

International Conference

women defending peace

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Geneva

CONFERENCE REPORT



The Suzanne Mubarak
Women's International Peace
Movement



Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs of Switzerland



**Women Defending Peace, International Conference
Geneva, Switzerland
22-24 November, 2004**

Conference Report

Organized by the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement (SMWIPM) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

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Women Defending Peace, International Conference
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Conference Report

I. Introduction

There has been a great deal written about the characteristics of conflicts and wars that have occupied the world scene since World War II. Conflicts and wars that are characterized by their frequency and diversity, as well as by their causes, patterns, and consequences. From upsurges of communal violence fuelled by inequalities between population groups to interstate conflict relating to border disputes; from movements for local autonomy responding to failed domestic politics and inadequacy of states, to armed criminal networks determined to prolong conflict in their quest for economic profit. Such conflicts and wars, persisting in many countries and perpetuating violence around the globe, have been characterized by some as the face of World War III.

Whatever the causes of conflicts and war, they all have had a heavy toll on the civilian population. In some instances, it was the civilian population itself that was specifically targeted, with entire communities being systematically annihilated. There is perhaps no single group that illustrates better the devastating effects of conflict and war than women and children.

Images of their horrendous suffering are constantly shown to us as powerful portrayals of the gripping effects of wars on the lives of ordinary people— women fleeing zones of hostilities carrying their children and the little belongings they can salvage; women in refugee camps struggling for the survival of their communities; women providing testimonials on the violence endured at the hands of the aggressors, including rape, torture and humiliation; still others weeping the loss of their families, livelihoods, and their sense of hope. And yet, when hostilities have stopped, and an unsettling calm reigns, women are also seen picking up the threads in order to provide economic, psychological and social support for their families and communities. These are the representations of war, which have become etched, in our collective consciousness.

These images of suffering on the one hand and of courage and perseverance on the other, illustrates the unique role that women play before, during and after conflict. They demonstrate women's tremendous strength and determination to keep going, and to invest in healing and reconciliation processes as an alternative to a downward spiral of revenge and hatred.

The courageous spirit of women to foster care and rebuilding in the face of violence and devastation has made a remarkable contribution to peace building efforts around the world. Step by step, they have organized themselves into groups at every level of society, creating an increasingly powerful force to rectify untenable situations. It was women who brought to the international spotlight the issue of rape as a weapon of war, which led to the demand for the recognition of such acts to be designated as crimes against humanity.

Women have increasingly adopted agendas such as declarations banning war, banning weapons such as landmines, or drafting legislation to protect the rights of the most excluded and vulnerable in their societies. The rise in women's movements has heightened the awareness of their potential. Among these are women's movements for peace that have mushroomed worldwide. Because women share a sense of common purpose, a commitment to human values of peace, dignity, human security and the promotion of the common good, they are increasingly prepared to join forces on issues of vital concern. In the face of proliferating conflict, women are uniting to defend peace, to assert their role in finding more effective ways of implementing existing global commitments, in putting an end to some of the unacceptable forms of violence inflicted on women, and in engaging directly in all aspects of peace building, from political negotiation to post-conflict reconstruction.

It is in this context that the present conference was planned. Its uniqueness stems from the fact that it was held under the auspices of the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement, a movement that emanates from the Arab Region which has been plunged in turmoil for so many years, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and the Canton and City of Geneva, a city that has hosted a great number of peace conferences and dialogues and is sparing no effort in the promotion of peace. For both organizing bodies, this conference built on recent initiatives that were held in the interest of fostering peace.

For the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement, the conference responded to the request made at the Sharm El Sheikh Dialogue for Peace in 2002 for a follow-up conference to consolidate a plan of action. For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, the conference followed a recent dialogue that was hosted in Geneva between non-governmental organizations, peace academies and institutions, peace activists and prominent personalities from Palestine, Israel, as well as from other parts of the world.

II. Purpose of Conference

The purpose of the conference was to provide a space for the free exchange of experiences and information among committed women and men from all over the world, representing different cultures, different religions, and yet who all have a shared goal: finding ways and means of enhancing peace. It enabled many who have lived through and endured the countless hardships brought about by conflict and war

to describe their efforts in overcoming them, whether these were through social movements, reforming political processes, or economic reconstruction.

What was important was to enable each and every one to voice their experience, and from these, lessons to be drawn and shared. It fostered a climate of mutual support and learning, and through unity of purpose enabled the building of alliances for consolidated and strategic action to be taken on a few priority issues, in which successful outcomes are to be achieved within a given time frame.

III. Opening Ceremony

The tone of the conference was set by opening addresses by Suzanne Mubarak, President of the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement, and Micheline Calmy-Rey, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland (see Appendix 1)

In their speeches, both Suzanne Mubarak and Micheline Calmy-Rey highlighted the importance of unifying groups and individuals working for gender equality, human security and a just peace in order to maximize their impact for change.

