
CONCEPT NOTE

HIGH-LEVEL LAUNCH OF THE 4TH PROGRAMMING ROUND

DATE AND TIME: Thursday 9 October 2025 | 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM EDT | 15:00 – 16:30 CEST

VENUE: UN Women HQ, Conference Room 1925 and Online (Zoom link forthcoming)

OVERVIEW

The [Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations](#) (EIF) will launch its fourth programming round on 9 October 2025 with a high-level event bringing together United Nations (UN) leadership, Member States, EIF project partners, and donors. Taking place during the 25th anniversary year of Security Council resolution 1325, the event offers a timely moment to reflect on progress, and persistent gaps—particularly in increasing the meaningful participation of uniformed women in peacekeeping.

As a global fund and strategic enabler of change, the EIF supports evidence-based and sustainable reforms that advance institutional transformation and systemic change. It also serves as a learning mechanism, enabling the identification of persistent challenges and the exchange of lessons across contexts. The EIF aligns with key UN priorities, including Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+), the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (UGPS), and the Secretary-General's *New Agenda for Peace*, all of which call for inclusive governance, resilient institutions, and gender-responsive peace and security systems.

This event will showcase the progress and lessons from EIF-supported projects and launch a call for new proposals from Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) and UN organisations. It will also reaffirm the collective commitment of the UN and Member States to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and address persistent gender gaps in peacekeeping. It will highlight the EIF as a catalytic mechanism that translates commitments into institutional reform and gender-responsive action.

EIF-funded and supported projects are delivering tangible institutional reforms across a range of contexts. In Sierra Leone, the Armed Forces are developing their first-ever gender policy and strengthening leadership pathways for women following a barrier assessment using the MOWIP methodology. The Zambia Police Service is designing an EIF-supported anti-sexual harassment policy to improve internal accountability and enhance reporting and response to sexual exploitation and abuse. In Senegal, the Armed Forces are now developing an action plan to implement recommendations from their 2024 EIF-funded MOWIP report. Meanwhile, in Uruguay, EIF support enabled the Armed Forces to conduct national sensitisation and media campaigns that highlight the contributions of women to UN peacekeeping. Additional results and project highlights are available in the EIF 2024 Annual Report: <https://elsiefund.org/eif-annual-reports/annual-report-2024/>.

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Showcasing perspectives from EIF-supported T/PCCs and a UN mission, alongside a senior uniformed representative with field experience.

- **Opening Remarks**
 - Under-Secretary-General Sima Bahous, Executive Director, UN Women
 - Lieutenant General Cheryl Pearce, Acting Military Adviser, UN Department of Peace Operations
- **Keynote Address**
 - **United Kingdom** -EIF Steering Committee Co-Chair
- **Panel Discussion: From Commitment to Institutional Impact**, featuring speakers from the following EIF-funded projects:
 - **Fiji** – Colonel Siliva R. Vananalagi, Military and Police Adviser to the UN, Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration (MHA)
 - **Uruguay** – Dr Carina de los Santos Gilomen, Project Manager - UN Women Uruguay, Ministry of Defence and Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI)
 - **Senegal** – Colonel Lamine Diouf, Minister Counsellor and Military Adviser to the UN
 - **UNMISS** - Lieutenant General Mohan Subramanian, Force Commander, United Nations Mission in South Sudan
- **Remarks from the Floor – Member State interventions**
- **Closing Remarks**
 - H.E. Mr Michael Gort, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN, as EIF Founding Member

OBJECTIVES

The high-level launch will mark the opening of the EIF's **fourth programming round** and announce the call for **Letters of Interest (LOIs)**, which will remain open until **31 January 2026**. The event will highlight results and lessons emerging from current EIF-supported projects and demonstrate how evidence-informed reforms are being used to address institutional barriers to the **full, equal, and meaningful participation** of uniformed women in peace operations.

Speakers will reflect on practical actions taken by T/PCCs and UN entities—ranging from policy reforms and infrastructure improvements to leadership development and gender-sensitive training. The discussion will reaffirm the shared commitment of the UN and Member States to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and closing persistent gender gaps, particularly in military deployments—where women remain significantly underrepresented—and in senior command positions, which continue to reflect systemic barriers to women's advancement.

