflict affected societies and in the field of conflict management around the world.
3. Women do ground-breaking work for justice, peace, and security, but they continue to be sidelined in formal peace processes.
4. Research has shown that inclusion of women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes improves the prospects of peace agreements and is essential for long-term success.
5. Ending violent conflict requires a more inclusive process with women playing a pivotal role in peacebuilding both from the bottom up as well as from the top down, engaging with multiple stakeholders and representatives from various levels of government to advance and implement sustainable and holistic peace practices.
6. Gender equal participation in post-conflict institution-building initiatives has also been neglected. When women and other marginalized or minority groups are not included in all aspects and stages of peace processes, there is significant risk that the final settlement will fail to deliver.
7. Efforts directed at enhancing women's participation in politics and electoral processes and fostering women's leadership are important not only to achieve a more gender-balanced representation and subsequently more gender sensitive policies, but also to ensure that women's voices are heard and represented, especially in matters and decisions of critical national importance and consequence.

8. Women's participation is important to ensure a gender perspective. A gendered approach to peacebuilding ensures that often overlooked issues affecting women and girls are addressed, and this in turn has a knock-on effect on future public policies that are put in place.

9. The level of trust that women mediators can achieve by working with other women affected by conflict is essential to obtaining critical information that otherwise might not be shared since women are often more comfortable opening up to other women.

10. Gender-sensitive capacity building programs are highly effective. They empower women by building their confidence and self-esteem and result in income-generating activities and, in some cases, help women achieve financial independence, enabling their more meaningful participation in the development of their societies.

11. Peace and development are inter-connected, and rural women represent key agents for development. More work must be done to ensure adequate communication and inclusion between and among national and subnational partners throughout peacebuilding processes.

12. Women's land rights are fundamental to rural development not only to increase gender equality but because female land ownership has a positive impact on the overall wellbeing of households. When women are given or included in property titles, this not only empowers them and improves their dignity but also serves to facilitate their access to credit, which in turn enhances their income-earning capacity.

13. A more common and consistent approach to peacebuilding is achieved when agendas mobilized by women representing diverse groups are combined. 14. Peace builders are exposed to many different types of threats, but the risks for women mediators are higher, especially since they constantly work in settings where violence against women is common and unchallenged.

15. Women are more vulnerable than men to threats by individuals or groups of individuals known as spoilers who are against the peace process. Spoilers often use tactics such as defamation, slander, and libel against women to undermine, weaken and attack them.

16. Protection mechanisms to prevent and mitigate threats against women peacebuilders and mediators should be incorporated in agendas and action plans at all levels of peace building efforts and processes.

17. Civil society organizations must be supported and strengthened because they are the actors which monitor compliance and implementation of laws, including gender-specific norms and regulations.

18. Programs promoted by international cooperation often collide with local challenges, such as low connectivity or limited access to markets and therefore, there should be focus placed on peacebuilding efforts carried out at the subnational and local level in consultation with local authorities and national bodies.

