

# Opening Conference

## AGENDA

**Equity: The Prerequisite for Democratic Renewal**

March 14-15, 2023

## Day 1: 14 March 2023

### 9:30-10:00 Welcoming participants

### 10.00-10.15 Welcoming remarks

- Ambassador Nancy Soderberg, Senior Country Director, NDI Kosovo
- Zeinah Salahi, Mission Director, USAID Kosovo
- Katharina Stocker, Head of Cooperation, Embassy of Switzerland, Kosovo

### 10:15- 10:35 Keynote Address: “The importance of equity and inclusion in democracy”

*Democracy is experiencing backsliding, not only in the region but globally as authoritarian rulers impose restrictions on the democratic functioning of government and limitations on free expression and other basic human rights. This keynote address will focus on the importance and need for governments to propose and employ policies that embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion as principles to attain solidarity, ensure the reversal of democracy's backsliding and seek democratic renewal.*

- H.E. Dr.Vjosa Osmani Sadriu, President of the Republic of Kosovo
- Shanthi Kalathil, Board Member, National Democratic Institute (NDI)



## **10.40-11.30 Open Discussion: “Equality, Equity, and Justice”**

*Integrating equity as a foremost principle in policy making is key to the establishment of a just society. By integrating this principle, governments are enabled to respond to the unique needs of different groups, thereby tackling systemic inequalities and building a more prosperous democracy that delivers for all. In this open conversation, the participants will have the opportunity to discuss the overall state of democracy in the country through the lens of equity, its challenges and opportunities, and how integrating equity serves to a more sustainable democracy.*

- H.E. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister, Republic of Kosovo
- Flaka Zogu, Journalist

11:30 - 12:00 Coffee break

## **12:00 - 13:30 Panel Discussion: Networking as competitive advantage for women's economic and political engagement**

*Financial dependence and limited access to networks remain some of the biggest barriers to advancing political profiles of women and reaching their full political potential. This panel discussion aims to examine the interdependence between women's economic empowerment and their meaningful participation in politics. Specifically, it aims to analyze whether higher exposure to networks and access to resources can lead to women's economic independence, thereby their active political engagement.*



## **Video Address: Valeriya Mechkova, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at University of Gothenburg, Sweden**

- Mimoza Kusari-Lila, Member of Parliament, Committee on Economy, Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade
- Hykmete Bajrami, Member of Parliament, Committee for Oversight of Public Finances
- Bali Muharremaj, Mayor of Suhareka
- Svetlana Stefanović, Executive Director, BFPE
- Iliriana Gashi, Executive Director, Kosovo Women for Women

**Moderator: Leonora Kusari, EBRD**

13:30-14:30 Lunch

14:30 - 16:00 Panel Discussion: Bolstering Democratic Reformers

*Women and youth have shown exceptional leadership qualities, hence their involvement in policy making is an imperative step towards reaching democratic renewal. This panel discussion will examine the challenges of women and youth politicians including their access to resources, decision making and mentorship opportunities, as well as discuss the need of adopting structural reforms by political parties - specifically in identifying, nominating, selecting and preparing women and youth candidates.*



- Behar Jashari, Head, Youth for Vetevendosje, LVV
- Arbnora Salihu, Head, Democratic Youth of Kosovo, PDK
- Paris Guri, Head, Youth Forum, LDK
- Amire Ajeti, Head, Youth Alliance of Kosovo, AAK
- Jeton Rrahmani, Coordinator, Youth Forum, IRDK

Moderator: Krenare Gashi Krasniqi, Head of RYCO, Kosovo (invited)

## Day 2: 15 March 2023

9:30-10:00 Welcoming participants

10:00 -10:05 Welcoming remarks

- Alan Bowman, Ambassador, Embassy of Canada to Kosovo and Croatia

10.05- 10.15 Keynote address: "Equity: The Prerequisite for Democratic Renewal"

