

Joint Press Stakeout on 13 January 2023

Today the Council convenes to discuss the situation in Afghanistan. We, the Security Council signatories of the Statement of Shared Commitments for the principles of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom, and in its national capacity, the United States, have come together to express grave concern regarding the critical situation of women and girls in Afghanistan. We urge the Taliban to immediately reverse all oppressive measures against women and girls, adhere to their commitments set out in UNSC 2593 and respect the rights of women and girls, and their full, equal and meaningful participation and inclusion across all aspects of society in Afghanistan, from political and economic, to education and public space.

Such measures include the banning of Afghan women from working in national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Afghanistan, as well as excluding women and girls from universities and secondary schools. Other restrictions have also been put in place limiting women and girls' ability to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. They are contrary to Afghanistan's obligations as party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Women are central and critical to operations to relieve the dire humanitarian situation. They have unique expertise and access to populations their male colleagues cannot reach, providing critical life-saving support to women and girls. Without their participation in aid delivery in Afghanistan and their essential expertise, NGOs will be unable to reach those most in need, in particular women and girls, to provide lifesaving materials and services. We reiterate the Council's demand on all parties to allow full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors regardless of gender. Moreover, a stable, economically viable, and peaceful Afghanistan is only attainable and sustainable if all Afghans, including women and girls, have access to and receive education, and fully, equally, and meaningfully participate in and contribute to the country's future and development in line with UNSC Resolutions 1325, 2593, and 2626.

As the mandate renewal of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) approaches, we reaffirm our strong support for UNAMA, not least in their

valuable contribution to gender equality, the empowerment and protection of women and girls, the full protection of their human rights, including education, work, and their freedom of movement. The full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all levels and stages of decision-making and governance processes in Afghanistan is necessary for achieving an inclusive political dialogue and participatory governance.

The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan must remain high on the agenda of the Security Council, and we will continue to closely monitor the developments on the ground and respond accordingly. As Council members, we stand with all women and girls in Afghanistan and reaffirm our commitment to prioritizing their rights and needs during our discussions.