

Media Release

Ottawa, June 12, 2019

Women Peace and Security Network -Canada welcomes the appointment of Canada's first Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security

The Women, Peace & Security Network-Canada applauds the Government of Canada's appointment today of Jacqueline O'Neill as Canada's first-ever Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security.

Ms. O'Neill will serve as a point person on Canada's efforts to advance a robust national strategy on women, peace and security, providing advice and "confidential assessments" to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces and working closely with civil society and other organizations engaged in Canada and globally on these issues.

"We have called for a high-level women, peace and security champion for many years," said Beth Woroniuk, Coordinator, Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada. "We are very happy to see such a distinguished and committed individual take up the new post of Canada's Women, Peace and Security Ambassador. Ms. O'Neill brings the experience and vision to lead Canada's ambitious agenda. We look forward to working with her."

Canada is one of 79 countries with a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, mandated by UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Canada's current national action plan was launched by Minister Chrystia Freeland in 2017 and expires in 2022.

The National Action Plan outlines Canada's commitment to increase the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, uproot sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones, protect the rights of women and girls' rights in fragile contexts and uphold their rights to sexual and reproductive health.

Canada has also committed to advance the WPS agenda in its peace operations, including deploying more women and fully embedding the WPS agenda into Canadian Armed Forces operations and police deployments.

"Ms. O'Neill's appointment comes at a time when conflicts are intensifying globally, with specific and devastating effects on women's lives," said Liz Bernstein, Executive Director, Nobel Women's Initiative. "Her leadership and deep expertise with women's movements globally will be an invaluable asset in shaping Canada's feminist foreign policy".

Lead partners for the Action Plan are Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Supporting partners are Public Safety Canada (PS), Status of Women Canada (SWC), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Department of Justice.

A global leader on women, peace and security, Jacqueline O'Neill is the former President of the Washington D.C.-based Institute for Inclusive Security and has over 15 years of expertise working with government and civil society. She has supported the creation of national strategies for over 30

countries, as well as NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the United Nations. Through her work, Ms. O'Neill has collaborated directly with coalitions of women peacebuilders in Colombia, South Sudan, Sudan, Pakistan, and South Korea among other countries.

Her appointment demonstrates Canada's firm commitment to the women, peace and security agenda. It comes at a critical time globally, with women seeking representation in peace processes in Syria, Yemen and other conflict countries. The Women Peace and Security Network- Canada welcomes the appointment of Ms. O'Neill and looks forward to working with her.

For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Beth Woroniuk, Coordinator- Women Peace and Security Network Canada
b.woroniuk@bell.net (613) 613 294 3057

Liz Bernstein, Executive Director- Nobel Women's Initiative
knivyabandi@nobelwomensinitiative.org (613) 691 1419 ext: 117