

Making Women's Leadership and Participation in Peace and Humanitarian Processes a Norm

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to address today's meeting. I would like to pay thanks to our fellow co-hosts, especially the German Mission for hosting us here, and to our esteemed panel of experts for joining us today.

The United Kingdom firmly believes that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and humanitarian processes is crucial to effectiveness. Women's participation in decision-making, peace operations and humanitarian interventions is not only a moral imperative, but it also improves the quality of policymaking and interventions. That is why peacekeeping, humanitarian action and women's leadership are central to the UK's new National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security.

Driven by this belief, we have consistently supported the UN's Senior Women Talent Pipeline and the Elsie Initiative to improve the gender balance in UN Peace Operations. We are proud to have committed \$7.4mil to Elsie since its inception.

Women's involvement in peace processes and political transitions is also an imperative for lasting peace. It is vital for UN peace operations to support women's participation in such contexts: such as in Mali's political transition and ongoing peace agreement implementation, and in the DRC through the Nairobi process and the government's new DDR process.

In humanitarian crises, the UK works closely with our partners to support women's leadership on the frontline of responses. Women's meaningful participation and leadership in humanitarian action not only improves outcomes for women and girls, but also strengthens the impact of the entire humanitarian response.

But endemic violence against women and rollbacks on gender equality are major barriers. We see this in contexts around the world, but it is particularly the case in Afghanistan today. We must continue to press the Taliban to ensure women's full inclusion and promote their rights, including to education.

The benefits of women's participation are clear. So let's act to build more effective humanitarian interventions and stronger, more resilient peace process, with women involved at every stage. I look forward to today's discussion and hearing from our panel. Thank you.