



W The Suzanne Mubarak
omen's International
Peace Movement

"Dialogue For Action"

Conference Report

Sponsored by
The National Council for Women and
the United Nations Egypt

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INTRODUCTION

The world looked with confidence and optimism at the new 21st century and earnestly hoped that it would usher in a promise of much longed for peace and stability that would make a lasting difference in people's lives. Unfortunately, the legitimate dream for a safe haven of peace was shattered instead by the dark legacy of cultural intolerance, escalating violence and the seemingly never-ending string of threats and armed conflicts that continue to tear apart innocent human lives and hope. Nevertheless, millions of level headed people still believe that humankind's disposition for tolerance and peace outweighs the propensity for violence and war. It is, hence, possible and vital that the world rises up to the challenge and dedicates itself to averting violence at all levels, bearing in mind that there is no one right answer. There may be several reasonable alternatives and creative options to examine. These should be pursued with determination and renewed vigor by all men and women to arrive at sustainable solutions to resolve armed conflicts and forge civilized understanding and tolerance toward one another. Indeed, the force of reason can and should assert itself over the reasoning of force.

The above bears special significance since the inertia of traditional thinking is being shaken by the realities of a new age. One of these compelling realities is that women, the very gender that creates life, are indeed a competitive asset at different fronts, rather than yet another legislated necessity! Women, many of whom have progressively asserted themselves at the center of influential social, economic, political and decision-making spheres, all share a sense of common purpose and commitment to human values: peace, prosperity, dignity and the common good. They are recognized for their empathy and their ability , if not to forget , to nevertheless forgive. They are continuously concerned about building a better future for their children and understandably subscribe less readily to the myth of the efficacy of violence. This effective human resource base has invariably demonstrated extraordinary resilience and creativity in responding to challenges, such as the harsh reality the world is facing today.

Within this context, women from different walks of life, are actively engaged in a number of well-established organizations and local initiatives involved in fostering the principles of peace, and many have a story to tell. At the same time, the gender dimension of peace is included in several international, regional and national organizations documents, particularly in the UN documents, resolutions and conventions, since women are known to be disproportionately affected by armed conflicts. These include, but are not limited to, the UN Secretary General's Strategic Plan of Action (A/49/587) and Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 which call for, inter alia, increased participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peace-building and in post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Clearly, together, women constitute a formidable "action force" that deserves a special seat at the table to provide a fresh, clear and powerful vision of the future and to settle differences without raising fists.

It is against this background that the "Women for Peace" initiative, in the form of an international, non-governmental "dialogue for action" was launched and hosted by Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, Egypt's First Lady. The meeting was held on the 21st and 22nd of September 2002, in the beautiful city of [Sharm-El-Sheikh, which has recently been declared by UNESCO as the City of Peace.](#)

This unprecedented initiative requires a visionary outlook, bold, unconventional and collaborative approaches as well as motivation, talents, skills, resources and systematic follow up.

Strength, solidarity, confidence and goodwill could indeed be amassed in the future by these continuous ripples around the world, and the divine prize of real peace can become more than

an empty catchword. Let us then work for the future, with an eye on the present. As they say, the past, as important as it is, belongs to the historians ...the future, is humanity's common heritage...and the continuity is their past, present and future.

While this report cannot capture all the wealth of knowledge and experience exchanged during the Sharm El Sheikh Conference, it nevertheless is an attempt to shed light on its main message, shared ideas, and outcome.

PART ONE

THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The Sharm El Sheikh Conference launched and hosted by Her Excellency Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, Egypt's First Lady, brought together a President, First Ladies, Ministers, Leaders of Peace, Public Figures, Parliamentarians, Ambassadors, University Professors, Judges, Lawyers, Thinkers, Writers, International Governmental and non Governmental Organizations and Women Associations. It was sponsored by the Egyptian National Council for Women and the United Nations Organizations in Egypt. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was acknowledged for issuing a Background Paper and providing technical assistance to the conference. The International Arab Women's Forum was also acknowledged for its valuable support.

