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WOMEN  
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# More Than Victims

*The Role of Women in Conflict Prevention*







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# More Than Victims

## *The Role of Women in Conflict Prevention*

### *A Conference Report*

Sponsored by the Conflict Prevention, Middle East and  
Environmental Change and Security Projects of the  
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and  
Women Waging Peace

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#### **Conflict Prevention Project**

The Conflict Prevention Project aims to broaden the understanding of how hard-edged policy analysis of conflict prevention may be infused into decision-making and planning at the highest levels of this government and others. Building on the work begun by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the Conflict Prevention Project emphasizes prevention as policy by sponsoring a distinguished speaker series to emphasize the high-level political attention necessary to shift governments' impulse from reaction to prevention; a series of "issue forums" to refine our understanding of the opportunities for effective preventive action leavened with the reality of a conflict's regional contexts; and a conference series focusing on long-term strategies that help not only make struggling countries better off, but that also help undermine the tendency for societies in transition to succumb to violence.

#### **Middle East Project**

The Middle East Project was launched in February 1998, in light of the importance of the region to the United States and the profound changes the states in the region are experiencing. Current affairs meetings deal with the policy implications of regional developments, regional political, economic, and social problems, American interests in the region, the Middle East in the international system, energy resources, and strategic threats to and from the region.

Since women's issues are of growing importance, the Project organizes meetings on the role of women in Middle Eastern societies. Among the subjects covered are employment, legal rights, political participation, the role women might play in advancing the cause of civil society, and the attitudes of governments, intelligentsia, and the clerical community to women's issues.

#### **Environmental Change and Security Project**

Population growth. Water scarcity. Degraded ecosystems. Forced migration. Resource depletion. Pandemic disease. These are some of the major challenges facing the world in the 21st century—and they are all interrelated. Since 1994, the Environmental Change and Security Project (ECSP) has explored the connections among these threats and their links to conflict, human insecurity, and foreign policy. ECSP programs and publications have examined the relationships among population, biodiversity, disease, water, economic development, migration, political stability, and violent conflict.

### **WOMEN WAGING PEACE** [www.womenwagingpeace.net](http://www.womenwagingpeace.net)

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Women Waging Peace aims to change the public policy paradigm to fully integrate women throughout formal and informal peace processes to prevent violent conflict, stop war, and sustain peace in fragile regions.

The Women Waging Peace Policy Commission, created to respond to the need for a strong academic foundation in the field of peace and security, focuses on research and analysis as underpinnings for policy advocacy. The Commission's work will produce a substantial body of information about women's contributions to peace efforts. Case studies of selected conflict areas and comparative analyses based on those studies will be released in the next two years. For more information, call (202) 403-2000.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Opening</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Setting the Stage: Revisiting Women, Peace and Security Issues</b>	<b>8</b>
Where We Are: UN Security Council Resolution 1325	
The Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and the Role of Women in Peacebuilding	
Promoting Women’s Political and Economic Participation: A U.S. Foreign Policy Perspective	
<b>Women During Wartime: Organizing for Peace</b>	<b>19</b>
Kashmir	
Nigeria	
<b>Peacemakers, Peacekeepers and Peacebuilders: The Importance of Women in Conflict Prevention</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Women in Post Conflict Situations: Building Capacity in the Peacebuilding Process</b>	<b>26</b>
Afghanistan	
Rwanda	
El Salvador	
Lebanon	
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix I: Agenda</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix II: Biographies of Presenters and Moderators</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix III: Participant List</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Appendix IV: Summary of subsequent meeting, “Bringing Women to the Table: Identifying Strategies for Enhancing the Role of Women in Peace Processes Around the World”</b>	<b>53</b>



## Executive Summary

**W**omen represent an untapped resource in peacebuilding. Stereotypical images of women as passive victims of war overshadow their agency and contributions to peacebuilding, and belie the complex reality of women's experiences in conflict situations.

Women are victims, but they are also fighters. Women are survivors and they are protectors. Women are also peacebuilders. In Nigeria, women's groups confronted multi-national oil companies and reached a compromise solution that benefited their communities. In Kashmir, women from widely differing ideological and political positions have joined together on a platform of peace and a rejection of violence to find peaceful solutions to the conflict facing their society. In Afghanistan, women have been instrumental in providing health and education to a generation of children under the Taliban rule and in refugee camps.

Across the world, with limited resources and in spite of threats from their own communities, women are active in peace marches and reconciliation efforts across conflict lines. Portraying and treating them solely as victims not only undermines their efforts and robs them of the opportunity to progress, but it also excludes a vast and untapped resource in terms of peacemaking and post-conflict recovery and transformation.

Women are largely active in the informal spheres, at community and civil society levels, beneath the radar of the international community and the traditional peace and security framework. In Lebanon, only three of 128 parliamentarians are women, while, of the more than 4,000 non-government organizations active in the country, women represent 55 percent of the total staff. Similarly, in El Salvador, as a result of their exclusion from formal post-conflict activities, women began to found non-government organizations that effectively widened the public agenda of democracy.

In situations of civil war and internal conflict where violence reaches into homes and communities, sustainable peace cannot be imposed by the political or military hierarchy alone. The very people who are affected by war must own the solution. Women have their "finger on the pulse" of their communities; they understand the needs and have the ability to root the peace in these communities. Yet they remain excluded from official peace processes.

While international actors, and even local political and military elites, often focus on their exit strategies, women in civil society at the grassroots never have this option. Thus they have a profound personal interest and commitment to building peace and reconciliation.

Including women in peace processes is mandated by international law. In October 2000, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. It is a watershed resolution that calls upon states and all actors to ensure women's full participation in peace processes. The European Union and other regional and multi-lateral organizations have replicated the resolution. Yet over two years have passed and the rhetoric is still not matched by reality. Little has been done to implement 1325. Experiences in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Guatemala and elsewhere show that bringing women to the peace table improves the quality of the agreements reached and increases the chances of better implementation. In Rwanda, where new structures to include women have been institutionalized, there is growing evidence of a qualitative difference in governance for peace.

As traditionalists maintain a narrow focus on "national security" based on military issues, they regard the advancement of women's perspectives and interests as "soft issues"; women continue to suffer from "second class citizenship." Yet it is often women who are the most vulnerable and first victims of the new and emerging threats to national and international security, such as HIV/AIDS, human and sex trafficking, and organized crime — none of which can be considered a "soft issue."

Introducing a "gender perspective" to peace and security issues, including the voices of women from the grassroots, and addressing the needs of all sectors of society should not be considered an "add-on" or a "new issue" for international aid and development programs. It should be an integral part of the basic effort of devising more effective policies and targeting aid more efficiently.



On September 12, 2002, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars\* and Women Waging Peace co-sponsored a conference entitled *More than Victims: The Role of Women in Conflict Prevention*. The aim of the meeting was to move beyond the stereotypical images of women as victims in conflict and to explore their complex experiences as fighters, peacebuilders, survivors and protectors. Discussions highlighted the policy advances in this field, notably the October 2000 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The meeting drew on the findings of the UN Development Fund for Women's recently published report on Women and War, and the Secretary General's report of the same subject mandated by Resolution 1325.

"After fifty years, the Council recognized that international peace and security is advanced when women are included in decision-making...and peacebuilding," said Felicity Hill of UNIFEM, setting the stage for the day's discussions. Carolyn Hannan, Director of Division for the Advancement of Women, outlined the impact of armed conflict on women and the roles they play in peacebuilding. Donald Steinberg, Principal Deputy Director for Policy and Planning at the U.S. Department of State reflected on the U.S. government's perspectives on this issue and the relevance of gender perspectives to the broader security agenda.

Drawing on their work in Kashmir and Nigeria, in the second session Sumona DasGupta and Yomi Oruwari spoke of women's peace efforts in these regions. They emphasized the diverse experiences of women in war and their ability to develop innovative strategies that create spaces for moderation and dialogue between adversaries in situations of intractable conflict and violence. This theme was continued by keynote speaker Ambassador Swanee Hunt of Women Waging Peace as she explored the rationale for the inclusion of women in peace processes. Focusing on the "efficiency" argument, Hunt highlighted the multiple ways in which women contribute to peace processes and reiterated the notion that

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\* Through the joint efforts of the Conflict Prevention Project, Middle East Project, and the Environmental Change and Security Projects at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

women in civil society are an untapped resource in the context of peacebuilding.

The panel on Post-Conflict Situations: Building Capacity for Peacebuilding drew on the examples of El Salvador and Lebanon, Afghanistan and Rwanda to examine the struggles that women face in maintaining their presence in the public arena and their concerns on the political agenda in the aftermath of conflict. Eugenia Piza-Lopez of International Alert and Elizabeth Picard of the Institut d'Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman, explored the strategies that women developed to counter the traditional power structures, to draw attention to women's voices. Homira Nassery of the World Bank examined the relationship between international interventions and the status of women in post-war Afghanistan. Defining women as victims has limited their opportunities, said Nassery; in addition, mainstreaming gender and addressing issues of women's empowerment is still in the realm of the rhetorical. Elizabeth Powley of Women Waging Peace examined women's participation in governance and the process of decentralization and democratization in Rwanda, discussing their contributions to reconciliation efforts and longer-term conflict prevention.

This report provides a summary of the panel presentations and rich discussions that followed. While highlighting many of the challenges that remain, it provides concrete examples of how the international community in general can support women's efforts and peacebuilding processes.

# More than Victims: The Role of Women in Conflict Prevention

## LEE H. HAMILTON

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To begin the day, Lee H. Hamilton, Director of the Woodrow Wilson Center, noted the importance of this event to the Wilson Center as part of its commitment to mainstreaming gender issues. In addition, Hamilton pointed out the position of women as victims of deadly conflict, but also the role that women play in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

“It is one of the great tragedies of the modern world, [and] of the ancient world as well, that women and girls are often the most adversely affected victims of violent conflict – targets for abuse, refugees, inhabitants of shattered communities and states. But time and again women have demonstrated their resilience in overcoming despair and building peace.”

## HARRIET C. BABBITT

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Ambassador Harriet Babbitt, Senior Vice President of Hunt Alternatives, also made opening comments, reiterating the importance of a day-long conference on women’s roles in conflict prevention. She noted that this conference addresses women’s *contributions* to peacebuilding, an emphasis generally overlooked by researchers on gender and conflict. Much of the current literature surrounds issues of the impact of violent conflict on women, rather than their contributions to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Ambassador Babbitt represents the foundation Hunt Alternatives, which supports Women Waging Peace, an initiative begun in 1998 under the auspices of Ambassador Swanee Hunt. Its mission is to shape the public policy paradigm toward the full inclusion of women in both the formal and informal peace processes around the world. The organization maintains a network of women peacebuilders who are actively preventing and resolving conflict and promoting post-conflict reconstruction worldwide. Women Waging Peace helps support and develop these women’s skills as it promotes their inclusion in the formal and informal peace processes.

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**“...Women and girls are often the most adversely affected victims of violent conflict – targets for abuse, refugees, inhabitants of shattered communities and states. But time and again women have demonstrated their resilience in overcoming despair and building peace.”**

**—Lee H. Hamilton**

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**“...Women represent essentially the backbone of reconstruction and rehabilitation and the reintegration of former combatants and the re-emergence of basic economic activity in a society, in a war-torn society, once a peace has been achieved.”**

**—Jane Holl Lute**

To fulfill a need for solid research demonstrating the fundamental role women play in peacebuilding and why their inclusion is vital to the successful implementation of peace agreements, Women Waging Peace recently initiated the Policy Commission. Directed by Sanam Anderlini, the Commission is developing a portfolio of case studies to demonstrate women’s contributions to a wide variety of conflicts in different stages around the world. Women Waging Peace is confident that, armed and primed with this information, women’s inclusion will be better recognized as a necessity for the sustained resolution of conflict, Babbitt said.

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#### **JANE HOLL LUTE**

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In her opening comments, Jane Holl Lute, Executive Vice President of the United Nations Foundation and Consulting Director of the Conflict Prevention Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, provided a framework and foundation for the day’s discussions – both in terms of overall conflict prevention and with specific regard to women’s roles.

“We all know and are in the habit of repeating the fact that civilians constitute 90 percent of the victims of conflict and the majority of that number we know are women and children. And there are two approaches to this dilemma. One is to focus on the children and if you do that you get children. But if you focus on women you get everybody.”

Preventing a war is entirely different than resolving one once it has begun. In order to prevent conditions that give rise to violent conflict from coalescing, capable societies must be created. These societies are characterized by three components: 1) security, 2) well-being and 3) justice for all of its citizens, including its women. Women’s roles in promoting these three causes provide us with examples of their activities toward preventing the emergence, spread or renewal of mass violence, Lute commented.

Women play often unacknowledged but vital roles in sustaining security. Women, despite their common image as victims, take care of their children, of their families and of their communities, especially during wartime. Women are very active on their own behalf in terms of self-preservation.

“Women are often the stabilizing force in the societies in which they exist. This is certainly true in post-conflict settings where women represent essentially the backbone of reconstruction and rehabilitation and the reintegration of former combatants and the re-emergence of basic economic activity in a society, in a war-torn society, once a peace has been achieved.”

In order to prevent the emergent spread and renewal of mass violence, the international community must take seriously the role of women in establishing security, well-being and justice in developing societies worldwide, she urged.

