

**Expert Discussion on the occasion of the launch of the
4th Swiss National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**

Gender equality: an asset for Peace & Security

Maison de la Paix, Petal 5, Room C 1

22 November 2018, 15.00

Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Sabrina Dallafior

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear Guests

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this expert discussion on women, peace and security – and to the launch of the 4th Swiss National Action Plan 1325.

This event is jointly organized with the Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Switzerland's main strategic partner in the field of gender-sensitive security sector reform.

A special welcome to **Clare Hutchison**, NATO General Secretary's Special Representative on Women Peace and Security.

I would also like to welcome our distinguished panelists. Each of them is working on peace and security in different contexts and from a different angle – and the women, peace and security agenda is a cornerstone of their work.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, Switzerland presents its 4th National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. It is the product of four ministries: Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defense, and Police & Justice. It also has been developed in close cooperation with Swiss civil society actors.

But let's be honest, the launch of a new NAP is not a reason to celebrate. It is rather a reminder that much more work lies ahead of us.

This year's report of the UN Secretary-General on women, peace and security presents, once again, a radical call for action, as the gap between normative frameworks and reality remain wide.

In my previous function, I was the chair of the Swiss inter-ministerial working-group 1325 on women, peace and security. Overseeing the efforts of Switzerland in different fields and regions. This included, for example,

- The support of a global network that brings women at peace tables in Colombia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Nepal in order to strengthen their voices in peace processes.
- The partnership with NGOs like the Women's Initiative on Gender Justice to bring justice to survivors of sexual violence and perpetrator to the criminal courts in DRC.
- To facilitate gender-sensitive context analysis in Lebanon to shed light on causes of radicalization and extremism.
- To prepare civilian and military peace building experts for their missions abroad by training them on women, peace and security.

These activities, and many more, will continue. At the same time we are asking ourselves constantly: which activities and interventions bring best results?

With our forth National Action Plan 1325, we have sharpened our profile, in the need to identify most successful approaches to achieve what Resolution 1325 is claiming: gender-equality as an asset for peace and security.

To that end, we have defined four guiding principles:

- *First of all: **women's leadership and expertise shall be at the center.*** The protection of women and their rights, capacity building and empowerment will, of course, remain crucial. At the same time, we need to challenge existing structures and institutions – we need, for example, better, smarter and more transparent recruitment processes and strong political commitment for gender-parity.

- *Secondly:* women and **men** shall share the responsibility - gender-equality is a matter of **partnership** – it will require burden-sharing; at the same time, a more equal society will be of the benefit for all, women and men alike.
- *Thirdly:* **civil society and local women’s organization** have always been and will remain a competent partner for Switzerland. They work on peace and conflict prevention every day, on a voluntarily basis, often without salary and acknowledgement. Local initiatives need our attention, their contribution in peace processes shall be heard and respected at the highest levels.
- *And fourth:* there is a strong link to **women’s human rights**. Switzerland has been promoting the cooperation between the Security Council in New York and the Human Rights Council here in Geneva. The framework agreement between the Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict and the CEDAW (the Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women), is a successful example of how this link can promote synergies.
- It is therefore an honor to have with us **Mrs. Bandana Rana** from the CEDAW Committee. Mrs. Rana will remind us at the end of this event that peace and security cannot be reached if human rights are not respected.

Let me now briefly highlight the five thematic pillars of the new Swiss Action Plan.

- 1) *First:* the effective involvement of women in conflict prevention. Through political and economic empowerment of women, through the support of women human rights defenders and through a stronger involvement of women in preventing violence. We have today with us **Elisabeth Mezok** who will later talk about the sensitive intersection between women’s rights and the prevention of violent extremism.
- 2) *Second,* women’s influence on conflict resolution and peace processes. On the panel, **Madame Samaké** will tell us later how a dialogue method made its journey from Caux, 1 hour away from here, to post-conflict

Mali and helped to strengthen women's voices in the peace process of the country.

- 3) *Thirdly*, an important pillar is the protection from sexual and gender-based violence in conflict as well as in refugee and migration contexts. Sexual violence against women has long been identified as an indicator for conflict and insecurity. Switzerland will continue its efforts to protect and support victims and bring justice to survivors. We further want to lift the taboo about men being victims of sexual violence and better understand men's vulnerabilities. **Anthony Keedi** from Lebanon, here with us, is doing promising work with young men to break cycles of violence.

- 4) *The forth pillar* is on women's participation in peace missions and security policy. Like in many other fields, women are significantly underrepresented in arms control, disarmament or de-mining. Why is it the case? Figures show that, on those who possess small arms and light weapons, only **5%** are women. An estimated **3%** of all armed perpetrators are women. Shouldn't that be precisely a reason why women should be engaged more in security policy? Switzerland works with the OSCE (Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe) and the UN Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) on a mentoring project to bring more women in arms control and disarmament.

Another crucial issue is the code of conduct for peace-keeping personnel. **Lieutenant Hauser**, with us today, will talk about how Swiss military personnel is being prepared for gender-sensitive peace-keeping.

- 5) *The fifth pillar* of our Action Plan finally concerns Switzerland's multi- and bilateral commitment. We believe that "International Geneva" – where real multi-stakeholder collaboration happen – is an important platform to link women, peace and security with disarmament, human rights and humanitarian issues. Switzerland stands ready to continue its collaboration with Geneva actors in this regard.

Let me close by wishing us courage and optimism for our continuous work towards gender-justice in peace and security. Let's support those who lay the ground for peace and dialogue every day, let's listen to them and learn from them – we will do so now.

Thank you