Suzanne Mubarak also drew attention to the devastating economic, physical and moral consequences of conflicts on women and children, and outlined some of the major obstacles that she believes hinder the international community's efforts to prevent such violations of the humanitarian law. In this regard, she made reference to the problem of the dispersion of efforts, the scarcity of reliable and factual data, the generality of initiatives and the lack of quick mechanisms of response on the ground.

Micheline Calmy-Rey focused on the need to channel the skills and experience of women working at the grass root levels to the center of the decision making processes, since they are usually more aware of the needs of their communities. This proportional representation, she believes, is also critical in the formulation of new constitutions and in the election processes.

Joining Micheline Calmy-Rey, Robert Cramer, President of the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, and Manuel Tornare, Vice-President of the Executive Council of the City of Geneva, were also present during this opening ceremony to welcome participants to the Swiss "city of peace". Both Cramer and Tornare expressed their determination to help bring women to the center of peace and security initiatives.

The opening ceremony was also marked by a message from the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, delivered by the Director General of the International Labour Organization, Juan Somavia. In line with the UN Resolution 1325, Annan emphasized the urgent need to protect women and girls from gender-based violence during conflict, put an end to impunity, and bridge the gender gap in peace and security processes. In this respect, the Secretary-General thanked the organizers and participants of this conference for their serious commitment towards the

implementation of this important resolution and the achievement of peace throughout the world.

Welcoming the participants at headquarters of the ILO, Juan Somavia stated that sustainable peace can only be achieved through the adhesion, mobilization and close collaboration of both men and women. (see Appendix 1) It was therefore, he believed, the responsibility of all mankind to ensure the participation of women in all conflict resolution and prevention strategies, as well as in post-conflict reconstruction initiatives. Somavia also thanked all the “women defending peace” present at the conference, and affirmed the ILO’s commitment to support their cause through its researches and programs.

In closing, Suzanne Mubarak and Micheline Calmy-Rey wished the participants a successful conference and appealed for the creation of a strong and unified global coalition of women defending peace as a direct outcome of this serious international initiative.

IV. Summary of Discussions

The discussions focused on the specific ingredients that contributed to successful outcomes, as well as the persistent constraints and obstacles faced by women in fulfilling their role as equal partners to prevent senseless wars and conflicts.

A holistic
Perspective to
Peace

Women and children continue to be the primary victims of war, but they should never be perceived as the victims of peace. They were the first to advocate the utilization of a holistic perspective of peace and human security. While they understand that it is essential to put an end to hostilities, they consider that it is equally important to attend to root causes of wars and conflicts if sustainable peace is to be reached in their communities.

Women's research
emphasize
grassroots level in
building peace

Research conducted by women shed light on the enormous experience gathered at the grassroots level. It portrayed the hardships faced during conflicts and wars and the difficulties encountered in building peace and enhancing human security. These were invaluable lessons to draw from for the future prevention of conflicts and for ensuring the effectiveness of peace building and reconstruction processes.

In the aftermath of war, women have shown that healing the divide is just as important as re-building shattered infrastructure and economies. They have shown that long after guns and bombs have been silenced children and families continue to suffer from the atrocities of weapons buried underneath the soil upon which they tread. The International Campaign to Ban Landmine provided an outstanding example of a successful strategy that alerted the world community to this inhuman state of affairs. At the outset, a couple of non-governmental organization's rallied around that particular cause and developed a well thought out advocacy campaign which took no less than six to seven years to implement.

The effectiveness
of the campaign to
ban landmines

The strategy utilized based its justification on solid factual information that uncovered the magnitude of the problem. There is no doubt that the effects of landmines on civilian populations had been known and the suffering had gone on for years, but the truth had been silenced.

The campaign helped to bring the true impact of landmines and the horrendous cost to human lives to the forefront of public opinion. It showed that wars and conflicts were no longer fought in far away battlefields but instead near schools, playgrounds and homes of innocent civilians.

In addition, because the campaign was spearheaded by civil society and non-governmental organizations that had first hand information on the situation at the grassroots level, more credence was given to their advocacy campaign.

The lessons drawn from this experience were numerous; the value of a well-articulated aim, a well thought out strategy and an effective advocacy campaign. The choice of partners who were willing to share their expertise and resources clearly accounted for the success of this initiative. From an initial handful of NGO's, the campaign evolved into a full-fledged coalition of 1300 NGO's, government representatives and committed individuals who worked relentlessly together for the adoption of 1997 international treaty banning antipersonnel landmines. The careful monitoring and transparency adhered to in sharing facts contributed to a relationship of trust between partners.

Building alliances and partnerships for peace

Although unique in their characteristics, aims and accomplishments, other experiences discussed shared similar principles. For example, in Africa, Femmes Afrique Solidarité began by forging alliances with African gender-sensitive leaders, African institutions and global partners to help increase the focus on gender policy frameworks. They used the power of the media to amplify their messages throughout the broad spectrum of their societies and redress common misperceptions regarding their objectives on the ground. Their strategy was further strengthened by using an evaluation mechanism, which enabled them to assess the effectiveness of their programs and introduce modifications when necessary.

Whilst some women groups worked hard to engender mechanisms of governance, others went even further by actually changing existing governing structures. In Somalia, for instance, women organized themselves into a "sixth clan" to participate equally in peace and political processes with the other five male dominated clans. Through the "sixth clan", Somali women were accorded 33% quota from the total allocation of civil society for representation in high-level conferences.

The detection of conflicts through early warning signals

In Kenya, women groups created their own conflict prevention mechanism by assigning five women in each village to monitor and diffuse brewing conflicts.

At the same time, Kenyan women have continued to assist policy makers with innovative strategies for resettlement and reconciliation processes. For example, the Coalition for Peace in Africa developed the 7R process - relationship building, rehabilitation, reconstruction, restorative justice, reparation, resettlement, reintegration and reconciliation - to be integrated in policies of their country.

These initiatives, and many others like them, have enabled women in Africa to gain credibility when requesting for partnerships in decision-making processes. This credibility, combined with evidence of their positive impact in the fields of peace and security, have allowed African leaders to realize that the involvement of women as partners and the elimination of violence against them was imperative for the continents well being.

50% gender parity in the decision-making process

Consequently, in July 2003, the African Union adopted the Maputo protocol requiring African governments to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and to promote equality between women and men. By adopting this protocol, Heads of State and Government agreed to reach a gender parity of 50% in the African Union. The highest percentage has been reached in Rwanda where 48% of Parliamentarians are women. This increased representation of women in decision making levels has provided them with the opportunity to make their voices heard when peace is threatened or negotiated.

“Women’s issues” are “Societal issues”

Additional success stories emphasized that “women’s issues” were not separate from “societal issues”. Women, who acceded to positions of responsibility, made their dent in all fields of development, such as the efforts to achieve good governance, protect human rights and uphold democratic values.

A good illustration of this point was made in South Africa, where the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) and similar organizations had mainstreamed the issue of women's political participation in already existing socio-political strategies. These strategies were designed to strengthen the country’s electoral processes, good governance, human rights and democratic values. Today, proportional representation governs the country’s electoral system and guarantees the participation of women at the decision-making levels.

Voting requires enabling environments.

Furthermore, programs to curb level of violence against women were developed in order to create an environment that encourages women to feel free to vote in elections - thereby fulfilling their important role at decision making levels. The latter is specifically important, since it has been shown that the right to vote does not automatically lead to women exercising this right.

Much depends on the conditions surrounding the voting procedure, such as the degree of confidentiality adhered to and the incidence of harassment and oppression during elections.

As experiences after experiences were recounted, it became apparent that the partnership of the UN and especially the passing of relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions have provided women's organizations and groups with the additional leverage that they required to activate their objectives on the ground.

For example, the partnerships forged by the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in the implementation of UNSC 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was invaluable in fostering participation of women in peace keeping operations. In Haiti, for example, peace operations have begun to include gender expertise in their assessment missions. The resolution has also stimulated the involvement of women in the peace processes of several nations, including Burundi, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia. It has motivated the participation of women in national elections in countries like East Timor and Afghanistan.

The power of resolution 1325 in negotiating women's involvement.

Resolution 1325 underpinned the necessity of empowering women to progressively assume roles that respond to concrete needs backed by concrete evidence. Ivory Coast's *Intelligencia de la Diaspora Panafricaine*, for instance, uses information on population needs to stimulate the creation of local peace and developmental initiatives.

It was found that women's empowerment should not be seen as that of simply increasing the number of women at decision-making levels. Rather, empowerment meant the opening up of equal opportunities for men and women to accede to positions of authority based on their qualifications, experience and the vision they brought to these positions. It was shown, for example, that women elected to the position of Mayor in Colombia utilized their appreciation of the conditions of their constituencies to introduce a human rights framework designed to redress abuses in their constituencies.

Education: a vital tool for the enhancement of peace

They used education and community programs to increase the capacity of their constituencies to resist armed conflicts and promote peaceful resistance. In addition, the creation of a "Map of Hope" provided inhabitants with a tool to synergize the objectives of positive initiatives undertaken at both the nation and international levels to accelerate needed action in small villages.

A similar principle was used by the Croatian Anti-War Campaign (ARK), which offers education for non-violent conflict transformation, human rights protection, social reconstruction and reconciliation as well as direct support for refugees and displaced persons. With over a dozen active centers, the network also provided help to the unemployed and those severely traumatized by war.

The Rede Feto Timor Leste (REDE), on the other hand worked to raise public awareness on women's rights and violations, as well as in lobbying government ministries for policy change during conflicts in preparation for times of peace.

All these initiatives have gone along way in increasing awareness of the issues relating to women, peace and security, and strengthening the impact of UNSC 1325 in stimulating the inclusion of women in peace process. Nevertheless, as long as women remain “token presences” in these processes, peace is likely to be short lived.

Women should not be “token presences” at the negotiating table

Society is composed of both genders in near equal parts, and an agreement concerning the fundamental dispositions of a society made by only one gender cannot possibly be inclusive and complete. As earlier stated, men’s and women’s capacities are complimentary, and it is only by including both that we can realize our full potential.

It was emphasized that a clear and holistic perspective of the meaning of peace, justice and the rule of law must be achieved if women are to be vital part of peace negotiations. The issue here is not that women would necessarily conclude better peace agreements than their male counterparts, but simply that women and men working together will surely do a better job than either could achieve in isolation.

Conflict is, inevitably, about division, while peace is about recreating inclusive societies of survivors. This means all survivors, whatever their role in the past: whether victims or perpetrators, whether bystanders or beneficiaries, must be included for society to be rebuilt in a sustainable manner. Justice too therefore, must be ‘survivors’ justice, rather than victors’ justice, and peace must be inclusive not selective or exclusive.

An inclusive strategy based on peoples needs is a recipe for success

Swiss Peace in Afghanistan, for example, involved men in all efforts to protect women during conflicts and support their participation in peace. In addition, their programs were tailored to meet the requirements and address the specific needs of Afghani people as a whole. Similarly, International Alert’s Women Building Peace programme strived to ensure that gender perspectives and practical realities were channeled into the implementation of international, regional and national policies on peace and security.

Healing the divide – building bridges of hope

Among the most crucial aspects of peace building and reconstruction that required re-enforcement were reconciliation processes and the restoration of justice. It was emphasized that healing the divide remains a challenge. Investment in reconciliation, therefore, assumes a central role in ensuring that peaceful reconstruction process leads to harmonious relationships in the rebuilding of war-torn societies.

In contrast, wounds that remain unattended quickly deteriorate and become breeding sites of vengeance and violence.

The experiences of Palestinian and Israeli women illustrated how shared hopes and common aspirations for peace can help build bridges and dispel hatred and fear developed as a result of occupation and war. They highlighted the power of informal house visits and dialogue in breaking down barriers and in uncovering the human face of those involved.

Obstacles and constraints reveal perpetuation of injustice

Despite these achievements, many challenges still remain.

The exclusion of women from the majority of conflict resolution, prevention, and reconstruction initiatives rests on the injustices that continue to be exercised in all global societies.

Injustice and the absence, manipulation or corruption of the rule of law represents a major obstacle to women. Therefore, the attempt to restore justice with peace must take into account all the kinds of injustice suffered or perceived by people during, before and after the conflict. Today, violations perpetrated against women have transgressed a threshold of dehumanization scarcely known before.

Women continue to be continuously subjected to abominable acts of violence and aggression, including rape as a principle tool for humiliating them and breaking their dignity. The latter is so predominant that it has become an inherent characteristic of the culture of war.

Conflicts and wars have to do with control and resources profiteering

Discussions affirmed that today's wars and armed conflicts have more to do with the control of resources than about ideology per se. The trafficking of women and children has become a major profit-making enterprise alongside the illicit trade of guns, drugs, oil, and diamonds. Women are treated like commodities, like disposable resources, the booty of war, often under the blind eyes of the rule of law.

Estimated figures of the transnational sex industry were enormous. The numbers of women and children trafficked ran between 700,000 to 4 million each year, if not more. What was even more deplorable was the fact that trafficking of women and children in the context of armed conflict is considered a war crime and a crime against humanity.

However, the existing laws, regulations and international instruments that prohibit such criminal acts and demand serious interventions have often failed to put an end to these practices. Moreover, the severe lack in a female dimension to combat this serious problem only served to aggravate the situation.

Women care about justice and the application of the rule of law

It became apparent from the discussions that women care deeply and passionately about justice and law, not so much about the abstract concept or ideal of justice but about the concrete reality and the lived experience of injustice. They also showed an irresistible urge to remedy this situation.

Moreover, women do not care about injustice only because they are its primary victims and wish to see their personal and individual wrongs righted. It is the moral responsibility for each other that truly underpins this notion. Women care about any injustice that reduces the potential of human beings and their societies. That is what united all the courageous women attending the conference, just as it united them with the many brave men who cared about the suffering caused by injustices as much as them.

An end to impunity is vital

Closely related to the above is the issue of impunity. The common practice of “sacrificing justice at the altar of peace” was found to be unacceptable by any standards, let alone by international law. It was noted that, notwithstanding the relevance of international norms and standards, the international system currently in practice still permits impunity and exceptionality for those enjoy power. In such a world, the rule of law is at risk in all communities. Ending impunity at local and national levels cannot and should not be disconnected from ending impunity and the international level.

Child soldiers: high risk group in war and peace

Another matter addressed was the issue of child soldiers, including forced recruits and volunteers – who choose to join wars and conflicts as a way to escape domestic violence and abuse. On the frontlines of battle, many of these children serve as human mine detectors, participate in suicide missions, carry supplies, and even act as spies. Once the wars and conflicts are over, they face discrimination and stigmatization and find it difficult to rejoin societies. Some of them fall into crime, street life, prostitution and homelessness. Others become the targets for future military and paramilitary recruitments.

As discussions ensued, a call was made to change our concept of security from weapons-based security to human security. As long as security was defined in terms of weapons, military budgets would continue to grow and war would rage on. In this kind of world, military solutions would be privileged over political and diplomatic engagement, and there would be no peace tables for women or men to sit at.

Tackling root causes of conflict as a prevention strategy

The root causes of conflicts, as previously described, rest in inequalities – political, economic and social – that were perpetuated along the lines of social identity, ethnicity, religion and class. It was pointed out that group mobilization to redress such inequalities and grievances, therefore, often occurred along these faultlines.

In cases where desperate groups embraced violence as a means of struggle, for example, it was important to redress inequalities politically, economically and socially. There could be no short cut to peace and security.

Peace agreements have often failed to go beyond the divisions caused during wars and address the underlying causes the systemic injustices, and the brooding grievances that preceded and precipitated conflict. It was stated that most peace agreements tended to seek quick fixes and tried to 'get the job done' as quickly as possible, compromising their sustainability.

In the current post September 11 world, however, it is necessary to distinguish between groups who use violence as a form of political struggle and those who use violence as sheer political terror. Even the latter can make use of the existence of inequalities and grievances to mobilize for their cause. All forms of violence must be cut at their root by working to end inequality, insecurity, impunity and injustice. This is the only way to ensure that the children of tomorrow will inherit a world without war where peace, justice and dignity can finally reign.

V. Adoption of Plan of Action

During this session, participants debated the draft action plan, which reflects their thoughts and recommendations. Below is the final Action Plan adopted by conference participants.

Goals and objectives:

- We, participants in the International Conference Women Defending Peace, express our collective determination to join forces in order to achieve the following objectives:
- Involve women systematically in all stages of conflict prevention, peace making, peace building and peace keeping, including decision making at all levels;
- Reject violence in all its forms and promote peace, where peace is more than the absence of war, but is a state of equal rights, rule of law, mutual trust, participation, involvement and well –being of all;
- Protect women and children, especially girls, in times of war, occupation and conflict against all forms of violence and exploitation.

We acknowledge the considerable efforts and advances that have been made towards these aims at local, national, regional and global levels. However, the world situation remains dismal. We can only achieve success by synchronizing our initiatives more effectively, and by adopting a campaign approach with clear goals and measurable benchmarks.

Strategy:

Towards this end, we resolve today to join our efforts and form a Global Coalition – Women Defending Peace.

The Coalition will bring together women’s groups and other organizations, as well as individual women and men, to combine their respective skills, capacities, best practices, lessons learned and resources to achieve our common endeavor to defend and maintain peace and justice involving women as equal partners. This Coalition will foster further research and will take action to achieve the above goals.

Functions of the Coalition:

The Coalition will magnify the efforts of individual institutions through coordinated advocacy and collaborative activities, drawing strength from the pooling of expertise and experience in the following fields:

- Involve women in all steps of the peace process from prevention to negotiations, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace building and reconciliation, including at decision making levels;
- Protect women and children, especially girls, in time of war, occupation and conflict from all forms of violence and exploitation;
- Stop impunity and bring to justice those responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity;
- Stop trafficking in human beings;
- Raise public awareness and involve civil society in peace-keeping and peace-building activities;
- Translate existing rules and policies into practice, including those of relevant international organizations and institutions;
- Other relevant activities which will enable the Coalition to achieve its objectives.

The Coalition will monitor and evaluate progress on key programmatic areas.

Structure of the Coalition:

The Global Coalition will comprise a steering mechanism, members and partners. A Global Steering Committee will help guide the coordinated actions we seek. Membership will comprise a world wide network of women's organizations, NGOs, expert agencies, academic institutions, national networks, individuals and media organizations engaged in advocacy on women and peace.

Partners will be drawn from:

- (a) The UN system and regional organizations and relevant bodies;
- (b) Committed governments and leaders;
- (c) Bilateral and multilateral agencies; and
- (d) Private sector.

The participants in this conference, with all the diversity and the wealth of experience that transcend nationalities and cultures here present, are determined to reach out to people in all corners of the globe.

Actions:

A huge number of excellent ideas, proposals and experiences emerged during our conference discussions. They run from establishing a World Bank for Peace Initiative, run by women, to preparing a Map of Peace that identifies the locations of ongoing activities involving Women

Defending Peace; from establishing an early-warning network that tracks trouble spots and dangerous situations, to engaging in a dialogue with those who have political, economic or media power; from ensuring no less than 40% participation of women at the negotiating table -- “No women, no table!” -, to education and training at all levels; from special attention to involving youth to ideas and processes for increasing the number of women in influential positions. So many excellent proposals that build on pioneering experience and unsung successes now need to be developed into specific, implementable global action programs as quickly as possible. We shall follow-up on these proposals in due course.

Initially, the experiences shared by participants will be documented and communicated to the secretariat for wider circulation.

Already, based on the discussions and consensus at the conference, we can identify the following three programs that will be implemented by the coalition:

1. Women Defenders of Peace Program:

This program will facilitate the greater consultation with and effective participation of local women at all levels of peace negotiations. From prevention to negotiations, to peace keeping to post-conflict peace building, to ensure the meaningful involvement and effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 in both spirit and letter. Beyond negotiations we will participate in monitoring elections in critical situations, and encourage the participation of women both as voters and candidates.

2. The custodians of peace program:

This program seeks, through advocacy campaigns and the establishment of an early warning mechanism, to protect women from violence and to restore their rights and dignity in accordance with international law, in particular humanitarian and human rights law. It will also use compassionate and culturally sensitive approaches to reintegrate women and girl victims within their communities.

3. The Women’s Peace Watch Program:

This program will involve the media and use other effective means to bring to the world’s attention violence against women and girls including trafficking, in order to end impunity and enforce the rule of law. We will expand initiatives like the Map of Peace to track all endeavors and resources directed to this area.

Measuring Impact:

- The Coalition will monitor and evaluate the above-mentioned programs against the following benchmarks:
- Reduction of violence against women and girls in times of war, occupation and conflict;
- Decrease in the trafficking of human beings, in particular women and girls, during and after armed conflicts; and
- Increase in the number of women actively involved in peace negotiations processes in conflict-affected areas in accordance with UNSCR 1325.
- A baseline of relevant data and indicators will be established at the start of the programs.

Time Frame:

The Coalition will develop a four-year plan of action with annual reviews by the steering committee. A mid-term evaluation will be undertaken and widely circulated. The steering committee will convene the general conference at the end of each four-year period.

Message:

We are determined that this be the launching pad for new global campaign for women defending peace in the world... As we go forward, we proudly declare:

The world is our country.

Humanity is our family.

Non-violence is our creed.

Peace, justice, equality, dignity and human rights are our purposes.

We invite all those who share our beliefs to join us

VI. Closing Session

The closing session was marked by the establishment of “*Women Defending Peace*” *Global Coalition* and the adoption of a formal *Action Plan*.

In her closing speech, Suzanne Mubarak expressed her conviction that such a coalition will not only facilitate and reinforce the efforts individual initiatives but also help to tackle all the issues of common concern. Using a campaign approach, the coalition will focus on the enhancement of women in stages of conflict prevention, in peace negotiations, as well as peace building and reconstruction efforts.

The plan of action also rejects violence in all its forms, and calls for the protection of women and children in times of war, occupation and conflict, and against all forms of abuse and exploitation. The Global Coalition will be comprised of a steering mechanism, members and partners. At the same time, a steering committee will be devised help to coordinate the coalition's actions. Joining Suzanne Mubarak on the podium for the closing session, Shaikha Sabika bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, wife of the King of Bahrain and Board Member of the SMWIPM, envisaged this newly established coalition as a powerful driving force for preserving the dignity of women around the world by protecting their rights and interests and empowering them to be in control of their destiny.

The enthusiasm at the closing was further heightened by solidarity statements from two Nobel Peace Prize winners: Wangari Maathai, Kenyan ecologist and Jimmy Carter, the Thirty-Ninth President of the United States of America. Wangari Maathai, who was awarded this year’s Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to combat deforestation, addressed participants on the need to link their peace initiatives with international developmental goals and projects. Jimmy Carter, who won the same renowned prize in 2002, for his efforts in the context of conflict resolution and human rights promotion, advised the newly established coalition to show tenacity and perseverance in the implementation of their objectives.

In closing, Suzanne Mubarak and Micheline Calmy-Rey emphasized the need for members of this global coalition to meet regularly and keep each other updated on their projects and activities. Suzanne Mubarak also invited the coalition to re-convene in four years time to evaluate its strategies and collaborative agenda for peace and security. They concluded the session by thanking all the speakers and participants for sharing their experiences, hopes and goals with one another during the conference and enabling the creation of the “*Women Defending Peace*” Global Coalition.

