



مركز دراسات النزاع والعمل الإنساني
Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies

Webinar Report

Marking International Women's Day, 2021

Recognizing the Role of Women in Peacebuilding: from Global to Local Levels



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To mark International Women's Day 2021, the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS) organized a symposium which brought together prominent women experts, diplomats and practitioners who play a leading role in peacebuilding efforts at all levels. The event sought to address the topic of women's role in peacebuilding from various perspectives.

The Ambassador of Tanzania to Doha, Fatma Mohammed Rajab, highlighted Tanzanian women's experiences. Similarly, Ambassador Zekaria Gutu of Ethiopia in Qatar touched upon the role that Ethiopian women play in peacebuilding processes. Rania Alfnek representing Libya, Dr. Antelak Al Mutawakel representing Yemen, and Rahela Siddiqi representing Afghanistan were invited to discuss their experiences as active participants in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and societal development as well as the importance of education and youth leadership.

Sheikha Alya Al Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN, and Fatima Gailani, member of the Afghan Doha Peace Negotiation team, joined as keynote speakers. Additionally, Khadija Benguenna, News Anchor of Al Jazeera joined as a moderator alongside Dr. Amal Ghazal, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, and Maysa'a Abu Hilal, CHS Partnerships' Officer and Women ART Peace Programme Lead. Representing the effort that Canada plays in uplifting and supporting local capacities were Ambassador Stefanie McCollum representing Canada in Qatar, and Canada's Ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security, Jacqueline O'Neill who joined as one of the three keynote speakers.

The symposium was structured in a way that consisted of three various panels, the first being the keynote speakers panel comprised of women experienced with the implementation of national strategies and frameworks and being directly involved in negotiations. The second panel introduced women working at the local grassroots level, and the last sessions featured Ambassadors and their countries' experiences in promoting a culture of peace.

As part of the UN75 Global Governance Forum, the Women ART Peace Programme was introduced by CHS in September 2020 to address the issues associated with women in peacebuilding processes of mediation, negotiation and development and to empower women through education, youth leadership, and capacity-building measures. The hosting of this event is an example of the Center's and Programmes' commitment to addressing these issues and to empowering women.



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The panellists during the symposium were in agreement regarding the formalisation of women's participation in peacebuilding particularly as a lack of representation exists for women such as those in Sudan who participated in the revolution but were much less represented at policy levels. Areas for progress discussed focused on the requirement for an increase of disaggregated data analysis in order to create truly sustainable peace as well as the development of National Action Plans in a way that encompasses various state structures with a vision of empowering women through various perspectives and contexts.

Additionally, it was recognised that investing in the mediation capacity of regional mediators was doubly critical as they, in comparison to international mediators, are less far removed from conflict settings. In essence, light was shed on the role that Qatar plays in promoting the participation of women in peacebuilding processes and working towards transitional justice for women who experienced gender-based crimes during conflict.

The meaningful inclusion of youth was additionally emphasised with a call for the expansion of tool kits of best practices that could aid in policy transfers. Furthermore, the experiences of women in Afghanistan were underlined and it was clarified that education was extremely important to increasing the chances of women's participation in politics. It was also pointed out that the inclusion of women is critical to ending conflict and reaching a sustainable peace.

Themes throughout the symposium related to the importance of empowering women through education, capacity-building measures such as in the cases of Yemen, Libya and Afghanistan and by enhancing the standing of grassroots-level organisations. Further still, it is imperative that such organisations and programmes carried out at the local level receive necessary international recognition.

In the case of Tanzania, it was revealed that key elements to fostering a culture of peace rested upon the creation of a nation focused on the individual as an individual rather than as an agent of gender or religion. In such a way, this was symbolised in their national emblem/coat of arms which featured a man and a woman, and also through their emphasis on one language to unite all tribes in an effort to coexist in peace.