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## Security Council Open Debate

# Promoting Conflict Prevention: Empowering All Actors

New York, 13 March 2024

Joint Statement by the Human Rights / Conflict Prevention Caucus New York

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Thank you, Mrs. President,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus New York, co-chaired by Germany and Switzerland, and its members Albania, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Gabon, Guatemala, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.

We thank Japan for organizing this open debate and extend our gratitude to the briefers for their contributions. As a cross-regional group of Member States, the Caucus would like to use this opportunity to address the Council for the first time this year.

As we are navigating turbulent times, it is crucial to recall the **universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness, and interdependence of human rights**. Adopted over 75 years ago by the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights governs our coexistence and sets out the foundation for protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for every human being on this planet. There is a clear lesson from the past as the Secretary-General pointed out in his address to the Human Rights Council in Geneva last month: **protecting human rights protects us all**.

The Caucus would like to focus on three points today:

First, **human rights** are at the very core of **conflict prevention**. History teaches us that the systematic violation and abuse of human rights is a strong indicator and an early warning sign of conflict. Upholding the human rights of every individual helps to prevent conflict and contribute to sustainable peace. The Caucus stresses the urgency of bolstering the UN's preventive mechanisms and fostering an inclusive and safe civic space for all actors to engage.

Second, **women's contributions and their leadership** are not optional luxuries but essential for sustainable peace. This is why we need to continue tearing down gender-based barriers and dismantling patriarchal power structures. Member states must ensure the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women in all peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts, including mediation processes. Their voices and roles as peacebuilders, decision-makers, human rights defenders and agents of change are fundamental to the durability of peace. We therefore call for the full implementation of all Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

Third, **young people**. They represent not just hope for the future, but are active enablers of change today. Engaging young people in conflict prevention and peacebuilding ensures that their diversity and ideas contribute to resilient societies. We must harness this untapped potential by advancing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and by empowering young people to lead.

For example: with its dedicated **Gender Strategy** and its **Strategic Action Plan on Youth**, the **Peacebuilding Commission** is paving the way for concrete steps to genuinely include all relevant actors in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In the future, both strategies could be expanded to early action and conflict prevention to guide the Peacebuilding Commission's own work as well as its advice to this Council and other UN fora.

Mrs. President,

Building on the Call to Action for Human Rights, the Secretary-General's **New Agenda for Peace** recognizes the central role of women and young people in peace building – and the need to address unequal power structures. It presents a crucial framework,

putting human rights at the heart of conflict prevention and underscoring that the full respect for all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - is integral to peace.

The agenda's comprehensive approach, which integrates peace, human rights and sustainable development, sets the stage for discussions at the upcoming Summit of the Future. Member States must commit to working for peace and security rooted in human rights, shaping a strong outcome of the **Summit of the Future**.

Finally, the Caucus is committed to strengthening **collaboration** between the **Security Council, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission** through regular briefings, which is essential for early action. To this end, we will work closely with member states, civil society, and the UN system. It is vital to align efforts across New York and Geneva to ensure informed decision-making with human rights at the forefront of peace efforts.

I thank you.