Participants from all parts of the world came to Egypt to attend this international nongovernmental conference with a profound sense of solidarity stemming from a common concern about peace, which is essential to the protection, improvement and enrichment of the quality of life of people around the globe. All of them, whatever their area of work, put a peaceful world high on their agenda. They all believe in the acute need now more than ever for a more positive and prominent role for women to promote values, create a culture of peace and tolerance, and participate in peace-building and peace-keeping.

This unique gathering was a fundamentally different forum, where all parameters were discussed constructively and openly in a positive and interactive dialogue oriented towards gaining and sharing factual information, identifying realistic expectations, finding common ground and agreeing on particular steps for future action.

It laid the foundation for a vibrant and vital international **Women for Peace Movement**. It likewise laid the building blocks for an ensuing larger **International Conference** to be held in 2004 to institutionalize and nurture the newly born movement.

Towards this end participants in Sharm El Sheikh brainstormed, had much to exchange, to compare, to understand and to learn from each other. Similarities were acknowledged and differences appreciated. The participants also decided to share this wealth of knowledge and experience with influential leaders from different parts of the globe, to build strong partnerships, active networks and a shared vision, all of which are instrumental to bringing down the ugly walls of prejudice and hatred that fuel violence and armed conflicts.

The Conference had on its agenda the following items:

- ✦ Women for Peace: Achievements, Challenges and Aspirations.
- ✦ From Intention to Implementation: The Role of Women in Fostering Peace.
- ✦ The Impact of Armed Conflict on Development: A Woman's Perspective.
- ✦ Women Tell their Stories: Lessons Learned from Success Stories in Mediation and Reconciliation.
- ✦ The Way Forward: Women for Peace Movement:
 - *The 2004 International Conference: Identifying Goals*
 - *Partnerships / Networks*
 - *Concrete Actions*

Women for Peace:

Achievements, Challenges and Aspirations

This item was discussed in the plenary inaugural session, which started with an opening address by Egypt's First Lady Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak; followed by a message from the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Anan¹. A keynote address delivered by the honorable Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, was followed by the addresses of H.H. Sheikha Sabika Bent Ibrahim Al Khalifa wife of H.M. the King of Bahrain and President of the Supreme Council of Women; The First Lady of Poland, H.E. Mrs. Jolanta Kwasniewska (a videotaped address); H.E. Mrs. Nana Rawlings, former First Lady of Ghana; H.E. Mrs. Mona Harawy, former First Lady of Lebanon; H.E. Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, Secretary General of the International Organization of the Francophonie; Mrs. Nora EL Sewedy, special envoy of H.H. Sheikha Fatma Bent Mubarak, the First Lady of the United Arab Emirates; Minister Naziha Bin Yadder, special envoy of H.E. Mrs. Laila Bin Aly, First Lady of Tunisia; Mrs. Enaam El Mofty, special envoy of H.R.H. Queen Rania El Abdallah, wife of H.R.M. the King of Jordan; Dr. Bouthayna Shaaban, the special envoy of H.E. Mrs. Asmaa El-Assaad, First Lady of the Syrian Arab Republic; H.E. Mrs. Intissar Al Wazeer, Palestinian Minister of Social Affairs; Mrs. Mary Eisenhower, President of the People to People Organization; Baroness Uddin Member of the United Kingdom House of Lords; Mr. Virendra Dayal, Member of the Indian Human Rights Commission; Mrs. Patricia Harrison, Representative of the International Business and Professional Women's Association; Mrs. Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum; Mrs. Edith Ballantyne, World International League for Peace and Freedom representative; Mr. Bertrand Ramcharam, Deputy UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; and finally an address by Mrs. Baheya El Hariry, Member of the Lebanese Parliament.