*Democracy demands continuous strengthening and nurturing, and, despite its shortfalls, it delivers peace and prosperity for its citizens. This keynote address will focus on the need for legislators to employ policies that embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion as principles to attain solidarity, ensure the reversal of democracy's backsliding and seek democratic renewal.*

- The Honorable, Ritchie Torres, Member of US Congress



10.15- 11.00 Open conversation: Integrating a 50/50 approach in party structures

*Despite clear signs of progress, women and youth in political parties in Kosovo continue to be underrepresented. As a result, their priority needs and interests often go unaddressed in policy-making, which ultimately has an effect of undermining the full potential of democracy. Different parties around the world have undergone structural changes to better represent women and youth. In this open discussion the participants will have the opportunity to hear on the challenges and opportunities of integrating a 50/50 agenda.*

- Memli Krasniqi, Leader of Partia Demokratike e Kosoves (PDK)
- Debora Peci, Project Manager, Democracy plus (D+)

11.00 - 12.30 Panel Discussion: “Local governance: The pathway to enabling an inclusive environment for women to thrive”

*Women continue to face a harsh political climate and significant barriers to meaningful engagement in decision making positions. This panel will discuss the unique challenges that women face in running for local government, their barriers once they reach leadership positions as well as their challenges in engaging as voters. Specifically, what remains to be done by political parties and local governance institutions to create an enabling environment for women to thrive.*



**Video address:** Blerta Hoti, Deputy Mayor, Göteborg, Sweden  
Thierry Apothéloz, State Councilor, Geneva

- Jehona Lushaku, Head, Women Forum, LDK
- Diellza Kukaj, Head, Alliance of Women, AAK
- Filloreta Hoti, Chair of Village Council, Gjakova
- Abdülhadi Krasniç, Mayor of Mamush

Moderator: Caleb Waugh, Policy Analyst, NGO AKTIV

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13:40 - 15.00 Panel Discussion: “Aspiring for inclusive media: A gender balance and diverse representation and reporting”

*The media plays a very important role in shaping public opinion, which means that any kind of gender stereotyping, intentional or not, has consequences. In this discussion, panelists will provide insights on the extent to which media organizations can employ gender sensitivity in their approach and what can be done to pursue policies and practices to promote a gender balanced and inclusive representation in media.*

- Shkumbin Ahmetxhekaj, General Director, Radio Television of Kosovo
- Adriatik Kelmendi, General Director, Klan Kosova
- Dafina Halili, Editor and Journalist, Kosovo 2.0
- Amina Omid, Journalist, Journalist in Residence in Kosovo (JiR), Afghanistan



Moderator: Adea Beqaj, Senior Program Officer, NDI Kosovo

15:00-15:20 Coffee break

15:20 - 15:45 Documentary Screening: "The high cost of women in leadership: Violence Against Women in Politics"

15:45 - 16:20 Open discussion on the documentary

*As women continue to make progress in joining political life, they get exposed in a harsh political climate enabled by gender equality opponents under the aim of undermining the participation of women in politics and contributing to the discouragement of young women and girls to join. This open conversation will address the role of government in combating this phenomenon to enable an inclusive political culture and public discourse.*

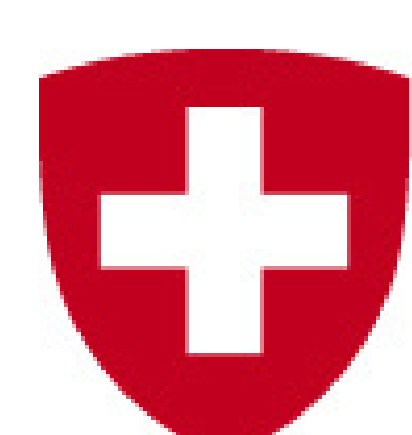
- Albulena Haxhiu, Minister of Justice, Republic of Kosovo
- Kaltrina Rexhepi, Journalist

16.20 - 16.30 Closing Remarks

- Ambassador Nancy Soderberg, Senior Country Director, NDI Kosovo



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