

**SUBJECT: Invitation to participate in the Strategic Learning Exchange in New York: Religion, Gender & Youth Inclusion in Peace & Security.**



Dear Colleague(s):

Over the past years, the international development, humanitarian, peace and security community have come to appreciate the positive force of religion; and, the synergetic impact of faith leaders/faith-based or faith-inspired service-delivery nongovernmental organizations within communities. Considering that we operate with the same communities, it is judicious that we study and appreciate the resources (financial, spiritual and human) that faith actors bring to the table.

The UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development led, for this initiative by UN Women and UNFPA, together with the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers are collaboratively organizing a series of Strategic Learning Exchanges (SLE). These SLEs are designed to collectively review and consider various means of outreach, including with faith actors, and joint implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants include individuals from various UN offices highly vested in outreach with faith-based organizations and/or religious communities, seminaries, as well as young people, broader academia, and faith-based development and relief and peacebuilding entities.

Evolving from consultations and direct requests, we have the honor to invite you to the forthcoming second SLE focused on Religion, Gender, Youth, Peace and Security, from 30-31 October 2017, kindly hosted by UN Women and coordinated by the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. The SLE will be held following the UN Security Council (UNSC) Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security to encourage reflections, sharing and collaborative actions based on some discussion outcomes. While the first SLE focused on development and humanitarian frameworks, this second SLE will focus on SDG 16, UNSC resolutions 1325, and 2250. Both SLE's intentionally bring forth the gender dimension of SDG number five.

The SLE will explore these questions: what are the links between religion, gender, youth and the SDG 16? How do these links manifest in practical peace and security efforts at the intergovernmental, regional, national to community levels? How can we strategically scale up partnerships that respond and contribute to the SDGs and human rights based priorities and indicators? The event will use a peer-to-peer approach co-facilitated by the UN Task Force, UN Women and the Network members together with faith-based counterparts. Participants are therefore requested to bring case studies to build interactivity that characterizes the SLEs. Pairing peer-to-peer learning with structured information sharing, participants will explore contemporary challenges and linkages between religion, gender, youth, peace and security work, and the added value of religious and faith organizations and communities. Participant-developed case studies will highlight opportunities and challenges of partnership between intergovernmental and faith-based organizations and innovative collaborative steps forward. The focal points from the UN Interagency Task

Force members will be Martine Miller (martine.miller@peacemakersnetwork.org) and Cassandra Lawrence (clawrence@alamanacentre.org).

**Given expressed interest and limited spaces, kindly send your RSVPs to Martine and Cassandra by Friday, 13th October.**

Please note: There are five internationally funded spaces based on need and direct selection with all other participants being self-funded.

Please find attached the concept note with further information regarding the purpose, objectives and expected outcomes. Upon confirmation of you/your organization's participation, an agenda will be forwarded to you along with further logistics information.

Thank you for taking this important strategic learning opportunity into consideration and we look forward to collaborating with you.

Yours sincerely,



Azza Karam, Ph.D. Convener, UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development



Martine Miller SLE Coordinator Director – Asia (regional), Inclusive Peace Processes (global), and Libya (lead), Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers