

The Global Network of Women Legislators in Defence, Security, and Peace Portfolios (WLID)

NETWORK MEMBER ORIENTATION
HANDBOOK

JANUARY 2024

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THE WLID NETWORK MEMBERS HANDBOOK

1.1 BACKGROUND

Increased conflicts and violence around the world have had serious impacts on the lives of women and children. Though women have played a critical role in preventing such conflicts, their involvement in global peace, defense, and security remains very low, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Following the establishment of the United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women's Peace and Security in 2000, countries around the world have been urged to increase women's engagement in the global peace and security agenda. However, due to gender-based constraints, there has been little progress in women's involvement and decision-making regarding global peace and security.

Recognizing the critical role of women in global peace and conflict prevention, in October 2022, legislators from Canada's House of Commons and the European Parliament founded a Network of Women Legislators in Defence, Security, and Peace Portfolios (WLID). The initiative has attracted the attention of female legislators from around the world.

An inaugural meeting that discussed the creation of WLID was held on October 20, 2022, with the enthusiastic participation of 22 female legislators and 15 parliamentary staff from 17 countries. The vibrant discussion and sharing of issues and experiences that women legislators in defence, security, and peace portfolios face globally clearly demonstrated a clear need and interest for a structured network.

WLID GOVERNANCE, MEMBERSHIP, AND SECRETARIAT

2.1 WLID MEMBERSHIP

The Network of Women Legislators in Defence, Security and Peace portfolios (WLID) is a global initiative to harness the experiences of women legislators active in policy debates related to defence, security and peace. The Network is open to individual and self-selected women legislators, women who, though elected, cannot take up their position, and women working towards the return of democracy in their countries. These

categories of membership draw on Freedom House's categorizations of Global Freedom, Internet Freedom, and Democracy Status. The WLID Network enables women legislators to share their experiences and knowledge, provide peer support, and identify supportive interventions to further enhance the contribution of women to more inclusive, secure, peaceful, and prosperous societies.

2.2 MEMBERSHIP STATUS

As of January 2024, there are 55 members from 25 countries, and the Network is going through an active recruitment process to ensure its global reach. Membership is open to any active legislator, those who have been elected but are unable to take office, and those working to return their countries to democracy. Membership registration is processed by the WLID Secretariat, which communicates network issues to the WLID Chair, network member committees, and all the members. To advance the network agenda and the implementation of the women in global defence, security, and peace agenda, the WLID Network members

will meet quarterly, virtually and in person, depending on the availability of network members and financial resources. Since its founding, three network meetings have been held, with the most recent one held virtually on November 9th, 2023.

Though WLID membership is open to active women legislators in defence, peace, and security portfolios, the network also recognizes the significance of collaborating with other like-minded organizations that advocate for and promote democratic values and the inclusion of women in global defence, security, and peace.

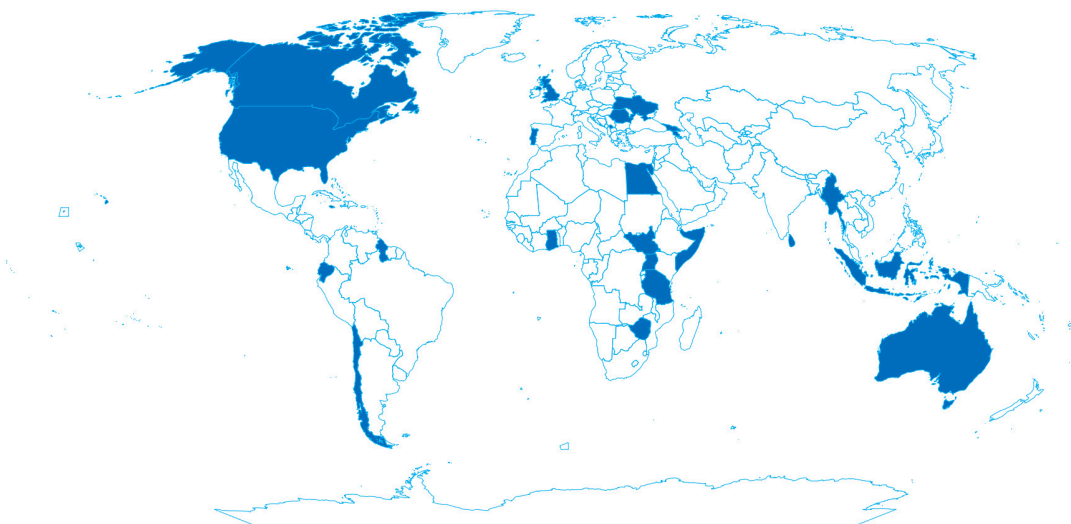


Figure 1: The WLID Network Members come from over 25 countries

2.3 ROLE OF MEMBERS

Network members are expected to participate in events and activities organized by the WLID and its Secretariat. With the goal of becoming a global network of women leaders, members are also encouraged to promote events and activities organized by the network

and volunteer for network leadership positions and other vital roles within the WLID. To attract and retain more women legislators in global defence, security, and peace efforts, the network will also create opportunities for peer support.

WLID GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

3.1. CO-CHAIRS

There will be two Co-Chairs, one from the Global South and one from the Global North, elected by WLID Network members. To ensure leadership continuity and avoid overlapping mandates, the leadership terms between the two Co-Chairs will be different. In the first instance, one of the Co-Chairs will have a 12-month term, and the other will have a 24-month leadership term. Subsequent elections will elect a replacement every twelve months. The WLID governance will also be jointly supported by a Steering Committee and Regional and Thematic Committees, which, among other things, will be an advisory body to the WLID Network. In accordance

with the Network goals and vision, the WLID Co-Chairs will be expected to:

- **Liaise with the WLID Secretariat in the preparation and coordination of Network meetings,**
- **Convene and chair network meetings,**
- **Ensure network meetings are run in accordance with rules and procedures that will be defined and agreed to by network members,**
- **Represent the WLID Network at internal and external meetings, events, and activities.**
- **Support the recruitment and retention of members of the network.**

3.2. STEERING COMMITTEE

As an advisory body to the WLID Network, the Steering Committee will provide guidance and support to Co-Chairs on the administration and management of WILD Network membership. Members of the Steering Committee will be elected among the active members of Regional Committees.

3.3. REGIONAL AND THEMATIC SUB-COMMITTEES

The Network will establish subcommittees for various thematic areas and five regions: The Americas, Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, MENA, and Asia. The number of sub-committees with a thematic focus will be proposed and voted on during network meetings and may change depending on the needs and growth of the network. Alongside the Co-chairs and Steering Committee, the Sub-committees are responsible for the following:

- 1.** Support Co-Chairs and Steering Committee in preparation and participation of Network, events, and activities beneficial to members and those in line with WLD’s mission and goals,
- 2.** Support recruitment, retention, and suspension of members to the WLID Network members,
- 3.** Coordinate and implement outreach activities and events in accordance with the WLID Network mission and United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security,
- 4.** Report and share news on the status of women and defence, security, and peace agenda in their regions during the network meetings,
- 5.** Represent the WLID Network in events, meetings, and activities related to the WLID Network mission.

3.4. WLID SECRETARIAT

The Parliamentary Centre serves as the WLID Network’s Secretariat and coordinates day-to-day events and activities. As the Secretariat, the Parliamentary Centre will also be a focal point through which the WLID Co-chairs, Steering Committee, and

Sub-committees coordinate meetings, events, and activities of the network and its members. The Secretariat will also manage an interactive and secure online database and communication platform.

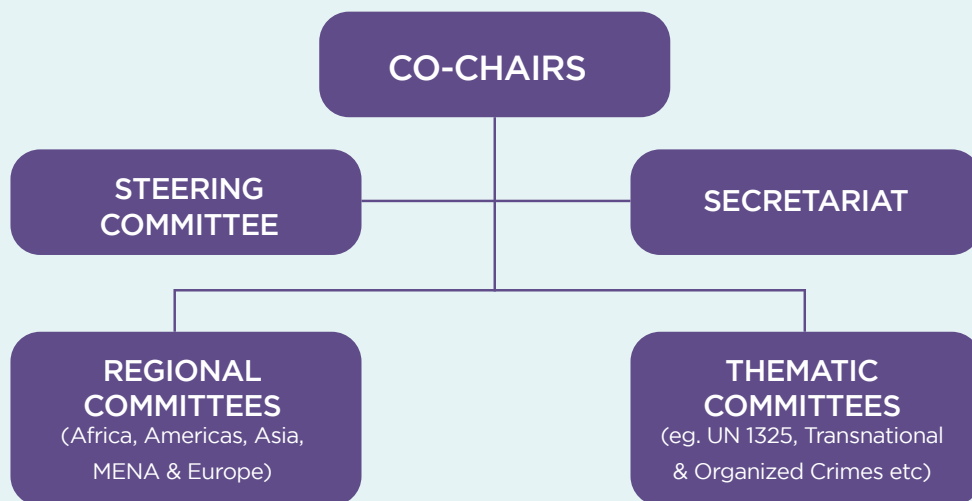


Figure 2: WLID Governance Structure

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Secretariat will use appropriate and secure communication platforms to update members on events and engage them in activities organized by the Network. The Secretariat may use communication platforms such as WhatsApp, private digital platforms open for members only, and other suitable means to communicate and share experiences with fellow network members.

The Secretariat will also establish an interactive and secure online database and platform for communication. The database/platform will store WLID members' information, including biographies, and highlight the geographical distribution of WLID network

members, calendar of events, and activities happening within the WLID Network and its partners around the world. With the support of the Secretariat, all active WLID network members will have access to the database and platform. Other means of communication, such as webinars and podcasts related to women in defense, peace, and security, will be organized by the Secretariat as a forum for members to learn, engage, and share best practices in advancing women's engagement in global defence, security, and peace. On a regular basis, the Secretariat will upload and share program briefs and newsletters highlighting the work of the WLID Network and its members.

