



**Security Council Open Arria-formula Meeting
Remarks of Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro
Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico
Launch of the Group of Friends of Women of the Sahel**

June 2nd, 2021

Good afternoon,

We congratulate Niger, Chad, Mali and Mauritania for this important initiative to hold this meeting and launch the Group of Friends of Women of the Sahel. We see our membership in this Group as an opportunity to advance the full and effective implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the inclusion of gender perspective in ongoing national, regional and international initiatives in the Sahel region.

In line with our Feminist Foreign Policy and our work as cochairs of the Informal Experts Group of WPS, along with Ireland, we look forward to working together with the other members of the GoF, to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, in all their diversity, in the maintenance of peace and security in the Sahel, a region of particular concern, as the situation continues to deteriorate despite the considerable resources that local governments and the international community have channeled to fight extremist groups.

Needless to say, how much international cooperation is needed to solve the pressing humanitarian, security and development problems affecting the region, from food insecurity, climate change, and hunger, to rising incidences of sexual and gender-based violence, which disproportionately affect women and girls. However, for the international efforts to deliver results, national ownership and the commitment of local actors to address, in a gender-responsive manner, the structural causes of conflict are essential conditions.

The deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the region is worrisome; 2020 was the deadliest year in record for civilians, resulting not necessarily from the COVID19 impact but from an increase in terrorist activity, inter-community violence and attacks by national security forces. Despite the political will expressed in numerous occasions to ensure women's and girls'



human rights and the implementation of the WPS Agenda, systemic barriers and negative social norms persist in countries of the Sahel and the participation of women and girls in conflict prevention is still extremely limited. In our view, responding to these challenges should be the main priority of the new Group of Friends.

In particular, initiatives of the Group with an inter-generational, intersectional and human-rights approach, aimed to ensure capacity building of diverse young women from marginalized groups, to ensure they have the right skills to become leaders, peacebuilders or mediators in their communities should be enhanced; advocacy with international donors, international and regional financial Institutions as well as with UN agencies, funds and programs will be highly relevant. It will be the shared responsibility of all the members to amplify their voices in our global fora and numerous events, in order to hear their recommendations to guide our decision-making. With no doubt, their inputs and all those from civil society representatives are key to better inform the peace, security and development discourse in New York.

Finally, in the framework of the Generation Equality Forum, held in Mexico City last March, the members of the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) discussed relevant ideas for its work ahead, related to: i) financing for the agenda; ii) meaningful participation of women in peace processes; iii) women's economic empowerment; iv) leadership of women in humanitarian sectors, and v) Protection of peacebuilders and women human rights defenders. Given that all these critical areas, related to the specific region of the Sahel, should be discussed within the new Group of Friends, synergies and collaboration with this innovative Compact should be strengthen in the short term.

We look forward to our active and constructive engagement in this new Group of Friends.

Thank you.