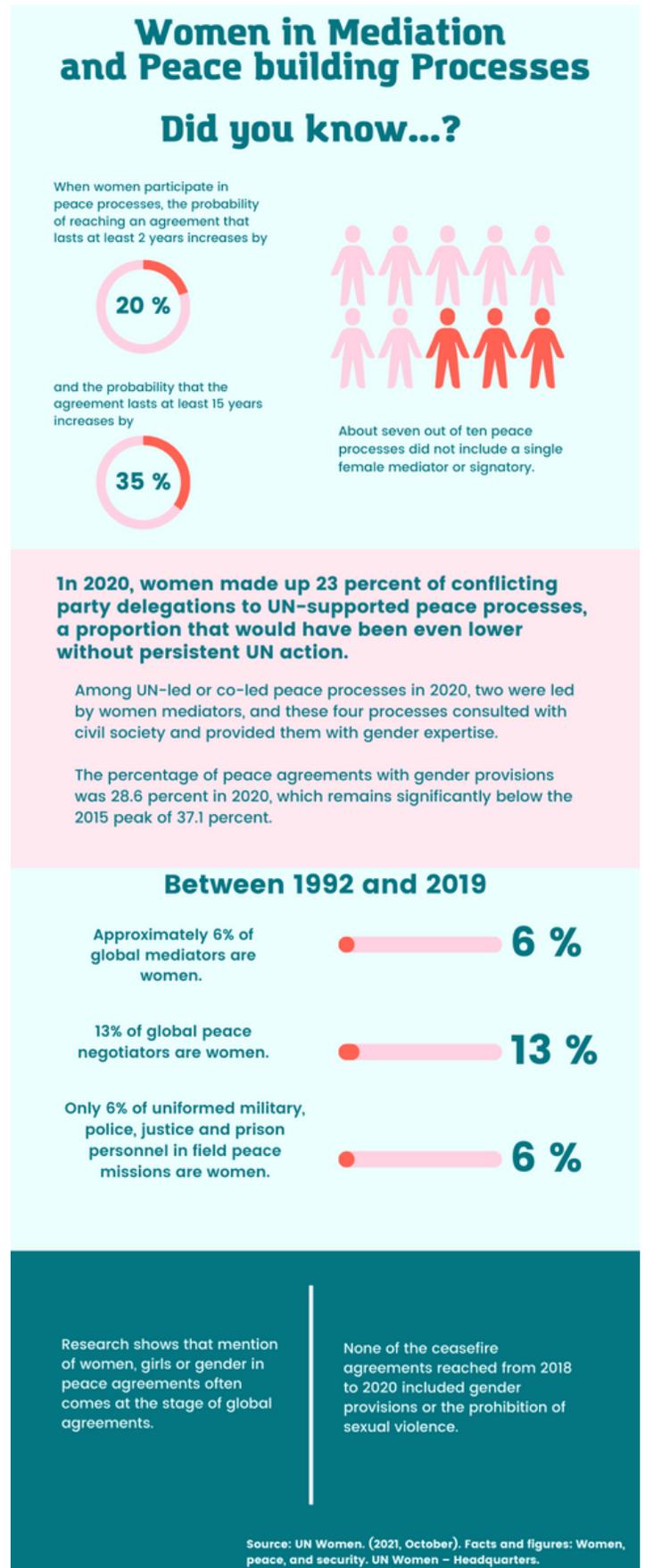


Figure 12: Women in Mediation and Peacebuilding Processes. UN Women. Facts and Figures: Women, Peace and Security, 2021.

# CONTRIBUTORS

## **Ayşe Betül Çelik, Professor of Political Science, Sabanci University**

Ayşe Betül Çelik received her Ph.D. in political science from the State University of New York at Binghamton in 2002 and is a full Professor at Sabanci University in Istanbul, Turkey. She teaches political science and conflict resolution. She is an expert on ethnic conflict, reconciliation, dialogue, forced migration, peace processes and gender and peacebuilding. She has several articles and a co-authored book on Turkey's Kurdish Question, forced Kurdish migration and role of NGOs in the conflict. She also teaches gender awareness to high school teachers in several cities in Turkey. She is one of the founders of the Turkey Antenna of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network. Prof. Çelik received "Ufficiale Dell Ordine Della Stella D'Italia"- Official (Ufficiale) of Order of the Star of Italy (Ordine della Stella d'Italia) which is a recognition of the highest degree conferred by the President of the Italian Republic in 2021 for her work in conflict resolution and gender.

## **Maria Victoria Llorente, Executive Director, Ideas for Peace Foundation, Colombia**

María Victoria Llorente is a political scientist and an expert in security, peacebuilding, and philanthropy. For the past 15 years she has been the Executive Director of Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), the most relevant think tank in Colombia on peace and security issues. Prior to this, Ms. Llorente was the director of a citizen security and criminal justice program at Los Andes University. She has also been a consultant for the Inter-American Development Bank, the United Nations Office on Crime and Drugs, the Colombian National Police, the Colombian Ministries of Justice and Interior, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace and the Office of the Mayor of Bogotá in issues related to peacebuilding, citizen security, crime prevention, police reform and drug policy. Ms. Llorente has been designated by the government in several high-level advisory commissions on police reform, criminal justice, drug policy reform and intelligence archives. From 1988 to 1994, she served at the office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the Office of the National Defense and Security Adviser, and the Office of the Minister of Defense

## **Neophytos Loizides, Director of the Conflict Analysis Research Center, University of Kent**

Neophytos Loizides is a Professor in International Conflict Analysis at the University of Kent and the Director of the Conflict Analysis Research Centre (CARC). He has previously taught at Queen's University Belfast and Princeton University and held fellowships at the University of Essex and the Kennedy School of Government. His research focuses on political institution building within violently divided societies, power-sharing and other formal or informal mechanisms aiming to mitigate protracted disputes. Professor Loizides is the author of *The Politics of Majority Nationalism: Framing Peace, Stalemates, and Crises*, *Designing Peace: Cyprus and Institutional Innovations in Divided Societies*, and *Mediating PowerSharing*. He has consulted various governmental bodies and international organizations including the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States and has contributed commentaries to international media such as the Guardian, the Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal.