# Setting the Stage: Revisiting Issues of Women, Peace and Security

## WHERE WE ARE: UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

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**CAROLYN HANNAN**, Director of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, opened the panel's discussions by noting the need for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in October 2000. The resolution reiterates the importance of bringing gender perspectives, the issues of concern to women as well as men, to the center of attention in all UN peacemaking, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian activities, and rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. Although the resolution has been cited and utilized in a variety of forums at international, regional, national and local levels, the important next step is to ensure that strategies are formulated to support the full implementation of the resolution at all levels, along with mechanisms to systematically monitor and report on this implementation.

Attempts to implement 1325 include three Aria Formula meetings on women, peace and security convened by the UN Security Council.<sup>1</sup> In addition to Aria Formula meetings, the Security Council has requested briefings from UN gender specialists and from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the gender equality situations in countries in conflict prior to undertaking fact-finding missions to these countries; the Security Council has also consulted with local women's groups and networks in the course of peacekeeping missions. The Security Council formally reiterated its commitment to fulfilling the resolution by holding a session in July of 2002; thirty speakers reflected and debated the practical aspects of implementing Resolution 1325.

In addition, progress has been made throughout the UN system. An inter-agency task force on women, peace and security was established in October 2000 where they developed an action plan outlining various initiatives to be taken by all the different entities of the UN system. At the Secretariat level, efforts have been made to mainstream gender perspectives into areas related to peace, security and post-conflict development. Examples include briefing notes on gender and disarmament from the

Department of Disarmament Affairs; a training curriculum on gender awareness for military personnel and civilian police within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; and, support for local women's networks by the Department of Political Affairs and the Division for the Advancement of Women. The Secretary General has recently appointed a woman as his Special Representative in Georgia, a woman as the Deputy Special Representative in the Democratic Republic of Congo and gender advisers in five peacekeeping missions, including Afghanistan. Many other examples of UN progress on Resolution 1325 can be found in the study of the Secretary General released in October 2002.<sup>2</sup>

However, despite these positive examples, Hannan noted that gender perspectives are not methodically incorporated into all activities on peace and security. To ensure that Resolution 1325 is fully implemented, Hannan outlined a number of essential steps.

First, all UN agencies relevant to peace and security should include more systematic attention to gender perspectives in *initial* appraisals, as well as in mission statements and action plans. Furthermore, gender perspectives should be incorporated into standard operating procedures, instructions, guidelines and manuals, and management responsibilities and professional accountability should be demanded from all staff. Equally important to ensure fulfillment of these activities, sufficient resources, both human and financial, must be allocated.

More specific steps include incorporating gender perspectives into all reports of the Secretary General to the Security Council. All participants on Security Council fact-finding missions should be briefed on gender equality issues. To this end, the Secretariat should maintain a database of women's groups and networks in countries in conflict to enable consultations with these groups and networks. With regard to peacekeeping operations, it is necessary to provide training for militaries and police on a systematic basis. "It's very important in peacekeeping missions to give specific attention to the needs and priorities of women particularly around issues of human rights violations, reproductive health, domestic violence and trafficking."

"In supporting peace processes and conflict prevention, it's important to identify women's concerns and also to fully involve women in conflict prevention activities, to identify and support the informal networks and groups that exist and to consult with local women more fully in the formal peace processes. Because as we know, while women are very actively involved in informal groups and networks, they are not brought into the formal peace processes...It's also very important to look for ways to incorporate gender perspectives and the concerns of women into peace accords and peace agreements."

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**"...As we approach the second anniversary of the adoption of this very important Security Council Resolution [1325], we should have no illusion about the complexity of the issues involved in securing its full implementation."**

**—Carolyn Hannan**

With regard to disarmament activities, female as well as male combatants must be identified. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs must systematically take the needs and priorities of these women into account, in addition to the concerns of the families of ex-combatants.

In the field of humanitarian assistance, women must be fully involved in the management of refugee camps, and gender and culturally sensitive counseling should be available to address the specific needs of women and girls in the camps. Additionally, women need to be given opportunities to expand their skills and capacities to better prepare them for returning to their homes and communities. If more women were decisionmakers and in leadership positions within the United Nations, such as Special Representatives of the Secretary General, or were serving in peacekeeping troops or as police, greater attention would be brought to women's concerns and gender perspectives in all of the United Nation's work.

"...As we approach the second anniversary of the adoption of this very important Security Council resolution, we should have no illusion about the complexity of the issues involved in securing its full implementation. While we've made some important gains, we have a very long way to go before gender perspectives are an integral part of all work on peace and security."

## **THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON WOMEN AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING**

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**FELICITY HILL**, Peace and Security Advisor at the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), furthered the discussion on Resolution 1325, defining it as "...a new threshold of action for itself and for the UN system and for governments." The resolution insists that gender perspectives are relevant to the negotiation of peace agreements, the planning of refugee camps, peacekeeping operations and the reconstruction of war-torn societies. In addition, it is important to note that Resolution 1325 makes the pursuit of gender equality part of every single Security Council action, whether related to country or theme.

"...After more than fifty years, the Council recognized that international peace and security is advanced when women are included in decisionmaking and when they contribute to peacebuilding."

Extremely relevant to these discussions is the October 2002 UNIFEM report, "Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peacebuilding," by Elizabeth Wren and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.<sup>3</sup> Based on



interviews with women in thirteen war-affected countries, the report urges that global security be redefined to include the human dimension, “one that includes lives free of violence - including violence against women - and HIV/AIDS. And one that fully recognizes women’s participation and leadership in peace processes and reconstruction,” according to UNIFEM Executive Director, Noleen Heyzer.

The NGO community should be commended for its worldwide distribution of Resolution 1325 and its related training, Hill said. As a result, women in the most unlikely places have heard of the resolution and call upon it in their work.

It is useful to make a qualification before beginning to discuss women, peace and security, Hill suggested. Women and men, both stakeholders and combatants in conflict, are rewarded for their support of war. The argument is not that women’s innocence is universal or that women are inherently more peaceful or men inherently more warlike. Conflict often causes fluidity in gender roles with women obtaining mobility, time and access to resources that they do not ordinarily have. However, that space is generally not used to secure permanent and lasting gender transformation.

The women that do utilize the window of opportunity need tremendous support to advance the skills they have developed during conflict. Unfortunately, illiteracy and poverty make it virtually impossible for the experiences of women to be heard by the international community. Other obstacles to women’s organization and visibility include resistance from husbands, fathers and communities.

“...The quest to tell the good news about women’s peacebuilding activity should not sway us from the fact that women really are victims of all kinds of violence and discrimination that inhibits them from taking control of their own lives, let alone taking decisions about war and peace...There’s a real tension here in getting this balance between victim and agent right...”

And yet, according to Hill, women continue to do incredible and amazing things. “They’re sharing information and analysis. They’re collecting signatures for petitions. They’re organizing demonstrations and campaigns. They’re reaching out over borders. They’re forming networks. Often they’re anticipating early signs of danger and lobbying for ceasefires,” she said.

