

*The Third Conference on National Dialogues, 5-6 April 2017*

*The House of the Estates, Helsinki*

## **Women Shaping the Agenda in National Dialogue Processes**

Women's meaningful participation strengthens national ownership and wider legitimacy of National Dialogue processes and their outcomes. Importantly, women's involvement tends to broaden the agenda for discussion and bring a richer variety of substantive perspectives to the table.

This panel examines the role of women in shaping the agenda for National Dialogue processes. It focuses on concrete and positive examples drawn from contexts where women have actively contributed to the agenda of a given national dialogue process, as in Burma, Central African Republic (CAR) and Yemen. The role of gender, local dynamics and regional actors forms a central part of the examination.

By focusing on concrete case studies, the panel also aims to distil lessons learnt for emerging national dialogue initiatives and related women's efforts for mobilization.

More specifically, questions for the panel discussion include e.g.:

- *What were the concrete issues that women brought to the table in the ND processes or relevant dialogue initiatives in CAR, Yemen, Burma and Syria? Were there any issues that proved to be difficult to incorporate despite best efforts?*
- *How was women's participation realized in practice? How did it (in its multiple forms) shape the dynamics of the dialogue process? What creative ways women have used to push for participatory processes? For instance, previous experience indicates that consultations are one of the most inclusive way of broadening the agenda – but how to ensure the consultation outcomes become officially endorsed?*
- *What were the local initiatives and actions that strengthened women's contribution nationally in these processes?*
- *What were, if any, the regional factors that enabled women's active involvement? What role can international partners play?*
- *How the above dynamics are manifested in emerging ND initiatives, and what could be learnt from the above?*



## Panel:

Dr. Thania Paffenholz, Director of the Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (IPTI) at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva (Moderator)

President Catherine Samba-Panza, Former President of the Central African Republic

Ms. Nang Lao Liang Won (Tay Tay), Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) & Women's League of Burma (WLB)

Ms. Maysaa Shuja Al-Deen, Yemeni Writer and Researcher

Mr. Omar Abdulaziz Hallaj, Senior Coordinator, Syria Initiative, Common Space Initiative

Amb. Ann-Sofie Stude, UNSCR 1325 National Focal Point, MFA Finland (First Commentary)