By showcasing the work already underway and encouraging new proposals, the event will demonstrate how the EIF continues to serve as a trusted and effective mechanism within the UN system for translating global commitments on gender equality into concrete institutional action.

EIF PROGRAMMING ROUND 4 – KEY INFORMATION

- **Submission Deadline:** 31 January 2026
- **Eligibility Criteria:** T/PCCs and UN organisations. See EIF Terms of Reference, section 4.2.5.
- **LOI Development webinar dates:** see <https://elsiefund.org/fourth-programming-round/>

- **Funding Modalities**

- **Barrier Assessment Funding:** Available to support T/PCCs to conduct a national barrier assessment using a rigorous, standardised methodology such as the *Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP)* methodology, developed by DCAF – the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance and Cornell University’s Gender and Security Sector Lab.
- **Flexible Project Funding:** Based on the results of a credible barrier assessment, T/PCCs may request additional funding to implement targeted reforms, such as policy development, leadership initiatives, training, or infrastructure improvements.
- **Gender Strong Unit (GSU) Premium:** A reimbursement to T/PCCs upon successful deployment of a verified GSU (as assessed through an independent verification process).¹ Priority is given to T/PCCs that commit to reinvest the premium in ways that further promote the objectives of the EIF—such as targeted gender-responsive training, leadership development, infrastructure improvements or addressing specific recommendations identified through a credible barrier assessment. These reinvestments are intended to strengthen institutional readiness for future deployments and promote sustained impact.

BACKGROUND

The full, equal, and meaningful participation of uniformed women is essential to the operational effectiveness and credibility of UN Peace Operations. This principle is grounded in key normative frameworks and international commitments, including UN Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2538 (2020), which call for the increased participation of women in peace and security efforts, including in UN peacekeeping missions.

To help advance these goals, the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) launched the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2028 (UGPS), alongside broader UN reform efforts such as Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) and A4P+. These frameworks urge Member States and the UN system to take coordinated, concrete action to increase the deployment of uniformed women and remove institutional and operational barriers to their meaningful participation.

In July 2024, the Secretary-General’s report, *A New Agenda for Peace: A Future for Peacekeeping*, reaffirmed that the meaningful participation of women in uniformed roles is central to the legitimacy, effectiveness, and accountability of peace operations. It called for renewed investment in inclusion, leadership, and institutional transformation. The EIF’s objectives are also closely aligned with this vision, and the Fund continues to support these aims through direct, targeted assistance to T/PCCs and UN entities.²

Established in 2019 by the UN, Canada, and Member States and hosted by UN Women, the EIF is a multi-donor global fund that provides financial and technical support to T/PCCs and UN entities. The Fund is designed to catalyse institutional reforms that enable the sustainable deployment of more uniformed women—particularly in roles where their participation has historically been limited, such as military contingents and leadership positions. Through its growing project portfolio, the EIF is also generating practical knowledge about what works—and what still needs to change—to improve the meaningful participation of uniformed women in peace operations.

¹ A gender-strong unit is a unit (typically a Formed Police Unit or Military Battalion) that (i) includes substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, (ii) has provided gender-equity training to all unit members, and (iii) has adequate materiel to ensure parity of deployment conditions for women and men peacekeepers, amongst other criteria. At a minimum, the percentages of women must exceed the targets set out in the UGPS by five percentage points.

² <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/671>

Since its launch, the EIF has supported or is currently supporting **24 projects** across **27 security institutions** in **16 T/PCCs**, as well as **3 UN Peacekeeping Operations**. These projects aim to identify and address context-specific barriers to women's participation, strengthen gender-responsive policies and systems, and foster more inclusive and enabling institutional environments with particular emphasis on increasing women's participation in operational, combat, and leadership roles. To date, 11 projects have concluded, with six security institutions that completed a barrier assessment invited to submit full proposals under the third programming round. These proposals have either been endorsed by the EIF Steering Committee or are in the final stages of review.

EIF REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

