

**Joint Press Stakeout by the Security Council signatories of the Statement of Shared Commitments for the principles of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) (Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom) 8 March 2023**

We the Security Council signatories of the Statement of Shared Commitments for the principles of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom, have come together on the International Women's Day to express grave concern regarding the dire human rights situation of women and girls in Afghanistan.

We demand the Taliban immediately reverse all oppressive measures against women and girls, and to respect the human rights of all Afghan people, including women and girls in all their diversity, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to ethnic and religious minority groups, youth, children, and others.

Women and girls in Afghanistan are experiencing one of the worst human rights crises in the world, unable to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Recovery in Afghanistan cannot happen without women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of political, economic, and social life. Women must be able to return to universities and girls must return to their classrooms. Women's rights to education, political participation, work and freedom of movement must be respected and protected in line with the international standards and commitments.

We reaffirm our strong support for UNAMA and expect its renewed mandate to ensure the preservation of all women, peace and security elements. We expect the Mission to further contribute to gender equality, the empowerment as well as the protection/safety of women and girls. The full protection of their human rights, including education, and the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all levels and stages of decision-making processes in Afghanistan must be the goal.

Today we commemorate the International Women's Day, a day to celebrate women's social, economic, cultural and political achievements and call for full gender equality. We, the signatories of the Statement of Shared Commitments for the principles of Women, Peace, and Security, would like to use this opportunity to continue to create arenas for Afghan women's voices to be heard and responded to. In this context, we would like to invite one civil society representative from Afghanistan to share with us her expectations from today's meeting. I invite Ms. Zubaida Akbar to take the floor.