***"A year of focused actions to combat violence against women and girls"***

**When: Wednesday, 15 March 2016, 13.15-14.30**

**Venue: UN Headquarters, Conference Room 2**

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) 2016, the European Commission has launched a year of focused actions to put an end to violence against women and girls. Violence against women and girls can only be combated if we address the problem from all directions and at all levels, from local authorities (such as police officers) to national governments and international organisations. Civil society organisations, social partners and academia all have an important contribution to make. The year of focused actions aims to connect all efforts to stop violence against women.

**Participants:**

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| **I.**  | Dr Helena Dalli, Minister for Social DialogueConsumer Affairs and Civil Liberties  | Malta, EU Council Presidency |
| **II.** | Doreen Sioka, Minister of Gender and Child Welfare  | Republic of Namibia |
| **III.** | Mara Marinaki, Principal Adviser on Gender  | EU |
| **IV.** | Dr Flavia Bustreo, Assistant Director-General  | WHO |
| **V.** | Valter Shuenquener de Araujo, Federal Judge  | Brazil |
| **VI.**  | Ana Sofia Fernandes, Secretary-General of the Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights | European Women's Lobby |
| **VII.**  | Moderator: Dr Purna Sen | UN Women |

The event will be moderated by Dr. Purna Sen from UN Women. The Moderator will introduce the side event explaining how combating violence against women is a pre-requisite for women's economic empowerment, and how women's economic empowerment might aid in combating violence against women and girls.

Before starting with the questions, the moderator will introduce all panellists drawing on the biographies included in this paper.

Each panellist will be asked a question and will have 3-4 minutes to answer. These combined replies will serve as a first way to examine the topic from different angles.

If time allows, panellists will be given one minute for a final comment at the end.

**FIRST ROUND OF QUESTIONS**

* **Malta (Minister Helena Dalli)**

Your work in the field of civil liberties over the past years has transformed national legislation and raised society’s aspirations for greater social progress towards a free and equal society. I am just mentioning the Civil Unions Act that provides same-sex couples an equal status to heterosexual couples; inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in the Constitution’s anti-discrimination article; and a Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act that provides all persons the possibility to change their legal gender through a notarial deed, and protects intersex persons against unnecessary medical intervention.

Could you tell us about the Maltese experiences and explain your efforts to take an intersectional approach in combating violence against women, and promoting gender equality?

* **Namibia (Minister Doreen Sioka)**

As a Minister for Gender and Child Welfare you are concerned with tackling violence against women in Namibia. Could you elaborate on the activities you carry out in this regard, and share the most successful practices? What is of your particular concern?

* **European Union (Ambassador Mara Marinaki)**

The European Union has been very active in promoting gender equality, both inside its borders and beyond. This year, there is a particular attention on combating violence against women and girls, as it was decided to place a specific focus on that in 2017. Could you tell us what that means, internally and externally, and what has been done so far?

* **WHO (Dr Flavia Bustreo)**

The health sector has a major role to play in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. The World Health Assembly adopted a landmark global strategy and plan of action on violence against women and girls last year. Could you explain how the health sector is currently involved and what the strategy and plan of action mean for the global efforts to end violence against women and girls?

* **Brazil (Valter Shuenquener de Araujo)**

When combating violence against women, law enforcement is one of the crucial elements. Could you elaborate on the approach the justice system takes in the enactment of the legislation on femicide in Brazil, and the efforts undertaken by the Judiciary Branch to identify, file and prosecute before a jury the cases of femicide?

* **European Women's Lobby (Ana Sofia Fernandes)**

The European Women's Lobby has been particularly vocal on the topic of violence against women. What would you describe is the role of the Lobby and how do you work together with other actors to improve the response from the European Institutions and the EU Member States?

**OPEN THE FLOOR TO QUESTION AND ANSWERS**

Participants have the opportunity to ask questions to the panellists.

**FINAL QUESTION TO PANELLISTS:**

What is the main priority that you will take forward in the immediate future to reduce violence against women and girls or to better support victims of gender-based violence?

**PANELLISTS:**

**Malta (Minister Helena Dalli)**

Dr Helena Dalli was elected to the Maltese Parliament in 1996 and served as Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister. She was re-elected to Parliament in all subsequent national elections, and served as shadow Minister for public administration, public investment and gender equality.

Following the 2013 elections, Dr Dalli was appointed Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties. The responsibilities of this Ministry include social dialogue with social partners and civil society, the Medicines Authority, the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority, equality and anti-discrimination policies, information and data protection, the non-governmental and voluntary sector, industrial and employment relations, the integration of migrants, occupational health and safety and the Building Industry Consultative Council.

Dr Dalli is a sociologist by profession and lectures in the areas of sociology of law, economic sociology and public policy.

**Namibia (Minister Doreen Sioka)**

Honourable Doreen Sioka was born 18 September 1960 and went in exile where she joined SWAPO in 1975 in Zambia. While looking after her children she completed her studies in Zambia where she was trained in various fields as infantry, nurse, cartoonist and teacher. She worked for the radio station "Voice of Namibia" in Lusaka and as cartoonist at the Liberation Centre in Lusaka where she was transferred to the secret information section at Kingstone Building in Lusaka. Prior to her current post as Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, she was Minister for Labour and Social Welfare (2012-2015), Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (2010-2012), Deputy Speaker at the National Assembly and Chairperson of the whole House Committee (2005-2010) and Member of Parliament in the National Assembly (1995-2015).

**World Health Organisation (Dr Flavia Bustero)**

Dr Flavia Bustero is WHO Assistant Director-General for Family, Women's and Children's Health and vice-Chair of the Gavi Board. In these roles, she champions the health and human rights of women, children and adolescents worldwide. Dr Bustreo has worked in many countries, including assignments for WHO country and regional offices in Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, Senegal, Sudan and Uganda, WHO’s EURO office in Copenhagen and at WHO Headquarters in Geneva. Dr Bustero also worked at the World Bank as a special advisor to the Norwegian Prime Minister's Initiative for MDGs 4 & 5. She has worked as a clinician with children and adolescents with disabilities, and with NGOs working with refugees in the former Yugoslavia and Iraq.

**European Union (Ambassador Mara Marinaki)**

Ambassador Mara Marinaki was appointed by the HRVP Federica Mogherini in July 2015 as the first ever European External Action Service (EEAS) Principal Advisor on Gender and on the implementation on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and all other gender-related matters, and has assumed her new post on 1 October 2015. She is the EEAS coordinator in mainstreaming Gender/WPS issues across EEAS services, in promoting the internal/external cohesion of EU external action efforts on Gender/WPS and in raising awareness worldwide on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, including through the important role of EU Delegations and CSDP missions and operations. Ambassador Marinaki previously had served as the EEAS Managing Director for Global/Multilateral Issues and Human Rights (May 2011 - September 2015) where she handled among her key human rights' priorities the promotion of all issues pertaining to women's empowerment and strengthening the role of women and girls in societies. She was also the EU/EEAS Coordinator on Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism with a strong focus on the role of women in combatting radicalization in local societies. Prior to taking up her functions in the EEAS, Ambassador Marinaki was the Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE in Vienna (September 2007 - May 2011) where she also chaired the Permanent Council during the 2009 Greek OSCE Chairmanship.

**European Women's Lobby (Ana Sofia Fernandes)**

Ana Sofia Fernandes is the Secretary-General of the Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights, an umbrella organisation of 25 women’s human rights and gender equality NGOs, which has Special Consultative Status with the UN ECOSOC. She is also the Portuguese Board Member of the European Women’s Lobby. Between 2010 and 2015 she worked at the European Institute for Gender Equality as Stakeholders’ Coordinator and Resource & Documentation Centre officer. With studies in International Relations and Cooperation for Development, her civic engagement in gender equality dates to 2000, when she co-founded and was the first President of the Portuguese Network of Young People for Gender Equality. Certified gender equality trainer, she held positions as member of the consultative council of the Commission for Equality and Women’s Rights, President of the Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights, member of the General Assembly of the European Women’s Lobby and member of the Board of the Association of Women from Meridional Europe. Her professional activity dates to 1995. Among others, she was engaged in the preparation of the 1st World Conference of Ministers of Youth of the United Nations System, and worked in several policy areas of the Portuguese Administration, having performed duties at the General Directorate for Health, Institute for the Management of the European Social Fund, cabinet of the Minister of Work and Social Solidarity and cabinet of the High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue.

**Brazil (Valter Shuenquener de Araujo)**

Valter Shuenquener de Araujo is a Federal Judge and currently holds the position of Counselor at the National Council of the Federal Prosecutor General Office, nominated by the Supreme Court of Justice. In this position, Mr de Araujo coordinates a national task force on femicide that seeks to ensure swift prosecution of cases of femicide, in the context of the National Strategy for Public Security.

**UN Women (Dr Purna Sen)**

Dr. Purna Sen is the UN Women Director of Policy. She has over 30 years of experience in capacity building, service delivery and evaluation review, teaching, advocacy and research publishing. Her work has included research, publications and activism on violence against women, culture and human rights, trafficking, sexuality and sexual control, human rights, development, civil society organising against violence, social development issues and race equality. Prior to UN Women, Purna was Deputy Director of the Institute of Public Affairs at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) where she also taught gender and development. Previously she served as Head of Human Rights for the Commonwealth Secretariat and as Director for the Asia-Pacific Programme at Amnesty International. During the 2015 UK general election, Purna was a parliamentary candidate for the Brighton Pavilion constituency. She holds a PhD from Bristol University on the subject of Violence Against Women.