

## **WPS Joint Statement on the occasion of the UNAMA Briefing**

*September 17<sup>th</sup>, 9:45 am – Delivered by ROK*

We, the representatives of Denmark, France, Greece, Guyana, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, signatories of the Shared Commitments on Women, Peace and Security of the Security Council, reiterate our strong condemnation of the Taliban's ongoing and institutionalized gender-based discrimination and violence, which may amount to gender persecution, a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute.

We have gathered today to express our unwavering support for the women and girls of Afghanistan. We express our deepest sympathy and condolences to those affected by the earthquake that struck eastern Afghanistan end of August. We urge the Taliban to lift any restriction on women's access to humanitarian services, to ensure all women and girls remain part of the humanitarian response and receive urgent attention in rescue, emergency assistance, medical care and the provision of safe shelter and protection.

We are deeply appalled by the Taliban's worsening repression against women and girls in Afghanistan – all the more so in light of the return of 1.7 million Afghan refugees, many of them involuntarily.

- The increased implementation and enforcement of the so-called Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice severely impedes women's fundamental freedoms, their economic rights, and their access to lifesaving healthcare, and even deprives them from the right to speak in public.
- The ongoing bans on women working for NGOs and the United Nations deny vulnerable groups – especially women and girls – from access to life-saving assistance. We strongly condemn the reported threats and harassment of UNAMA personnel.

We demand that the Taliban immediately reverse all laws, policies and practices that restrict the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls, and uphold Afghanistan's obligations under international law, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as well as Security Council resolutions 2593 and 2681.

- We also support all efforts to fight impunity in Afghanistan and ensure accountability for international crimes, including gender-based crimes. We take note, among other initiatives, of the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court for two senior Taliban leaders in Afghanistan.

We express our solidarity with Afghan women and girls who persist with extraordinary resilience. Despite near-total restrictions, they sustain businesses, serve as humanitarian workers and midwives, and lead communities.

We call on the Taliban:

- To uphold the right of Afghan girls to pursue education beyond primary school, including medical training.
- To immediately reopen avenues for women's economic participation, including their right to work and participate in all spheres of public life.
- To completely cease targeting Afghan women human rights defenders, civil society representatives, and peacebuilders who provide life-saving support to the Afghan population.

We stress that the UN-led Doha Process:

- Must deliver concrete progress on the protection of women's rights and guarantee the participation of diverse groups of women throughout the process, including in the development of a political roadmap.

As we mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325, we face a defining test of our collective resolve and credibility.

As members of the Security Council, we affirm our unwavering commitment to ensuring the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women and girls in all aspects of Afghan society as well as their protection from all forms of violence and discrimination. Thank you.