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Excellencies, it is a pleasure and honour for me to address the Peacebuilding Commission

I especially recognize Canada's leadership as a PBC Chair and thank ASG Oscar Fernandez team for long-standing partnership and visionary leadership in promoting inclusive approach to peace.

This year we are taking stock of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, as well as the Peacebuilding Commission's work.

Following the 2015 Peace and Security reviews, the Sustaining Peace resolutions set conditions for addressing inequalities - the long-term structural causes of conflict.

The situation has changed drastically with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis that has revealed and exacerbated inequalities and has exacerbated the challenges that women are facing, globally and on the ground. Women make up 70 per cent of workers in the health and social sector and women do the much unpaid care work as men. The COVID-19 crisis also impacts the ability of women to earn the minimum income needed for survival. Domestic violence, conflict related sexual violence, rape, marriage, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse all spike in emergencies.

We know from Ebola crisis experience that women's participation and leadership is a crucial factor in a society's ability to respond and reverse an epidemic.

The UN Secretary-General has made a call for a global ceasefire. Indeed, without a focus on prevention, management and resolution, the impact of COVID-19 in conflict settings will be dire.

Yet I want to highlight that when it comes to dialogue and confidence-building measures such as ceasefire, humanitarian access, prisoner exchange/release agreements - women can play a vital role.

We know that women's participation makes humanitarian response more effective, peace more durable and conflict prevention a reality.

And that both female as well as male peacekeepers are needed in order for the UN to be able to respond to the needs of communities.

In situations of active or frozen conflicts, women's mediation and peacebuilding efforts at the grassroots level are effective, cost-effective and sustainable.

Today you will hear from local peacebuilders from South Africa au00912 0 612 792 reW*ñBT/F4 11.04 Tf1 0 0 1 383 266.33

