



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

8 March 2021

Arria formula meeting: Call to Lead by Example – Ensuring the Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation of Women in UN-led Peace Processes

**Statement on behalf of Australia delivered by H.E. The Hon.
Mitch Fifield, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of
Australia to the United Nations**

Madam President

In marking the 20-year anniversary of the WPS agenda last year, Australia joined the international community in celebrating a lot of gains – including, really importantly, an evidence base that women’s participation makes peace processes more sustainable and durable – but we all know there’s a lot more than has to be done.

Last year, the UN Secretary-General reported that women continue to be stifled in decision-making processes, in peacebuilding efforts, and are underrepresented in recovery and reconstruction, including peacekeeping. We do have a collective responsibility to ensure these setbacks are addressed.

The full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women is essential in preventing and resolving conflict, in peacekeeping, and in relief and recovery efforts following conflict and crises.

It has never been more important for the UN and for the international community to recommit to promoting women's right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. As we speak, COVID is raising the stakes globally, posing risks to gender equality, women's rights, empowerment, leadership, safety and resilience.

For our part, Australia calls on the UN to take a leading role in making women's full, equal and meaningful participation a reality, including by making it a requirement for all mediation teams, political transitions and the peace processes it leads or co-leads. In particular, we think there are gains to be made in promoting female candidates for roles in peace and political processes at all levels, as well as in identifying and overcoming obstacles that prevent the participation of diverse women, including women with disabilities, young women, and women who work at grassroots levels.

Australia is proud to support this work, including by promoting female candidates such as Australia's MAJGEN Cheryl Pearce who recently completed her tenure in Cyprus, only the second woman to serve as a UN Force Commander.

We are also proud to partner with the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, the WPS Global Facility and the Elsie Initiative for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations.

Finally, we are very happy to have supported the development of the PeaceFem App which offers best practice guidance on gender provisions in peace agreements.

I thank you.