

Locally Rooted, Globally Connected
***Harnessing the Collective Power of Women's Leadership in Preventing Violent Extremism
and Promoting Sustainable Peace***

7th Annual Women, Peace & Security Forum

November 12-14, 2018

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Draft Concept Note

The International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) will convene its 7th Annual Women, Peace and Security Forum, "*Locally Rooted, Globally Connected: Harnessing the Collective Power of Women's Leadership in Preventing Violent Extremism and Promoting Sustainable Peace*" in November 2018 in Colombo, Sri Lanka generously co-hosted with the Association of War Affected Women (AWAW).

As in previous years, the forum will bring together some 70 women peacebuilders and human rights defenders from over 30 countries actively involved in countering violence and extremism by promoting peace, resilience, equality and pluralism (PREP). Many are among the founding members of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) that ICAN spearheads. WASL is the largest global network of independent women-led organizations and experts active in P/CVE and peacebuilding.

Context

ICAN's 7th Annual Women, Peace and Security Forum will take place at a time when the world is experiencing yet more turmoil. Space for civic voice, agency and action is shrinking in many contexts. Even at the global level, the rhetoric on engaging CSOs, including women in peace and PVE processes is being challenged by some powerful states.

Amidst the cacophony and the persistent violence it is easy to lose hope. But throughout the WASL alliance, we witness how women peace leaders and their local organizations are adapting and adjusting to new realities and continuing their efforts. While they focus their

actions at the local level, they are seeing the value and potential of the global alliance, and how much they can learn and share among each other.

The 7th forum will provide a necessary opportunity to reflect on achievements to date as well as planning for the forthcoming years. The three day program will be dedicated to the following:

- Day 1: Reflections on ICAN/WASL's achievements to date including our contributions to global thought leadership and policy developments related to gendered peace making and P/CVE (notably in relation to education, security and economic policy);
- Day 2: Assessment of current country contexts and rising trends and means to deepen the Alliance's membership collaboration across countries;
- Day 3: Determining effective strategies to amplify the collective voice, agency and influence of the Alliance as a movement in national, regional and global arenas.

Program

Under the overarching theme of "*Harnessing the Collective Power of Women's Leadership*" ICAN's 2018 Forum will be dedicated to sharing experiences, tactics, lessons and prospective ideas for deepening these strategic alliances. As in every forum we will also acknowledge and celebrate the courage and resilience of our partners. This year we will mark the 3rd anniversary of the founding of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), with attention to our collective achievements to date and the added value of the alliance as a mechanism for collaboration. The program will also be dedicated to articulating the strategy and approaches we need to continue nurturing and building the reputation of this global movement of women's organizations recognized for their expertise and leadership in addressing violent extremism through promoting peace, rights, equality and pluralism.

Core sessions will include:

1. Sharing the knowledge products we have produced related to policy developments and practice in education, economic and security policies with a gendered lens in relation to PVE and building peace;
2. Capacity building on concepts and skills related to gendered mediation drawing on ICAN's Better Peace Initiative and related tools;
3. Interactive discussion with key international policy makers and donors; and,
4. Assessing WASL's current state of work, practice and impact and undertaking strategic planning to determine WASL collective priorities and unified actions for 2019.

Participants

ICAN's Women, Peace and Security Forum is an annual event dedicated to providing women peacebuilders and human rights defenders a safe space for learning, collaboration and solidarity. Forum participants will be active members of WASL with demonstrable expertise in innovative practices, activism advocacy and thought leadership in the realm of women's rights, peace, security and C/PVE. Representing over 35 conflict and fragility affected countries worldwide, they are locally-rooted and globally connected, trusted in their communities, and key influencers in their societies. They have much to teach and learn from each other to broaden their own national reach. Collectively we will take the time to plan our movement's growth and impact on the world stage.

Sponsorship

As the organizer of the event, ICAN with the generous support of governmental and private donors covers the costs of participation of all women activists, as well as costs related to the convening of the forum. Representatives of international non-governmental organizations, governments and donor institutions are expected to cover their own travel and lodging costs. ICAN is grateful to the Association of War Affected Women (AWAW) in Sri Lanka for inviting us to convene our annual forum in Sri Lanka in 2018.