CONCEPT NOTE

High-Level Side Event on ‘Global Solidarity with Afghan Women and Girls’

UNHQ, Conference Room 2

**Background:**

On 19 September the Permanent Missions of Canada, Indonesia and Ireland to the UN, in partnership with the Women’s Forum on Afghanistan, will host a high-level event on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan.

As global leaders gather in New York during High Level Week of the UN General Assembly, women and girls in Afghanistan remain erased in their own country. Over two years since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan, the previous twenty years of progress – fought for and won by Afghan women – have been reversed. Girls have been banned from secondary school and women from tertiary education. The Taliban’s ban on women working for NGOs has had a disastrous impact on the ability of the humanitarian community to respond to the overwhelming needs of millions of Afghans. Women are banned from working in offices, using public places such as parks and gyms, and even going to the beauty salon, which served as a place of safety and social gathering for many women. The human rights situation remains grave, particularly for women, girls and minorities.

Afghanistan cannot recover from decades of conflict and poverty without the full, equal and meaningful participation of Afghan women in all aspects of economic, political and public life. Neither will the Sustainable Development Goals be reached, including SDG Goal 5, while Afghan women continue to be erased from Afghan society and Afghan girls excluded from education.

The participation of women in economic development, including access of girls to education and women to employment and financial resources, is essential to ensuring its sustainability, as is widely recognized around the world. Investing in women is the most effective way to empower families and communities. This high-level event aims to centre the voices of Afghan women in discussing the need for women’s participation in economic development, as a matter of strategic impact as well as human rights, and to prompt a discussion on how Afghan women can better participate in discussions on the future of their country.

**Running order:**

**Introductory segment:**

- Voices from inside Afghanistan (pre-recorded video)
- H.E. Micheal Martin TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland
- H.E. Retno LP Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia

**Speakers:**

- H.E. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo (TBC)
- Ms. Asila Wardak, Former Director-General of UN Affairs in the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Women’s Forum on Afghanistan Steering Committee member
- Dr. Habiba Sarabi, Former Afghan Minister for Women’s Affairs and Women’s Forum on Afghanistan Steering Committee member
Closing segment:

- H.E. Mélanie Joly PC MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada
- Ms. Fawzia Koofi, Former Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Parliament and Women’s Forum on

**RSVP:**

Attendees are asked to RSVP at the following [link](#) by **15 September 2023**. UN Member States wishing to make an intervention from the floor are asked to email [ellen.swan@dfa.ie](mailto:ellen.swan@dfa.ie) by **14 September 2023**.