Women also participate in less formal peacebuilding activities, such as taking in orphans and assisting in the reintegration of combatants and child soldiers in the community. In Bosnia, women identified the need for mobile medical clinics to go from village to village to serve health and psychosocial needs. In Colombia, women risked their lives by marching in the

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**“...After more than fifty years, the [Security] Council recognized that international peace and security is advanced when women are included in decisionmaking and when they contribute to peacebuilding.”**

**—Felicity Hill**

streets for peace. In Albania, women collected weapons. The range of women's activities for peace is incredible, she remarked.

Hill outlined nine areas identified by UNIFEM experts that require action:

**PREVENTION.** Information about and from women needs to be integrated into early warning mechanisms. For the Security Council to respond appropriately, systematic and regular information must be collected, analyzed and available.

**PROTECTION.** There is an enormous gap in the legal and physical protection offered to women during and after conflict. Impunity prevails for widespread crimes committed against women.

**HIV.** The enormous nexus between HIV and conflict has not been well documented. Hill quoted the Secretary General's Special Adviser on AIDS in Africa, Stephen Lewis, as stating that, "HIV/AIDS feasts on gender inequality and war."

**PEACE PROCESSES.** According to Hill, formal negotiations excluding half the population have little hope of popular support. Quotas have brought women into the political process in a variety of places, and have met with significant success.

**PEACE OPERATIONS.** Hill reiterated Hannan's earlier recommendation that consideration of gender must begin in the assessment stages of peace operations.

**CODES OF CONDUCT.** Recent reports note that humanitarian workers themselves have committed various atrocities in the field. The Secretary General has thereby issued a report advocating a "zero tolerance" policy on such actions. Rules on how the international community should interact with the local populations must be more clearly articulated and implemented.

**REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.** Universal standards can be more easily implemented when a framework between regional organizations and the United Nations is firmly in place.

**DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR).** Women play a variety of roles within armed groups, whether as forced sexual slaves, carriers, cooks or combatants. "And," according to Hill, "no matter what role women played in armed groups, they, too, need to have programs and opportunities to be retrained and replaced in the community just as combatants do under DDR programs."

**RESOURCES.** According to Hill, a sound economic basis is what helps create just communities and provides opportunities for women to enter into the public field. She argued that resources are available for peace, despite popular belief. In fact, indicated Hill, such available resources are spent on military equipment and preparation for war. The founders of the United Nations, in Article 26 of the Charter, recommended that the Security Council should conceive a plan of action for the least diversion of the world's resources to armament. The Women's Peace Petition echoed this article when, in 1999, 99,000 women signed a petition directed at the Secretary General which asked for military budgets to be cut by five percent per year for the next five year to make available funds to fight for peace and justice throughout the world.

### **PROMOTING WOMEN'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION: A U.S. FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVE**

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A self-defined “designated mainstreamer” of issues related to women and peacebuilding, **Ambassador DONALD STEINBERG, Principal Deputy Director of Policy and Planning at the U.S. Department of State**, began by noting that issues related to conflict prevention in general and the role of women in particular often get lost in the shuffle of crisis management. However, it is precisely in the middle of crises that these issues should take center stage, he suggested.

Although the day's discussions focused on women's contributions to conflict prevention, Steinberg said that it is still worthwhile to reiterate the impact that conflict has on women. When social order and rule of law break down, it is women who suffer most. When men and teenage boys go off to war, women become the heads of households and must provide food, income and security for remaining family members. Women are subject to gender-based violence, used deliberately as an instrument of war and often suffer from deep psycho-social trauma. One alarming example comes from a recent Physicians for Human Rights report which states that one sixth of women in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan have attempted suicide.<sup>4</sup>

The breakdown of health structures during conflict results in skyrocketing maternal and infant mortality rates. Trafficking in women and girls increases when social order falls apart. In addition, women bear the brunt of displacement, leading their families to refugee camps or temporary shelters for the internally displaced and taking care of them throughout unstable circumstances. Women, as the primary farm workers and collectors of firewood, are disproportionately the victims of land mine accidents. And, even

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**“...You still hear the advancement of women’s interests in these situations described as the ‘soft side’ of American and other countries’ foreign policy. ...There’s nothing soft about preventing armed thugs from abusing women in refugee camps or holding warlords accountable for their abuses against women or insisting that women have a seat at the table in peace process or post-conflict governments.”**

**—Donald Steinberg**

after the killing stops and the soldiers return home, it is women who run the risk of being subjected to rising levels of domestic violence and alienation.

From the perspective of the U.S. government, specific activities to expand opportunities for women in the political and economic lives of their countries are being undertaken to give full meaning to UN Security Council Resolution 1325. According to Steinberg, this is not just a question of equity or fairness, rather, “Bringing women to the peace table improves the quality of the agreements reached and increases the chances that successful implementation will be achieved.”

The single most productive investment in revitalizing agriculture, restoring health systems and improving other social indicators to prevent conflict or to restore societies after conflict is women’s and girl’s education, he said. In September 2002, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell reminded the delegates at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg that development programs work best when they involve women as planners, implementors, and beneficiaries. Furthermore, insisting on full accountability for actions against women during conflict is essential to establish rule of law.

“This issue still suffers from second-class citizenship. Despite the heavy emphasis placed on these issues, you still hear the advancement of women’s interests in these situations described as the ‘soft side’ of American and other countries’ foreign policy. And yet we all know that there’s nothing soft about going after traffickers and human suffering. There’s nothing soft about preventing armed thugs from abusing women in refugee camps or holding warlords accountable for their abuses against women or insisting that women have a seat at the table in peace process or post-conflict governments.”

Steinberg and others in the U.S. government have recognized the failures of past peace processes to include women at the table, specifically in his experience as U.S. ambassador to Angola from 1995 to 1998. Despite a Special Representative of the Secretary General sensitive to gender-based issues, a human rights commission focusing on gender issues, and programs designed to enhance the role of women in the political and economic life of the country, when Angola relapsed into conflict in 1998, issues concerning women were de-prioritized. Thus, the Joint Peace Commission meeting comprised of the Angolan government, UNITA, the United Nations and the troika countries of Russia, Portugal and the United States omitted the presence of women.

“In Angola, we soon realized and recognized that we were missing a real opportunity to lay the groundwork for post-conflict equality and reconstruction by bringing women to the table to plan for emergency

assistance; by using women's non-government organizations to distribute relief; by assigning gender advisers to prevent domestic violence as ex-combatants returned to their homes; and, by ensuring women a seat at the table in the talks themselves."

The U.S. government has learned from these experiences and in the current crisis in Afghanistan has made women's participation a high priority in all efforts, Steinberg said. The White House, in particular, pushed for full participation of women in the political conference in Bonn, in the reconstruction conferences in Washington and Tokyo and in the Loya Jirga in Afghanistan.