Each of the addresses delivered during this meeting stated a valuable experience and a commitment to work for empowering women and activating their role in peace-making and peace-building. At the end of the meeting the First Lady of Egypt summed up the main points raised in the debate as follows:

1. Women must be recognized as key actors in conflict resolution and must be involved in all efforts for peace-making, peace-keeping, peace-building and reconstruction.
2. Women bring to the cause of peace new perspectives and experiences.
3. Since the obstacles to peace are a result of human decisions and not destiny there is a dire need for a more positive role for women in promoting peace.
4. Women suffer disproportionately in armed conflicts, and the Palestinian, Irish, African and Lebanese women are a case in point.
5. Women, as leaders, have proven their valuable contribution to the peace process.
6. Women must be empowered to lead in the peace process for they can make a difference.
7. Women must build coalitions and forge networks, and mobilize as a critical mass in order to work collectively for peace and security.
8. Voices of women are from the sidelines, not from the mainstream.
9. Women have the art of listening to others, to find compromises, and accommodate differences. We must start at the grass-roots level.
10. The link between peace and democracy should be emphasized.
11. The importance of social justice to prevent divergence, conflict and war. Even-handedness is very important for peace building.. Might should not always be right.
12. The importance of the home (family) in fostering a "culture of peace" was highlighted.
13. The importance of involving youth in the peace process and at the same time benefiting from the wisdom of older persons, including women, was addressed.
14. Concrete proposals to institutionalize the Movement would include the formation of an "Executive Council" to guide and monitor future actions. The "Executive Council" should include leaders from

around the world: from political, academic and cultural domains and should take into consideration U.N. Conventions related to the rights of the child and the elimination of discrimination against women.

1 Delivered by Amb. Mervat Tallawy, Assistant Secretary General and Executive Director of Escwa.

The Role of Women in Fostering Peace

Under this item, discussed in working group one, the following points were raised:

1. Increasing the role of women in the promotion of peace and incorporating their concerns in peace agreements.
2. Recognizing the central role of women as bridge builders.
3. Strategies for empowering women for greater political roles, particularly, through education and health programs, should be part of humanitarian and reconstruction programs.
4. Efforts to increase the political participation of women through elections and other means is crucial to peace promotion.
5. Fostering democratic values and respect for human rights is part of the culture of peace, which has to be promoted in homes, schools and communities.
6. The importance of the economic empowerment of women was emphasized.
7. The value of networking at all levels.
8. The role of the media as a powerful force for change was raised.
9. The need to understand and identify with the pain of “the others” as fundamental for achieving peace was emphasized. In this context it was proposed that at future meetings representatives from all parties to any conflict should be invited.
10. The importance of using and understanding the language of peace.
11. Starting the peace process at the grass roots and the family;
12. Women’s own priorities and needs should be the basis for any work on women, peace and security including rehabilitation and reconstruction. External actors, including the UN, should not neglect to identify and address gender perspectives on the ground of sensitivity to traditional values and customs, particularly where local women themselves are calling for change.
13. The need for coordination between the organizations working for peace.
14. The UN was criticized for not living up to commitments made by Member States in different strategies and resolutions. It is important to focus on transforming these resolutions into concrete actions and to request accountability from the Member States and United Nations entities
15. To urge governments to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and to work with “Friends of 1325” to increase women’s participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building. The UN Secretary General’s report on that subject will be submitted to the Security Council on the 25th of October 2002.

A UNIFEM study will be launched at the same time.

At the end of the session the chairman summed up the proposed recommendations of the group participants as follows:

1. The representation of women in all peace-keeping operations and peace negotiations must be increased as a priority issue.
2. The efforts of women’s groups and networks at formal and informal levels should be supported, and successes documented.
3. Women’s issues and concerns should be made more central in formal peace processes.
4. Specific allocations should be made in budgets for peace processes to ensure women’s representation and incorporation of women’s concerns.
5. Training was emphasized as an important instrument. It should be provided as an ongoing process.
6. Counseling should be developed to assist women to deal with conflict traumas;
7. International agencies supporting peace operations and post conflict reconstruction should establish criteria of 30% representation of women.
8. The importance of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325.
9. The UN should fully involve local women in its efforts to achieve peace, while recognizing

the constraints local women may face in accessing and carrying out decision making functions.

10. A framework for conflict prevention was shared as a possible model. The cycle of violence was described as, Atrocity leading to:
 - Shock/Terror
 - Fear/Pain
 - Guilt
 - Anger
 - Bitterness
 - Revenge
 - Retaliation

It was focused that for effective peace promotion, intervention must come before anger hardens into bitterness, revenge and retaliation. Interventions are requested to secure physical, psychological and political security.

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Development

A Woman's Perspective

The second working group discussed the impact of armed conflict on development.

Participants in this group raised the following issues:

1. The situation in Palestine.
2. The impact of the armed conflict in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo;
3. The short term effects of armed conflict on the prime victims, women and children, and its long term effects on development.
4. The effects of wars on the ecological environment and on natural resources.
5. The main factors leading to violence, armed conflicts and wars, especially the scarcity of natural resources or their illegal exploitation.
6. The problems facing refugees and displaced persons.
7. The vicious cycle of unemployment created by terrorism.
8. The consideration of women's rape as a war crime.
9. Women's education and empowerment; economic empowerment being essential for political participation and decision making.
10. The need for a new partnership between men and women that could help lay down a solid foundation for peace.

At the end of the session the group participants' proposals were summed up as follows:

1. To encourage tolerance within and between nations, particularly the need to understand the fears of others as well as those of our own community;
2. To change the logic of force to the logic of reason and ensure the establishment of the rule of law.
3. To establish a new global and comprehensive definition of peace and development to ensure that social, political, cultural and economic factors are all accounted for.
4. To address the root causes of conflicts, particularly, through developing education, respect for cultural differences and traditions. It is important for people to gain mutual understanding and not to allow anger and hatred to distort reality.
5. To re-conceptualize the role of women and realize the importance of partnership between men and women. Conflicts impact the whole society and men must be sensitized.
6. To promote the role of women and increase their representation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace-making, peace-keeping and reconstruction, and call on women's movements to support that role.
7. To develop culturally sensitive counseling to deal with gender specific trauma of conflicts.

8. To build on the peace processes that are prevalent throughout the world and are currently taking place.
9. To realize the importance of the role the media plays in channeling the perceptions on conflicts. and
10. To urge the arms industry to redirect knowledge and technology towards development and rehabilitation.

Women Tell their Stories:

Lessons Learned from Success Stories in Mediation and Reconciliation

During a special session on the first day and through out the conference participants shared their experiences on the role of women in peace building and narrated stories of women who have suffered because of wars. The experiences shared during the conference proved that women can be effective peace agents and actors.

Her Excellency Mrs. Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland spoke of women's role in the ongoing Irish peace process. After several months of intensive negotiations, agreement was reached on Good Friday, 10 April 1998. To reach that agreement women from both sides played a great role in the negotiations, especially the then newly formed Irish Women's Coalition.

Nevertheless, the role of women politicians on the British side was not less than that of their Irish counterparts, as both listened carefully to each others needs and fears. Consequently both sides reached agreement on the necessity to create a space that would accommodate the needs of both sides and emphasized the need for a shared humanity.

Mrs. Edith Ballantyne, the Representative of The World International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) stated that her international women's peace organization, exerted much effort to stop the World War that was devastating Europe, and to seek conditions on which a permanent peace could be built. It was the first women's peace congress that appealed to the neutral states to bring the nations to the negotiating table and talk instead of fight. Although the women's congress was not too successful at the time, they continued to work ceaselessly to end the war system and to resolve conflicts by peaceful means.

Dr. Haifa Abou Gazaleh, Representative of The United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), stressed that officials from her organization went to hot spots like Jennin and Ramalah and met Palestinian women groups and NGOs. She stated that infrastructure there was falling apart, families were collapsing, food was scarce and no health care was provided. To face this tragic situation UNIFEM had to implement emergency programs. They also set a special program entitled, "Employment of Palestinian Women", to strengthen women leaderships and support women's movements. Dr. Abou Gazaleh emphasized the importance of capacity building.

Mrs Saida Bin Hebliss, President of the Federation of Associations for Victims of Terror explained that the Algerian experience throughout history has shown that women and children have always been victims of war and terrorism. However, Algerian women's efforts for peace and stability in their country have been enormous. Women were the first to re-enroll in schools, to participate in the 1995 pluritarian elections and to organize demonstrations to promote the need for peace and stability.

Mrs. Sally Bayoh, Representative of The Mano River Women Peace Network in Guinea (MARWOPNET), stated that MARWOPNET was established in May 2000 by women from Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, to face the deteriorating situation in the sub-region and search for re-establishing regional peace and security. She added that the network organized a series of confidence building and strategic planning meetings involving ministers of defense. They provided the first opportunity for coordination between women peace activists in West Africa and created women peace and development networks in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. She outlined the constrains and needs of refugees, which all call for immediate attention.

Dr. Gret Haller, the Former Ombudsperson for Human Rights in Sarajevo shared her five years experience. She described the atrocities and how individuals on the two sides were treated.

She stressed on the attitude that developed; the “us” and “them” and “friends” and “enemies”. and emphasized the importance of respect for human dignity.

Mrs. Flora Brovina winner of the Millennium Peace Prize for Women stated that before the war, there was no dialogue between Albanians and Serbs . She explained that after the war it was difficult to imagine a dialogue because everybody suffered traumatic symptoms, children lost their parents and women lost their husbands. However, women NGOs managed to start a dialogue between Serbian and Albanian women.

Mrs. Peta Payne from the European Union for Women brought a message of hope from the European Union. She recalled the words of a European politician who said that Europe had been fighting for 800 years but now especially during the past 50 years it has been committed to the principles of peace.

The Way Forward:

Women for Peace Movement

The participants gathered in three working groups, that were held in parallel sessions, to discuss the following three sub-items:

- ✦ *The 2004 International Conference: Identifying Goals*
- ✦ *Partnerships / Networks*
- ✦ *Concrete Actions*

The 2004 International Conference:

Identifying Goals

The participants identified the following goals:

1. To reach a common framework and agree on methods and mechanisms for launching the next phase of the movement.
2. To determine long and short term objectives as well as immediate ones.
3. To create a temporary secretariat for developing a website and disseminating the peace message.
4. To promote values as peace, tolerance, equality and sovereignty.
5. To create effective partnerships and bring the voice of women to peace building processes.
6. To include all parties to a conflict in the mediation peace talks.
7. To exert pressure on governments opting for violent interventions in solving conflicts, through building alliances at the national, regional, international, governmental and non governmental levels, to shift these belligerent attitudes.
8. To hold regional meetings in order to prepare the 2004 global conference.
9. To counter the current projection of violence by the media and bring about a mindset change, peace building awareness should be diffused.
10. To focus on resource mobilization .
11. To report on the work accomplished in relation to women for peace to the 2004 Conference.

Partnerships / Networks

The participants proposed the following objectives:

1. Being reactive for example to situations like Palestine and pro-active to develop a long term goal to create a culture of peace.
2. Networking for mutual support and exchange of knowledge and experience.
3. Drawing on the wealth of experience from women's groups throughout the world by sharing and highlighting the best practices, and success and failure stories. Put success stories on the internet.
4. Creating websites, data bases and newsletters to foster interaction between movement members.
5. Collating existing information and make available to all members of the coalition.
6. Activating a network of women parliamentarians to support peace at national, regional and international levels.
7. Working with UN agencies, governments and civil societies as they are all partners in any peace initiative.
8. Promoting the Movement as an open channel for all women who want to work for peace and be involved in peace making and peace building.
9. Bringing attention to the efforts of girls and young women in the area of peace.
10. Mobilizing women as individuals and organizations particularly through electronic communication.
11. Holding regional meetings to know what initiatives exist and what women are already working on to discover how the Movement can best be maximized.
12. Mobilizing resources to finance the proposed activities.

Concrete Actions

The following actions were proposed:

1. Media

- a) Lobbying against violence in the media;
- b) Producing documentaries and short stories illustrating efforts of women promoting peace.
- c) Encouraging celebrities to support the Movement's cause.
- d) Structuring a media campaign that will accommodate regional differences, variety of priorities, individual interests and specialties.
- e) Buying time on international television channels, to educate the masses and influence decision makers around the world.
- f) Exhibiting war photos in different countries under the title "The Price of War" to show people the horrors of wars.