WLID FOCUS AREAS

As a global network of women legislators, the WLID Network also seeks to empower, enhance knowledge, and build the capacity of network members in many areas regarding defence, security, and peace. Several areas of interest were mentioned through formal consultations with existing network members and identified as potential focus areas for training and broader discussion amongst Network members. Through the recent Needs Assessment exercise, members indicated their top three thematic issues to explore

in the coming year. These topics of high interest for members include (1) UN Resolution 1325 and the development of National Action Plans, (2) transnational organized crime, and (3) abuses of citizens by the state and security sector. The WLID needs assessment is an ongoing exercise incorporating new members as they join and circling back to previous members to gather information on how the Secretariat can best serve and meet the diverse needs of WLID Network members.

WLID NETWORK ACTIVITIES

With the support of the Secretariat, the WLID network initiative will focus on the following key activities.

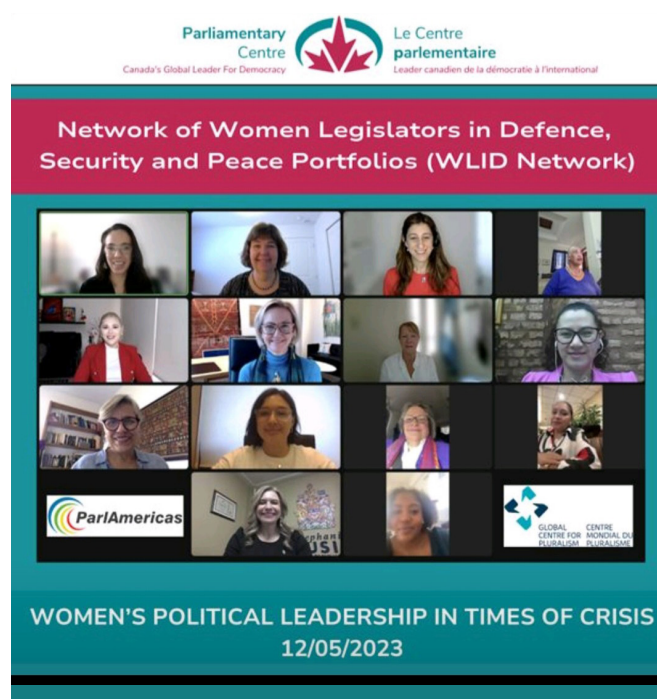
6.1 Recruitment, retention, and peer support to WLID Members

In accordance with rules and procedures established by WLID Network members, the Secretariat will invite applications and recruit new members to the network. The Secretariat will administer the registration process, and membership information will be shared with the Co-Chairs and Steering Committee. As the network expands and grows, the membership criteria will be

revised to accommodate membership needs and ensure the network is diverse and globally inclusive. To sustain the WLID Network, experienced WLID network members will also have an opportunity to offer peer support to younger female legislators within the WLID network and support them when they are interested in leadership roles.

6.2 Network Members Meetings

The WLID Network members will meet quarterly virtually and in person. Network meetings will be organized depending on members' availability, the safety of individual members, and the financial resources to organize and host in-person gatherings of a large group of legislators. With the support from the Secretariat, the draft agenda for the meetings shall be prepared and sent out by the Co-Chairs to all network members in advance of the meeting. The Secretariat will organize, coordinate, and facilitate WLID meetings. During WLID network meetings, members are expected to participate actively, propose motions to support the growth of the network, and take on any other duties assigned by the Co-Chairs and Steering Committee.



6.3 Webinars, Expert-led Workshops, and Training on Women, Defence, Peace, and Security

The Secretariat will organize webinars, panel discussions, speaker series, and regular training and capacity-building sessions tailored to WLID members' needs to advance women's involvement in global defense, security, and peace. The Secretariat will circulate a needs assessment each year to identify topics, panel discussions, and capacity-building sessions that will benefit WLID Network members. Members are encouraged to participate in all training opportunities organized by the Secretariat.

WEBINAR

HOW TO FORMULATE A GENDER-SENSITIVE LEGISLATION?

8AM - 10AM (ET)
1PM - 3PM (GMT)
4PM - 6PM (EAT)

February 1, 2024

[Register on ZOOM](#)

Panelist
Hon. Priscilla Nyokabi Kanyua
Member of Parliament - Kenya
Advocate of the High Court of Kenya.
Human Rights lawyer.

FACILITATOR
DARINE BENAMARA
GBA+ Consultant
Women Leadership Expert

Global Affairs
Canada
Affaires mondiales
Canada

**Parliamentary
Centre
parlementaire**
Canada's Global Leader for Democracy
Leader canadien pour le soutien à
la démocratie

**AFRICAN CENTRE FOR
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