Yet, Steinberg argued, "Words alone cannot ensure women a seat at the peace table." Thus, the U.S. government has begun a variety of practical steps to translate words into actions enhancing the political and economic participation of women around the world. Within the U.S. Department of State, the Office of International Women's Issues and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor are assisting women's organizations and ministries of women's affairs to promote women's rights and involve women in peace-building and post-conflict political structures. The Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration is addressing women's and girls' education, psychosocial trauma, special feeding programs, mother-child healthcare and protection services for refugees and internally displaced persons. Training programs on these issues have been implemented for junior, mid-level and senior offices at the Foreign Service Institute. In addition, exchange programs sponsored by the Bureau for Educational and Cultural Exchange draw women from across the political, geographic and ethnic spectrum.

In addition, new U.S. partnerships with developing countries will place importance on women and girls. For example, the Africa Education Initiative will train 160,000 new teachers, mostly women, and provide scholarships for 250,000 African girls. The Global Food for Education program will provide school feeding programs for seven million children, with a particular emphasis on girls, while more U.S. development aid is supporting projects relevant to women, including maternal health, girls' education, HIV/AIDS, micro-credit and the strengthening of civil society, he said.

Steinberg reminded participants that although much has been accomplished, the process of including women in conflict prevention and peace-building efforts has only begun. "For every picture of a woman speaking to the Loya Jirga in Afghanistan or girls returning to schools in that country, there are dozens of countries around the world where women are systematically excluded from peace processes and post-conflict governance and where girls' access to education, health and other social services is minimal," he concluded.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

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Moderator **SANAM ANDERLINI, Director of the Policy Commission of Women Waging Peace**, opened the question and answer session by commenting that although women are victims in conflict, in no way are they *passive* victims. As noted by the speakers on the panel, women sustain their families during conflict, mobilize for peace and rebuild their communities. It is the responsibility of the international community, Anderlini said, to recognize these roles and harness these efforts.

“Bringing gender in is not an ‘add-on’; it should be part of the basic efforts of any kind of program. The needs of both men and women must be addressed. We’re not asking for new things. It’s just asking people to do their jobs properly.”

Rosemary O’Neill of the U.S. Department of State’s Office of International Women’s Issues commented on the self-empowerment of women in the Afghanistan and Northern Ireland conflicts and peace processes. Women held their communities together, developing leadership skills later utilized in the peace process to organize political parties, run for office and obtain seats at the negotiating table. O’Neill pondered whether women in other violent situations experienced similar empowerment.

In response, Carolyn Hannan qualified O’Neill’s statement, noting that, although women may by necessity gain certain skills during conflict, in reality, the situation is an overwhelming psychological and physical burden for the women and not necessarily empowering in itself. Women do fill in gaps left by men; women do become more politically active; and women do take on economic positions. But, unfortunately, these gains are very difficult for women to maintain in the post-conflict environment as women are expected to return to their pre-war positions in society.

Felicity Hill added an example of women’s empowerment and action in the formation and activities of the Mano River Women’s Peace Network. This network was organized by women in West Africa to prevent the eruption and spread of violent conflict in the region.

Ambassador Steinberg also added that it is nearly impossible to separate the issues of women’s empowerment in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction from the fact that women and girls are systematically marginalized from educational opportunities and equal access to the rule of law, prohibiting their participation in formal peace processes. Steinberg argued that women’s empowerment across the board is vitally important to the advancement of women into the formal peace process.

Anne Henderson of the U.S. Institute of Peace's Training Program noted the need to not only address and combat men's behavior and attitude with regard to conflict transformation, but many women's as well. In her experience with women's non-government organizations in the Caucuses, women often support the male political leaders' ideas about conflict, including the need to defend territorial integrity and suspicion of other ethnic groups. Women, in this case, did not unite through their gender to question such positions.

Carolyn Hannan noted the importance of recognizing that women are not a homogenous group, but are, in some cases, active combatants or war supporters or victims or mobilizers for peace. Furthermore, Hannan noted that particularly in recent years, men have been subjected to incredible brutality and violence as men, in the same way that women have been subjected to violence because they are women. Felicity Hill added to Hannan's points by noting that, although it is true that women may buy into the war agenda, oftentimes they are following decisions, not making them.

Carmen Lomellín, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States, posed the question of the ability of women in high leadership positions in government, such as foreign or defense ministers, to have an impact on conflict resolution and on the role of women. Currently, El Salvador and Colombia have women foreign ministers, and Chile recently appointed a woman defense minister.

In response, Felicity Hill argued that in supporting women in decision-making roles, it is important to ask the question of the background and ideals of those women. Additionally, in isolation, women in leadership positions face multiple behavioral and cultural "modus operandi" that they alone cannot necessarily bypass, overcome or transform. According to a report from the UN Division for the Advancement of Women and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, a critical mass of 30 percent of women is required to change the tone, style and culture of a peacekeeping operation. Hill asserted that that same amount is necessary in governments, inter-governmental agencies and non-government organizations to mainstream the agenda of women, peace and security.

Ambassador Steinberg added his personal experience during the peace negotiations in Angola where all the participants including militant officers, government delegates and representatives of international organizations were male. In that environment, where there is no one who simply by their presence is a reminder of the impact of conflict on civilians, a different dynamic exists.

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**“Bringing gender in is not an ‘add-on’; it should be part of the basic efforts of any kind of program. The needs of both men and women must be addressed. We’re not asking for new things. It’s just asking people to do their jobs properly.”**

**—Sanam Anderlini**

Carolyn Hannan reminded the audience that gender mainstreaming means changing attitudes and actions. For that to occur, the attitudes and working manner of every peacekeeper, police officer and administrative individual, in addition to the gender units and specialists working on these issues, must recognize the value that women add.

Francesco Tornieri of the World Bank's Gender Unit pointed out the difficulties of translating the principles and resolutions into viable policy strategy and action plans. According to Tornieri, the disconnect between advocacy and policymaking must be overcome through the difficult task of gender mainstreaming.

In response, Carolyn Hannan noted the need to "unpack" the recommendations in the various resolutions into concrete activities for target audiences. According to Hannan, the United Nations, in collaboration with the development organizations such as the World Bank, should assist governments with this implementation.

Felicity Hill agreed with Tornieri's argument: that the advocacy message and the rhetorical agenda does not often become reality. For example, in the United Nations programming in Afghanistan, despite spoken emphasis on the importance of assisting the women in that country, less than one percent of the budget had direct relationship to women.

To conclude the discussion, Sanam Anderlini reiterated the complexity of the topic of this panel. Women play diverse roles – they are victims, combatants, supporters of war and builders of peace. The various international institutions operating in this field are confronting this complexity, as well as apathy within the implementing organizations themselves, as they advance the agenda of women, peace and security.

## NOTES

1. Aria Formula meetings are informal meetings that allow the Security Council to dialogue openly with various non-governmental organizations and members of civil society.

2. United Nations. (2002). *Women, Peace and Security: Study Submitted by the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*. Available online: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/eWPS.pdf>

3. United Nations Development Fund for Women. (2002). *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peacebuilding (2002)*. Available online: <http://www.unifem.org/resources/assessment/index.html>

4. Physicians for Human Rights. (2001). *Women's Health and Human Rights in Afghanistan: A Population-based Assessment*. Section III Women's Health and Human Rights Survey: [http://www.phrusa.org/campaigns/afghanistan/Afghan\\_report.html](http://www.phrusa.org/campaigns/afghanistan/Afghan_report.html)



# Women During Wartime: Organizing for Peace

## CASE STUDY: KASHMIR

**SUMONA DASGUPTA**, Senior Program Officer, Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), began her presentation by reiterating the importance of “unpacking” UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in order to understand its implications and potential for women on the ground.

To frame the discussion on victimhood versus agency even further, DasGupta emphasized that while there is extensive literature on political violence and armed conflict, even in the context of South Asia, the micro-analyses leaves out the role of women. The existing literature on the role of women has assumed two kinds of overtones. One is essentialist, defining women as inherently peaceful and men inherently warlike. The other is a discourse of “victimology,” that women are victims of conflict. Yet women are now proving they are much more than victims. For example, the Naga Mother Women’s Association was the first group in India and in South Asia to actually sit with the government of India at the peace table and negotiate a ceasefire. In short, there is a need in the field to move toward a more comprehensive understanding of the complex roles and interests of women and men as victims and as agents in armed conflict and in the building of peace.

An estimated 30,000 to 40,000 lives have been lost in the tragic conflict that continues to engulf the valley of Kashmir. DasGupta argued that, apart from the sheer number of deaths, the people of Kashmir are forced to bear agonizing hardships as they carry out their everyday lives in the midst of militants and security forces. Still, as DasGupta pointed out, it is the women of Kashmir who have bore the brunt of the violence.

“It is [the women] who have to ensure that the battles for everyday life continue as normally as possible even when times are far from normal. It is they who have had to come to terms with the violence whether it comes from guns of the security forces or bullets of the militants. And once again it is the women who have had to provide solace to the rest of the household following the loss of a husband or a son or a brother...”

DasGupta asserts that the shouldering of such additional responsibilities is exactly what has empowered women, compelling them into a new

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**—Sumona DasGupta**

domain. After WISCOMP convened a roundtable entitled “Breaking the Silence: Women and Kashmir,” the delegates from Kashmir requested that WISCOMP facilitate the formation of an all-Kashmiri women’s organization, named “Atwas.” In Kashmiri, Atwas means “to reach out and to shake hands.” Women of all backgrounds – Muslim, Hindu and Sikh – have come together out of a common commitment to peace, exhibiting a first real step towards conflict transformation in Kashmir.

The Atwas group visited a village in the border district of North Kashmir where the example of women as both victims and agents is particularly strong. According to reports, this village consists only of 100 to 150 widows whose husbands and sons have been killed or jailed in the conflict. According to DasGupta, the Atwas group expected the widows to be steeped in sorrow. However, it had been eight years since the deaths of the husbands and the widows now identified themselves primarily as survivors. The women of that village had moved from the private to the public space. They go to the relief office and negotiate for assistance, interact with local authorities, collect wood in the jungle, grow maize and work as laborers.

The Atwas group has collected and recorded numerous similar stories of Kashmiri women who transformed from victims to agents. Clearly, DasGupta argues, practical examples of victimhood and agency exist, and the discourse must now develop into a more nuanced understanding of these concepts.

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#### **CASE STUDY: NIGERIA**

According to **YOMI ORUWARI, Professor of Architecture at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology in Port Harcourt, Nigeria**, her country is engulfed in a variety of internal religious, environmental and ethnic crises that have increased in number and intensity over the past ten years. Despite the fact that Nigeria is not in a state of war, Oruwari said, these various crises and conflicts are actually quite violent.

Oruwari focused on the Niger Delta region, the primary oil mining area of Nigeria. There, women have taken an active stand to broker peace during crises, specifically between the oil-prospecting companies and the community in which they reside.

In a less successful example, women in one village in the Rivers State organized a peaceful demonstration in the hopes of gaining an audience with the management of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC). Oil was first struck in that community in the late 1950s, and from the beginning the SPDC neglected to involve the village in decisions. Youths in the community accused the chiefs and elites of corruption in the village negotiations with the SPDC and conflict emerged. Arson and

assaults on elders took place, and in 1990, the women decided in their monthly meeting to convey their concerns to the management at SPDC.

When the SPDC refused to meet with the women, they organized a peaceful demonstration carrying leaves, which as part of Nigerian tradition, denotes nonviolence and peaceful solidarity. However, the SPDC riot squad dispersed the crowd with tear gas and shot into the group. Many women were seriously injured and one was killed. As a result, the men and youths attacked the SPDC and the reinforcement police squads, escalating the situation. However, on a more positive note, SPDC, after making financial compensation for destroyed property, also provided a clinic, pipe-borne water, electricity and a primary school. Yet, in the opinion of Oruwari, this is little compensation for years of total neglect.

A second and more recent intervention by women occurred in 2002 in the Delta State, another high oil-producing area of Nigeria. In this case, women from the community, protesting against Chevron's operational accidents and disaster response policies, among others, occupied a tank farm that served as the business nerve center of Chevron Nigeria Limited in the Delta State. Their occupation interfered with Chevron's operations and forced them behind schedule.

In response, Chevron negotiated peacefully with the women and other stakeholders, and all parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding stressing the company's commitment to community development projects and economic empowerment programs in the region. According to Oruwari, Chevron learned from the experiences of Shell and worked with the women for a peaceful solution.

Historically, in times of conflict, women organize for peace. Governments, Oruwari argues, are often ineffective at peace efforts and merely contain conflicts in the short-term. Non-government organizations and donor organizations should assist women, capitalizing on their efforts to improve methods of peacebuilding toward the goal of eradicating conflict.

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD**

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The moderator for the panel, **HALEH ESFANDIARI, Director of the Middle East Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars** opened the floor for questions on each of the case studies and on these issues in general.

Leah Hoffman from the Center for International Policy asked about the current situation of the widows discussed by Sumona DasGupta particularly vis-à-vis the militant operations. In response, DasGupta noted the trend of women's activism in the region is generally more informal. In one case,

though, a woman has begun an Association of Disappeared People to highlight the desperate situation of widows who, without an official declaration of death of their husbands, cannot receive benefits from the government. Called “half-widows,” these women have mobilized into an entire association, now pressuring the government for information on their loved ones.

Yomi Oruwari, in response to a question regarding the networking of Christian and Muslim women, noted that the two groups are generally divided by region. As a follow-up, Haleh Esfandiari questioned the role and situation of Muslim women in Nigeria vis-à-vis *sharia* law. Oruwari pointed out that when *sharia* was introduced, it was the more educated Islamic movement that led the discussions; the women’s groups did not participate as such. Women in the Muslim regions of Nigeria did vote for *sharia* to be included in the constitution, but, according to Oruwari, they did not realize the effect of the law’s passage, and in many cases, they were responding to familial pressures. The fairness of *sharia* and its harsh sentences against the poor and women without much recourse to the federal government or to the courts is of grave concern.

**ANITA SHARMA, Deputy Director of the Conflict Prevention Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars,** tying this panel to the first, requested elaboration from each of the panelists on their work with the United Nations and others to further the missions and goals of their organizations. In response, Yomi Oruwari pointed out two faults with UN and U.S. interventions – 1) Organizations have pre-conceived ideas of what should be done and how; and, 2) Many programs are “one-shot” in design and do not achieve sustainability. The local populations, and specifically women, should be consulted in the design and implementation of international programs. Sumona DasGupta reiterated the importance of internalizing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to call upon it when working with international organizations.

In response to the question of implementation by Carla Koppell of Women Waging Peace, Sumona DasGupta stressed the importance of recognizing and capitalizing on women’s activities in the informal spaces. She reiterated the importance of the contributions of the Naga Women’s Associations and others in keeping the peace in their community and brokering peace between warring factions in the region. Women are not always in the formal space but can easily be found working informally in their homes and communities and contributing to peace. To follow on that point, Yomi Oruwari noted the importance of increasing the number of women in formal politics so they might link with the women operating in the informal sphere and work together for peace.

## Peacemakers, Peacekeepers and Peacebuilders: The Importance of Women in Conflict Prevention

**A**mbassador **SWANEE HUNT**, Director of the Women and Public Policy Program in the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and Director of Hunt Alternatives opened her remarks with the reminder that the seeming intransigence of conflicts continues to confound leaders around the world in their efforts at peace and conflict resolution. Yet, as discussed in earlier panels, untapped resources exist to aid and advance these efforts – women peacebuilders in countries of conflict worldwide. In order for mainstream leaders and organizations to recognize women as a resource, a fundamental shift in the policy paradigm is required – a shift away from past definitions of security to, what Ambassador Hunt terms, “inclusive security.”

“In short, it must become unthinkable not to have women intricately involved in every stage of the peace process, whether that is conflict prevention or conflict resolution or post-conflict stabilization.”

Cultural stereotypes thwart societies from looking to women for solutions. Men make war and negotiate peace; women, on the other hand, are often victims, Hunt said. Inclusive security rests on the principle that women are more than victims and bring rich experiences and different perspectives to the peace table. Other arguments for women’s inclusion include 1) Representation as half of the population; 2) Compensation as victims; and, 3) Rights both short and long-term through participation in negotiations. Hunt chose to direct her presentation to a fourth concept — what she calls the “efficiency argument” for women’s inclusion in the peace process.

“For lasting stability, we need to have peace promoters, not just warriors, at the negotiating table. And more often than not, those peace promoters are women.”

It has been well-studied that women are generally more adept at building relationships that bridge ethnic, religious and cultural divides due to their social and biological roles as nurturers. Whereas most men come to the negotiating table directly from the battlefield, women usually arrive from civil activism and family and community care with a “finger on the pulse” of the population that must live with conflict and with a peace

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**“In short, it must become unthinkable not to have women intricately involved in every stage of the peace process, whether that is conflict prevention or conflict resolution or post-conflict stabilization.”**

**“For lasting stability, we need to have peace promoters, not just warriors, at the negotiating table. And more often than not, those peace promoters are women.”**

**—Swanee Hunt**

agreement. This, in part, motivates women to become the more powerful voices for moderation in times of conflict.

As a host of negotiations during the war in Bosnia, Hunt remembers that the sixty person negotiating team was all male, despite the fact that the women of Yugoslavia hold more doctoral degrees than women in any other country in Europe and had been active in mobilizing for peace. This situation resulted in a peace agreement designed by warriors and war criminals who came to the table without peacebuilding credentials. Almost seven years later, millions in the Balkans remain displaced, and the region remains unstable, she said.

Hunt pointed out that women, because they are rarely perceived as those behind the gun, are often less branded after the conflict is resolved. This grants women an ability to cross battle lines, connect with the opposition and work for peace. Hunt gave the example of a Palestinian woman who held up her hands and yelled for the Israeli soldiers to stop shooting and allow school children to cross the street safely – which they did. The woman noted afterward, “If I had been a man, I would be dead.”

Another example of a more formal process of crossing the lines of conflict is that of the formation of the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition. When only political parties were allowed to participate in the peace negotiations, Monica McWilliams and May Blood gathered signatures for their own political party. In less than six weeks they had collected 10,000 signatures and won enough votes for two seats in the Parliament and a place at the peace table. The only nonsectarian party, the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition, drafted key clauses in the Good Friday Agreement and in the subsequent referendum.

Unfortunately, however, Hunt noted, in most cases, women have not participated in formal peace processes and work outside of traditional power structures. But as a result, they are more practiced and adept at working creatively for solutions acceptable to the community. For example, at age 26, a young Rwandan woman became the post-genocide Minister for Families and Gender responsible for the design of a program for the adoption of half a million orphans. Shortly thereafter, Aloisea Inyumba, in her new role as Executive Secretary of Rwanda’s National Unity and Reconciliation Commission responsible for forging a peaceful society between genocide survivors and perpetrators, requested villagers throughout Rwanda to dramatize their experiences during the genocide and their visions of the future return of perpetrators to the community.

“Innovation is the key, and women walk around with it in their pockets.”

The step taken by the Northern Irish women from innovative community work to the formal policy arena is a giant leap. Recently though, as discussed in earlier panels, several policy pillars have been drafted that women may utilize as a foundation to cross into formal peacebuilding – UN Security Council Resolution 1325, a resolution by the European Parliament, another by the G8 and a gender plan within the OSCE. Policy proclamations are but a beginning; implementation, Hunt reiterated, is the key to advancing women in the peace process.

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD**

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Joseph Montville, Director of the Preventive Diplomacy Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, suggested it would be useful for women to focus their efforts and collective power on the male decisionmakers in terms of impacting congressional and presidential elections. For example, on the current public debate on the United States' war in Iraq, if women hold strong feelings on the issue, they should make their presence felt in Washington. "Hardball politics" should be part of women's toolkits, in addition to the many other skills and abilities discussed throughout the day.

Following on that comment, Haleh Esfandiari, Director of the Middle East Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, noted from her personal experience in the Middle East that legislation is often necessary for women to take part in the political process. Otherwise, the men or leadership in the countries simply do not accept women. Ambassador Hunt agreed and added that, after asking a UN official once why the negotiating teams in Africa were all men, he told her, "It's very simple. The African warlords refused to have women on their teams because they're afraid the women would compromise." According to Hunt, one effective approach at ensuring women are included in the peace table is when third parties – such as the United States or the United Nations – insist upon it.