## **Natalia Melgarejo, Consultant, Organization of American States**

Natalia Melgarejo is a Consultant in the Executive Office of the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy at the Organization of American States (OAS), where she supports different activities, such as electoral and political field missions. Most recently, she has been closely collaborating with the Department for the Promotion of Peace to develop a series of peacebuilding and conflict resolution projects, including the implementation of high-level mediation and negotiation training courses. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from American University, and is pursuing a Master's degree in Latin American and Hemispheric Studies from the George Washington University, focusing on Security and International Development.

## **Tarcila Rivera Zea, President, Center for Indigenous Cultures, Peru**

Tarcila Rivera Zea, from the Quechua-Chanka Nation of Peru, is an important indigenous activist and recognized defender of the rights of indigenous girls, women, youth, and peoples. With a career of more than 40 years, she contributes to the vindication of ancestral cultures, the strengthening of indigenous leaders and the fight against all forms of violence from her association CHIRAPAQ and other international spaces. Likewise, she promotes the coordination of organizational processes and the strengthening of the indigenous women's movement from the local to the global level. At an international level, she has received awards from UNICEF, the Ford Foundation, and the Sacred Fire Foundation, and in Peru, from the Ministries of Culture and the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations for her distinguished career and valuable contributions to the promotion and defense of the rights of indigenous women and peoples, as well as by the National Elections Jury as a defender of democracy. She is the founder of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA), the International Forum of Indigenous Women (FIMI-IIWF) and the Abya Yala Indigenous Forum (FIAY). She was also a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the International Advisory Group of Civil Society of UN Women, UNESCO's International Commission on the Futures of Education, and in Peru, she was a member of the Court of Honor of the National Elections Jury. Since 2022, she is a member of the Stockholm+50 Civil Society Advisory Group.

## **Magdalena Talamas, Director, OAS Department for the Promotion of Peace and for the Coordination with Subnational Governments**

Magdalena Talamas is the Director of the Department for the Promotion of Peace at the Organization of American States (OAS). In this capacity, Ms. Talamas is responsible for promoting peace-based initiatives and actively engaging in peacebuilding efforts in conflict and post-conflict areas; enhancing the capacity of the Organization and of its member States in peace and conflict resolution studies and training; preserving the Organization's institutional memory, sharing lessons learned and best practices in peace and conflict resolution initiatives; and strengthening relations and examining the peacebuilding role of subnational administrations. Prior to her current position, Ms. Talamas served as the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the OAS for Belize-Guatemala Affairs and oversaw for more than a decade the Belize-Guatemala Civilian Peace-Keeping Mission on the ground. Ms. Talamas earned both her Bachelor and Master's degrees with honors from Georgetown University, concentrating in international affairs and public policies. She began her career at the OAS in 1991.

## **Marios Tanteles, University of Kent**

Marios Tanteles is a student of Neophytos Loizides at the University of Kent who has recently graduated with an upper-second class Honours holding a Bachelor of Arts in Politics. He has focused his studies on the field of conflict analysis and resolution, as well as politics in deeply divided societies, areas in which he has shown a natural aptitude. Marios provided facilitation support to the Café Diplomático workshop and has aided the production of the guide by capturing the insights from the discussion

## **Jamie Thomas, Program Officer, Forum of Federations**

Jamie Thomas is a Program Officer at the Forum of Federations where she primarily works on the Forum's policy programs. In this role, she works on projects and thematic research areas including those concerning peace and fragility, intergovernmental relations, women's and youth empowerment, and electoral systems in federal countries. Jamie currently serves on the executive board of Women in International Security Canada and is an avid researcher and writer. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) First Class in Political Science from the University of Calgary where she concentrated in Security Studies and holds a Master of Arts in Political Studies (International Relations) from Queen's University.

## **Liam Whittington, Senior Program Manager, Forum of Federations**

Liam Whittington is Senior Program Manager at the Forum of Federations. In his work at the Forum, he has contributed to various programs supporting federal and multilevel governance development around the world, including projects in Myanmar, Cuba, and Sudan. He is the Forum's program lead on its peacebuilding governance intervention in Cyprus and for the Forum's partnerships with the OAS Department for the Promotion of Peace and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform. Liam is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Federal Studies at the University of Kent (UK) and a former Research Fellow of the Council of Hemispheric Affairs (Washington DC). He has supported governance, policy development and peacebuilding projects commissioned by the European Commission, the World Bank, the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the Government of Canada. He holds a BA (Honours) (First Class) in History from the University of Birmingham and a Master's in International Relations from the University of Nottingham.

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