“We came together...We worked together...and ...We shall build peace together” – Suzanne Mubarak

VII. Organization of Conference

Background

The International Conference Women Defending Peace was held from November 22-24, 2004 at the ILO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. It was co-chaired by Suzanne Mubarak, President of The Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement, and Micheline Calmy- Rey, Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland. As a follow-up to the Sharm El Sheikh conference 'Women for Peace, Dialogue for Action' held on September 21-22, 2002 under the initiative of Suzanne Mubarak, the Conference brought together a prominent group of women and men who have dedicated much of their work to enhancing peace. Among them were representatives of non-governmental organizations from all over the world, peace laureates, academics, jurists, representatives of international organizations, governments and special invitees.

The Conference Women Defending Peace was initiated and called for by women and men who have recognized the importance of creating and intensifying efforts to achieve peace. In this context, countless examples illustrate women's invaluable role in periods of crisis. Their solidarity particularly transcends differences in religion, ethnicity and nationality, thus providing a valuable springboard for remarkable and creative ways to achieve peace and reconciliation. The Conference was a renewed opportunity to call on women and men to work together in partnerships designed to end situations that lead to despair, and to restore a sense of human dignity as well as respect for the human rights of all individuals.

November 22nd, 2004

Opening Ceremony

Welcoming Remarks: Juan Somavia, Director General, International Labour Organization

Message: Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General

Message: Robert Cramer, President of the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva

Message: Manuel Tornare, Vice-President of the Executive Council of the City of Geneva

Address by Suzanne Mubarak, President of the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement

Address by Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

November 23rd, 2004

First Plenary Session

Panel 1- Women's Contribution and Leadership in Peace-building

Keynote Speaker: Boutros Boutros Ghali, Board Member, the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement

Moderator: Vivien Creegor, Presenter/Anchor for Sky News, and co-chair of the United Nations' 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing

Speakers and topics:

Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize 1997
Banning Landmines

Ivette de Oliveira, Fokupers, Timor Leste
Justice and Reconciliation

Vesna Terselic, Winner of Alternative Nobel Peace Prize 1998
Peace Processes and Post-War Reconstruction

Piedad Cordoba de Castro, Senator, Republic of Colombia
Human Rights Promotion

Zahira Kamal, Palestinian Minister for Women's Affairs,
Winner of Freedom and Human Rights Award 2004
Joining the Peace Table

Bineta Diop, Executive Director, Femmes Africa Solidarité
Action Plan on Women's Empowerment in Africa

Panel Session A

***Discussion with Participants on
Success Stories: Promoting Women's Participation in Peace Building***

Moderator: Mona Harawy, Board Member, the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement

Panelists:

Dehka Ibrahim Abdi, Policy and Learning Advisor, Coalition for Peace in Africa

Sima Samar, Chair, Independent Afghanistan Human Rights Commission

Mary Brownell, President, Liberian Women's Initiative

Susanne Schmeidl, Advisor to Afghan Civil Society Forum and Tribal Liaison Office, Swiss Peace Foundation Afghanistan

Amna Badran, Palestinian Jerusalem Center

Panel Session B

Discussion with Participants on Success Stories: Promoting Women's Participation in Peace Building

Moderator: Ismail Serageldin, Director of Bibliotheca Alexandrina/Board Member, The Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement

Panelists:

Asha Hagi Elmi, Chairperson, Save Somali Women and Children

Ancil Adrian Paul, Programme Manager, International Alert

Dren Nupen, Independent Consultant, Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans

Fatoumata Traore, President, Intelligencia de la Diaspora Panafricaine

Naomi Chazan, Former Member of Knesset, Winner of Freedom and Human Rights Award 2004

Second Plenary Session

Reports from Panels A and B, and Debate

Moderators: Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, and H.E. Anne Marie Lizin, President of the Senate of Belgium.

Third Plenary Session

Obstacles: Protecting Women in War, Supporting Women for Peace

Moderator: Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Journalist, The Independent

Opening Remarks: Rama Mani, Winner of the Federation of International Institutions in Geneva - Civil Society Prize, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Speakers and themes:

Helga Konrad, Special Representative on Trafficking in Human Beings, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Trafficking in Women

Kamel Idris, Director General, World Intellectual Property Organization
Peace Negotiations and Post-War Reconstruction

Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women
Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Prospects for the Future

Celhia Chaix Lavaren, United Nations, Liberia
Women's Movement for Peace, Rights, and Democracy

Yakin Ertürk, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women
Violence against Women in Armed Conflict

Panel Session C

Discussion with Participants on Obstacles: Protecting Women in War, Supporting Women for Peace

Moderator: Afsane Bassir Pour, Journalist, Le Monde

Panelists:

Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Matthias Stiefel, Executive Director, War-torn Societies Project

Rachel Brett, Representative on Human Rights and Refugees, Quaker UN Office Geneva

Elisabeth Rehn, Senior Adviser at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of inland/Chair of working Table I on Democracy and Human Rights at the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Panel Session D

***Discussion with Participants on
Obstacles: Protecting Women in War, Supporting Women for Peace***

Moderator: Nafis Sadik, Board Member, the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement

Panelists:

Patricia Lewis, Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

Emma Bonino, Member of the European Parliament

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Chairperson of the Governance Reform Commission of the National Transitional Government of Liberia

Fourth Plenary Session

***Reports from Panels C & D, and Debate
Obstacles: Protecting Women in War, Supporting Women for Peace***

Moderator: Lyse Doucet, BBC World

The Evening of the Culture of Peace (see Appendix

Moderator: Zohreh Tabatabai, Director, Department of Communication, International Labour Organization

Opening Remarks:

Suzanne Mubarak

Messages:

Juan Somavia, Director General, International Labour Organization

Frederico Mayor, Professor, Autonomous University of Madrid

Adelina von Furstenberg, President, Art for the World

Performance artists: Terese Surssock and Lionel Ritchie

Photo Exhibitions: International Committee of the Red Cross and Laurence Deonna, Honorary Member, Swiss Press Club

Dinner prepared by 'La Table de la Paix' by Geneva Chefs

The Culture of Peace event has been generously supported by the Credit Suisse, Hotel Beau-Rivage, International Committee of the Red Cross, and AEG Live. Fondation pour Genève and Authenticolor (Genève) have also supported the exhibition of Laurence Deonna.

November 24th, 2004

Fifth Plenary Session

Adoption of the Plan of Action

Chair: Gertrude Mongella, Ambassador, President of the Pan-African Parliament, African Union

Moderator: Aleya El-Bindari Hammad - Secretary General, Women Defending Peace

Closing Session

Chair: Suzanne Mubarak

Remarks:

Shaikha Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of H.M. the King of Bahrain and Board Member of the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement

International Solidarity Statements and Messages:

Wangari Maathai, Kenyan ecologist, winner of the 2004 Nobel Prize for peace

Jimmy Carter, Thirty-Ninth President the United States of America, winner of the 2002 Nobel Prize for Peace

Closing Remarks: Suzanne Mubarak and Micheline Calmy-Rey

Side Events

1. 'Peace Women' - The eleven Women who received the Nobel Peace Prize (1905-2003) - Book by Angelika U. Reutter and Anne Rüffer

Armed conflict continues to stalk the world, becoming ever more vicious. It is an appalling fact that in today's conflicts civilians are not just the accidental victims of war, they are increasingly the deliberate targets. Conflict is supposed to resolve what was not resolved in dialogue and negotiations. What remains are misery and destruction, anger and impotence, and last but not least breeding grounds for renewed violence.

The examples of the eleven women in the book 'Peace Women' who have been awarded the Peace Nobel Prize show that other approaches are possible. They decided to stand up for their ideals without identifying with fear, violence, and brutality. They believed and believe – and one may say it in such simple words – in the good in human beings; they believe that humanity can improve.

And they are not to be wavered in their belief. They have stood up for their ideals; they did not remain silent. They face reality; they do not look the other way; they encourage us not to give up. Now, did these women achieve something, or do we have to admit that maybe they have failed because the world – our world – has not become a less-violent or even peaceful world by any standard?

Moderator: Valérie Nadrai, Gender Expert, Political Division IV, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

Speakers:

Jody Williams, 1997 Peace Nobel Prize laureate
Anne Rüffer, co-author of the book 'Peace Women'
Ruth-Gaby Vermot, Swiss MP and President of the initiative '1000 Women for the Peace Nobel Prize 2005'

2. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces Book Project:
Women in an Insecure World

Edited by Marie Vlachová and Lea BIASON
Preface by Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

Current threats and risks have placed the paradigm of human security at the core of global security concerns today. Women hold a vital function, a no negligible half of the world population whose existence is not only constantly threatened by various forms of violence all throughout their lifecycle but have also proven

resilience against adversity, thus becoming key figures in community and peace-building. Violence against women is pervasive, cutting across time and cultures being deeply embedded in societal norms, attitudes and gender identities.

In the increasing magnitude of specific forms of violence today, the book 'Women in an Insecure World, Violence against Women Today: Facts and Analysis', timely examines the roots and scope of gender-based violence, exposes violence against women in daily life, wars and armed conflict and post-conflict situations, and elucidates strategies and solutions to its eradication drawn from recent legal developments and advocacy of women's movements.

The book was elaborated under the patronage of the Swiss Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey, who has stressed the promotion of peace as a priority in Swiss foreign and security policy, placing particular emphasis on human security and the protection of vulnerable groups in society. The side event is an opportunity for an informal forum with the co-editors and authors in the book engaged in eradicating violence against women and furthering peace.

Moderator: Theodor Winkler, Ambassador, Director, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

Speakers:

Marie Vlachová and Lea Biason, Co-editors, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces