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## **NORWEGIAN STATEMENT ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND SECURITY GOVERNANCE**

As delivered by Ambassador Ellen Svendsen at the Joint meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation and the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 12 March 2025

Thank you, Chairs,

Norway welcomes the Security Dialogue on Women, Peace, and Security Agenda at this joint FSC-PC meeting. We thank the distinguished panelists for their valuable contributions.

Chairs,

25 years ago, the UNSC committed states to the women, peace, and security agenda, calling for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all matters of peace and security. It is built on four pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. We have heard in this organization support for various efforts to prevent gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, to protect women in conflict areas, and to provide relief and recovery post-conflict to help society heal from the wounds of war. We are therefore pleased that the participation pillar, which is facing increasing backlash, is chosen as a topic for this meeting.

Chairs,

Ukrainian women continue to play major roles in combat, building resilience delivering aid and advocating for Ukraine. Defending their country Russian aggression, some of these women were described in a dehumanizing manner by the Russian representative during last week's PC. Referring to women as inhumane because they by their free will conduct the same tasks as men to defend their country is utterly unacceptable. The statement also reminds us, however, that there is still a strong and repressive narrative around women's role in war and conflict, that continues to undermine fundamental freedoms.

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Chairs,

The women and men of Ukraine are not only fighting for the freedom and territorial integrity of their country but also defending our common values and freedom to choose democracy and equality. The strategic importance of women's participation, at all levels and in all roles, cannot be underestimated. When the time comes, we must ensure that women take part in defining the conditions for peace and are in the forefront in any talks and negotiations about Ukraine's future.

We reiterate our commitment to all four pillars of the WPS agenda. Women are willing, able, and entitled to a full, equal, and meaningful participation in all matters of peace and security.

Chairs,

Female participation is not a nice thing to have, it strengthens our posture and combat readiness. In Norway, we have had universal conscription since 2015. Our women conscripts are highly motivated and perform often better than men in many disciplines. The enlarged pool of candidates has awarded us access to better soldiers, which in turn makes for a better defense.

We recognize that men and women are physiologically different, and account for this by continuously reviewing the equipment and training offered in order to meet the high standards for protection and performance we keep in our Armed Forces. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, this has been a central part of our support to all brave Ukrainian defenders.

Mister Chair,

Women's participation in the Armed Forces amplify challenges as well as benefits. We continue to work within the military to encourage all those in service to revert from any form of sexual harassment and abuse. It's not an easy task, but vocal women have been instrumental in calling out harmful norms that permit such unacceptable behavior. It was essential that we established a secure reporting mechanism to ensure accountability for perpetrators.

At the operational level, a vast network of gender advisers and focal points continuously analyze and map out the potential risks to military and civilian women in conflict zones. Through revisiting tactics, applying a gender lens in all aspects of an operation has also improved operational effectiveness. These perspectives came from the inclusion of women

in all matters of peace and security, such as diversity also in the past has produced more robust strategies and policies.

Chairs,

We live in a time where traditional gender norms are gaining traction. I would like to remind all participating States that ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all matters of peace and security is not only a moral imperative, it is a strategic one.

I thank you, Chairs.