2. Political Lobby

- a) Writing to parliamentarians urging them to exert diligent efforts to help in solving disputes before they turn into armed conflict.
- b) Urging governments to abstain from sending arms to any feuding party;
- c) Requesting governments to reduce military budgets and to reallocate the resources for peace and development.
- d) Strengthening the efforts of the Women for Peace Movement to be a strong source of lobbying and advocacy that avails itself to the general populace and has the ability to respond to crisis quickly.
- e) Establishing a national institute for women to help them practice their political rights and access decision making positions.
- f) Making all efforts through the international, regional and national organizations particularly through the United Nations to reinforce the fundamental role of women in promoting and preserving peace.

3. Education and Training

- a) Reforming education and including in the school curricula teaching of universal human rights;
- b) Organizing in schools, universities and youth centers "We love Peace" groups, promoting activities that nurture the culture of peace, shedding light on the consequences of wars;

- c) Supporting the development of material on the value of peace and the benefits of universal coexistence for use in children's books, toys and electronic games.
- d) Encouraging communication, tolerance and international mutual understanding between children and youth of the world.
- e) Initiating a tolerance movement towards refugees.
- f) Providing training, especially for women, on conflict resolution skills, advocacy and lobbying.

4. *Involving Grass Roots.*

- a) Promoting the interest of competent NGOs in the **“Women for Peace Movement”** and enhancing their role as communicators between grass roots and decision makers.
- b) Supporting relief work for refugees, as they can also be effective peace advocates.
- c) Working with already existing peace groups to bring together grass roots women.

The Closing Session

The text of the Sharm El Sheikh message **“A Call for Action”** approved by the drafting committee, was introduced by The First Lady of Egypt and adopted unanimously. This message strongly supported the **Suzanne Mubarak Initiative** and launched **The Women for Peace Movement**. It also stipulated the holding of an international conference in 2004 to reach a common framework and agree on methods and mechanisms for launching the next phase of the movement.

The closing statement read out by Mrs. Mubarak expressed, “the great concern and deep regret for the latest developments in the Palestinian territories”, as well as the “deep regret for the victims from among civilians, on both sides of the conflict” and emphasized that “bloodshed can never put an end to violence, or lead to resumption of the peaceful settlement”.

The closing statement also included the following points that were highlighted during the conference:

- ✦ The Sharm El Sheikh Conference calls for the launching of an international **Women for Peace Movement** to reaffirm the unified goal in confronting intolerance, violence, and extremism.
- ✦ The Movement recognizes peace as the sole avenue to human progress and the assured guarantee to fulfill justice, and the principles of freedom, fraternity and equality.
- ✦ The Movement has humanitarian objectives and is not restricted to particular geographical borders or focuses on specific problems, but is rather transnational addressing urgent causes throughout the world without discrimination based on belief, origin or religion.
- ✦ The need to spread the culture of peace to put an end to prejudice and discrimination all over the world.
- ✦ The need to concentrate on the role of culture and media as they influence people's perceptions and understanding of peace.
- ✦ The need to restore and reinforce justice to achieve peace, stability and prosperity;
- ✦ The conference urges the international community to stand for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East; and
- ✦ The conference is a glimmer of hope that leads the path of the participants towards achieving their common dream - “peace”.

Mrs. Mubarak ended the statement with the hope that the Sharm El Sheikh Conference would be the starting point towards a better future for humanity. She concluded that, “When a human being dreams alone, it remains a dream, but when we dream together, the dream becomes a reality”.

WOMAN FOR PEACE

MESSAGE:

SHARM
EL SHEIKH

A CALL FOR ACTION

The conference has unanimously adopted the following message:

We, participants in the Sharm El Sheikh Initiative, women who have come together from various regions of the world, express a new and profound sense of solidarity; a solidarity which stems from our common concern to peace as essential to the protection, improvement and enrichment of the quality of life of all our people: This solidarity transcends differences of religion, ethnicity and nationality .

We believe that women have a central role to play in *advocating* peace; in *defending* peace; in *promoting* peace and in *participating* in its realization and that peace is within our reach.

We believe that empowerment of women is intrinsically linked to our capacity to foster peace.

We are aware that whilst major wars have been averted, they have been replaced by more persistent conflicts, border strife, civil wars, foreign occupation, and terrorism that characterize our world today. These crisis situations have deprived people of their dignity, violated their human rights and subjected them to unnecessary pain and suffering. This state of affairs exacerbates extreme poverty and unemployment, and patterns of economic, political and social injustice. Conditions that are marked by discrimination, rejection or oppression have often led to despair and loss of hope. Women, the youth and children have been the hardest hit.

We strongly support the Suzanne Mubarak Initiative and *launch* a global *Women for Peace Movement* urging all women-groups, associations and organizations -to join the movement, utilizing it as a *platform* for making silent voices heard; a *forum* for dialogue and information sharing; a *means* of building alliances to enhance strength from consolidated action; an *opportunity* for action to ensure a greater role for women in formal and informal peace processes; and a strategic avenue for enhancing the role and visibility of women as active partners in the elaboration of international policies and action for peace.

We encourage women to continue building on existing initiatives such as local, national and international agendas and legal frameworks, including relevant UN resolutions, particularly UN Security Council resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000 on Women, Peace, and Security. The latter should be utilized and adapted to local contexts in order to respond to priority needs. *The Women for Peace Movement* is a positive vehicle for ensuring the implementation of this resolution.

We urge women to work alongside men to find sustainable ways to foster a culture of tolerance, peace and human security. To work:

- 🕊 **in their own families**
- 🕊 **in their own communities**
- 🕊 **in their countries**
- 🕊 **with the media**
- 🕊 **with civil society institutions**
- 🕊 **with political institutions**
- 🕊 **with government institutions.**

PART TWO

Establish, at national level, if not already existing, a women for peace movement or similar entity that acts as an umbrella/coalition under which a number of organizations, associations and youth clubs and movements work together on joint projects and programs that give women capacity and resources that empower them to address specifically the root causes of insecurity and violence in their communities, and map out activities to be undertaken. Monitoring and surveillance is an important component in order to keep track of the outcome of measures taken as well as acting as a conflict early warning system.

Urge women journalists, lawyers and political leaders to contribute to the *Women for Peace Movement* by promoting the principles of equality and non-discrimination in all aspects of political, social, cultural, civil and economic rights, as well as conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peace-building. The use of evidence and documentation on concrete issues and problems touching the lives of those most affected is an essential and powerful tool for negotiation and reform.

We, participants of the Sharm El Sheikh Initiative, strongly believe that during this important gathering, a conviction has grown that an opportunity has been regained to contribute to peace and security, and to enhance human rights and greater freedoms by fostering sustainable economic and social development for greater prosperity. This new spirit of solidarity will require us to embrace the energies, creativity and enthusiasm of committed women, youth and men, and to work together between communities and between states for a better future.

In this context, we believe that this movement is truly action oriented with a window on conflict situations in all regions. It will focus on actions that will reap the maximum credibility and thus ensure global support. It will build on other agencies/organizations efforts and not duplicate their work by forming a mechanism and database for communication among these agencies.

The holding of a *conference in 2004* will provide us with the opportunity to reach a common framework and agree on methods and mechanisms for launching the next phase of our campaign for world peace through the collective strengths of our diverse women's organizations.

As part of our mobilizing strategy, we agree to take concrete action now on ongoing conflicts requiring urgent attention. We will be urging the inclusion of women in government, United Nations observer missions and fact finding missions, peace negotiations, and as special representatives of United Nations Secretary General in conflict situations.

The establishment of small sub-regional groups to foster dialogue among various groups is an important step in achieving peace and conflict resolution.

The development of a strong communications strategy is vital to ensuring that as many people as possible support this movement and its aims. That men and women feel there is a voice of reason they can support. That a critical mass is established to have the power to influence.

The groups should pressure on their governments and legislative bodies at national and international levels.

We hold central the vision that the force of reason can and should assert itself over the reasoning of violence and conflict. *Together we pledge to work on fulfilling the commitments in this Call for Action.* We will report on the work accomplished to the 2004 conference.

22 September 2002
Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt