

Provisional programme

The Elders in conversation on women in mediation in the Arab world | WP1778V

Monday 5 – Wednesday 7 October 2020

Held online

This high-level virtual gathering will bring together around 50 experienced mediators, experts, peacebuilders and national and multilateral officials to promote women's meaningful participation as mediators in peace processes in the Arab world.

It marks the 20th anniversary of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security which reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations and peacebuilding.

Women are highly active in peace making in the Arab region but there is a missing link between women in grassroots peace making and senior policy circles, where women are under-represented, especially in roles that relate to conflict or security. The virtual gathering will make a contribution to bridging this gap, by bringing together women who are active in mediation from selected countries across the Arab world, with experts and practitioners from other regions and countries, and with members of The Elders.

Over sessions on three consecutive days, four Elders will share their collective experience and insight into the power and importance of women's engagement in mediation and hear from leaders in the Arab world about the challenges and the opportunities they face in promoting women's participation as mediators in the COVID world.

The Elders will publish a final short policy paper with key recommendations for mediators, governments and multilateral organisations, and will use their social media channels to highlight the experiences of women mediators.

The organisers aim to convene a physical meeting in 2021 which would bring these participants together with senior officials from around the Arab world, at which government participants will be encouraged to make commitments to support, strengthen and encourage networks of women mediators.

In collaboration with The Elders, in association from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and with support from UN Women

Monday 5 October

0830-0900

Orientation session – assistance for participants/speakers joining call

0900-0925

Welcome and Introduction

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park

UN Women Senior Official TBC

0925-0930

Turn to your neighbour- small groups

0930-1015

1. The Elders' reflections on the power of women's inclusion

Graca Machel is an international advocate for women's and children's rights, former freedom fighter and the first Education Minister of Mozambique. She has been a mediator for the African Union in Kenya and elsewhere.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is the former President of Liberia and Africa's first elected female head of State and a Nobel Peace Laureate. She led Liberia during the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak.

The two Elders share with Wilton Park's Alison Hilliard their reflections on the power and value of women's inclusion in negotiation processes, to be followed by an interactive Q&A.

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park

Graca Machel

The Elders

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

The Elders

1015-1030

Break

1030-1115

2. Inclusive peace processes in the Arab World: gender perspectives and the role of Women Mediators

How does the evidence of the value of women's inclusion in negotiation processes translate to the Arab world where women remain significantly underrepresented in formal peace and transitional processes?

What lies behind their exclusion? How can it be overcome? Can the increasing complexity of global conflict – including in the Arab world- offer opportunities to integrate women more fully into all levels of mediation?

What challenges and opportunities does the increase in digital diplomacy open up for engaging women in mediation? Does the new COVID world create new opportunities or challenges for engaging women in high level mediation in the region?

Graca Machel and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf are joined in conversation by leading experts in the field. The interactive discussion will then allow for inclusion of the experience of other participants.

Graca Machel

The Elders

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

The Elders

1115-1200

3. Discussion groups: shifts in peacemaking in 2020 and beyond - Opportunities for enhancing gender perspectives

The conversation is taken further in small breakout groups to reflect on what new opportunities and new challenges the COVID pandemic has brought for the engagement of women in peacemaking in the Arab world. Can the digital world and the COVID crisis fast track the engagement of more women in mediation through social media and digital diplomacy? Has social media shifted power and the narrative from around the table and given young people a new role in peace processes? Each group will be facilitated by a young community women mediator from the region, who will guide the conversation and return with their reflections.

1200-1215

Break

1215-1300

4. Highlights from discussion groups and looking forward

Reflections from discussion groups and interactive discussion.

1300-1330

Networking chats (optional)

Provide opportunity for participants to meet other participants informally.

Tuesday 6 October

0830-0900

Orientation session

0900-0915

5. Welcome to Day 2

0915-0920

Turn to your neighbour (small groups)

0920-0935

6. Doing things differently

So how can things be done differently? Can there be a radical rethink of mediation and the engagement of women in peace processes? Can the COVID period allow us the space to step back and explore alternatives to business as usual?

Reflections from Elder Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Algerian freedom fighter, Algerian Foreign Minister, conflict mediator and UN diplomat and an expert in peacekeeping and post conflict reconstruction, serving the UN in Afghanistan, Iraq and as Joint Special Representative of the UN and Arab League for Syria.

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park

Lakhdar Brahimi

The Elders

0935-1015

7. Doing things differently

Lakhdar Brahimi is joined in conversation by leading experts in the field. There will be a time for questions and reflections from the high-level group.

Chair: Jane Kinninmont

Head of Programmes, The Elders

Lakhdar Brahimi

The Elders

1015-1030

Break and energiser

1030-1100

8. Doing things differently: models for women in mediation

To help with this, UN Women has worked with a leading expert in peacebuilding processes to prepare 2 models of how things could change. Christine Bell, Executive Director of the Global Justice Academy, and Head of the Political Settlements Research Programme, University of Edinburgh, will present those models. (The paper will already have been shared with participants).

- a. Co-mediation (2-person mediation teams; one man, one woman)
- b. Formalised civil society mechanisms

Christine Bell

Director, PSPR, University of Edinburgh

1100-1145

9. Operationalising change: strategic thought groups

To discuss the new ideas put forward in the paper.

- Would these models work?
- How would these models bring about change?
- What opportunities/ obstacles are there in their adoption?

These groups will be led by global mediation leaders.

1145-1230

10. Highlights from strategic thought groups and looking forward

Reflections from discussion groups and interactive discussion.

1230-1300

11. End of day 2

1300-1330

Networking chats (optional)

Provide opportunity for participants to meet other participants informally.

Wednesday 7 October

0900-0910

Welcome to Day 3

0910-0925

12. Building political will to support Arab Women Mediators

How can the potential for women to contribute to mediation and negotiations in the Arab world be realised? What role do governments and multilaterals have in promoting lasting change? Where will the pressure for change come from and who is listening? What are the next steps?

Reflections from Elder Ban Ki-moon, Deputy Chair of The Elders and 8th Secretary General of the United Nations.

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park

Ban Ki-moon

The Elders

0925-1030

13. Going forward

What action needs to be taken to ensure change? What role do governments and multilaterals have in promoting lasting change? Where will the pressure for change come from and who is listening? Where will the political will for change come from? What are the next steps to ensure change?

In this session we will invite Ban Ki-moon, Deputy Chair of The Elders and 8th Secretary General of the United Nations, Lakhdar Brahimi and leading experts in the field to share their thoughts.

Ban Ki-moon

The Elders

Lakhdar Brahimi

The Elders

1030-1040

Break

1040-1045

Discussion group orientation (in plenary)

1045-1115

14. Recommendations and commitments discussion groups

Groups will be asked to formulate three recommendations of what can be done to ensure women are more engaged in mediation and peace processes in the Arab world and one personal commitment to take this forward. Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on the recommendations in session 15.

1115-1145

15. Sharing recommendations from discussion groups

This is an opportunity to mark the anniversary of UN Resolution 1325 by reflecting on the recommendations proposed to ensure that women are more engaged in mediation and peace processes in the Arab world. All proposals will be collated and shared with the group after the event.

1145-1230

16. Conclusion and going forward

Lakhdar Brahimi

The Elders

UN Women Senior Official TBC

This is a provisional programme and as such may be subject to change.

This is an invitation only conference.

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