# Women in Post-Conflict Situations: Building Capacity in the Peacebuilding Process

## CASE STUDY: AFGHANISTAN

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**HOMIRA NASSERY**, Communications Officer on the Health, Nutrition, and Population Team at the World Bank and an Afghan by birth, opened her presentation by noting that the severity of women's conditions in Afghanistan pre-dates September 11.

In recent years, approximately two million Afghans have died, three million are disabled and six million are displaced – these numbers make up ten percent of the total population. Currently in Afghanistan, there are few institutions and no revenue base. A drought is threatening the lives of another four million Afghans, while the country remains under a state of war.

Women, as has been discussed, have been most affected by Afghanistan's recent history. Although traditionally viewed as symbols of honor in Afghan culture, women have been used recently as political tools. Those most repressive to women have been seen as good Muslims, good leaders and good Afghans. Despite this repression, however, women have made contributions in the household and the community, and were critical to Afghanistan's economy through their work in animal husbandry, crop manufacturing, crop cultivation and food processing. Even now, women are less concerned with issues of the traditional *burqa* than with gaining access to safe water, shelter, education and health services, Nassery said.

Unfortunately, the international aid community in Afghanistan has contributed to the perceptions of Afghan women as victims. There have been numerous cases within the aid community in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran where Afghan women working for international agencies have not received the same right as men, nor the same training opportunities or access to equipment. More importantly, by defining women only as victims, the opportunities for women are closed off.

“In a way, this has robbed [women] of the opportunity to progress and advance on their own merits. By labeling them as victims and by trying to always protect them, we are really undermining their growth and potential.”



Despite rhetoric from the top with regard to ensuring women's participating in Afghan society, many organizations, including the World Bank, are failing to operationalize gender mainstreaming on the ground. More and more, Nassery notes, women must be recognized as not only victims, but also as resources. Current reconstruction programs for women have focused on sewing projects and handicrafts. Beyond this, women should be placed into productive activities and into the private sector.

Nassery suggested several areas to begin to harness the activity of women. First, Afghan women have maintained networks within the different ethnic groups and tribes in Afghanistan throughout the war. Second, Islam, when applied as intended, can be used as a strong mechanism to ensure Afghan women's participation in all facets of life. It is important that international agencies work within the system desired by the Afghan people. Third, women have a wealth of indigenous knowledge, particularly with regard to the health sector and local plants, roots and herbs used to treat basic illnesses. On that note, the international community must take care not to miss a strategic opportunity to learn from Afghan women of the many coping mechanisms they employed throughout the past few decades when working with very scarce resources. In any case, the international community must be very careful to work within traditions of Afghanistan, while promoting women's inclusion and active participation as full members of society.

## **CASE STUDY: RWANDA**

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**ELIZABETH POWLEY, Associate Director of the Policy Commission of Women Waging Peace**, presented the preliminary findings of her research on women's political participation in Rwanda. The case study in Rwanda is one in a set of case studies being conducted by the Policy Commission of Women Waging Peace to 1) confront the disparity between mandate and implementation, and 2) provide the international community with substantive in-depth studies on women's contributions. As background, Powley noted the importance of democratization to Rwanda and to Africa as a whole. Democratization encapsulates economic and political liberalization, good governance, the rule of law, free and fair elections, parliamentary oversight, an independent judiciary, solid democratic institutions and respect for human rights.

“Democratization is not only important in an abstract or philosophical sense, but also because democratization is linked to life-and-death issues of sustainable development, poverty reduction and the peaceful resolution of civil conflicts.”

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**—Elizabeth Powley**

In the Rwandan context in particular, the 1994 genocide was linked in part to the historic absence of democracy and inclusive governance. In addition to endemic poverty and resource disparity, observers also point to the manipulation of ethnic tensions by political elites and to state-sponsored violence as other reasons for the genocide. Thus, democratic governance and decentralization are vital to Rwanda’s hopes to move beyond the violence and prevent such cycles in the future.

Local elections were held in Rwanda in 2001, and national-level parliamentary and presidential elections are set for 2003. There has been considerable debate in the international community regarding the pace and effectiveness of Rwanda’s plan for decentralization and democratization, including concern regarding intentions and political will. In this panel and in her study, however, Powley chose to focus on how Rwanda has explicitly reached out to women and considered their inclusion and the inclusion of gender concerns a cornerstone of good governance and democratization.

Women suffered a profound impact from the genocide, not only psychologically, socially and economically, but even from a pure demographic perspective. The Rwandan government estimated that, immediately following the genocide, approximately 70 percent of its population was female. With the return of refugees in the intervening eight years, the current estimate is that women constitute 54 percent of Rwanda’s population.

In the largely rural economy, women comprise the majority of the adult working population, heading 35 percent of households and producing the bulk of the country’s agricultural output. In addition to productive work, women also take care of their own children and others orphaned during the genocide. Both the government and people of Rwanda have recognized publicly that women primarily were neither the masterminds nor the implementors of the genocide and have dealt with extraordinary burdens and made extraordinary contributions in the aftermath and reconstruction period. Government officials at all levels are quite comfortable discussing women’s contributions and the centrality of gender considerations to Rwanda’s future. President Kagame himself, during a speech to address the needs of rural women<sup>1</sup>, stated, “...women must be nothing less than equal partners...” In addition to addressing this through policy, a change in attitude must take place. “It should be the duty and obligation of government to provide leadership in this change of attitude.”<sup>2</sup>

Powley noted the importance of recognizing the commitment of the Rwandan government to women and to gender issues is an initiative of the Rwandans themselves and is not being driven by the international community. It is a purely domestically-driven agenda.

Rwanda has put into place three specific mechanisms to promote and include women's participation in politics and government. The political structure of government in the country is hierarchical, with a national assembly where 17 out of 74 parliamentarians are women, with a provincial level of government with one woman appointed head of province, a district level of government and a cell level. The lowest level, the cell, consists of approximately 200 families.

The first government mechanism designed to include women is a distinct post or position to deal specifically with gender issues in every level of government. Interestingly, there is no word in the local language for "gender" as is thought of in Western countries; two words are used instead – equality and complementarity. Furthermore, the gender posts are held by both men and women as resources are short, and the post is a civil service, paid government position. Those in the position coordinate trainings led by the Ministry of Gender, where again participants include both men and women.

The second innovative government mechanism for women's advancement in Rwanda's political structures is the formation of Women's Councils. These are grassroots structures elected at each administrative level to represent women's concerns in an electoral-college type system. For example, when a ten-member Women's Council is elected at the cell level, from that, a district Women's Council is elected and a provincial Women's Council, as well. Thus, ultimately, two women are elected to the Parliament from a constituency composed only of the women of the country. These two parliamentarians have as their sole responsibility the representation of women's concerns at the national level.

Finally, the third mechanism designed to promote women's participation in the political process is the "triple ballot" system. In March 2001, for the first time, Rwandans voted on three separate ballots – a general ballot, a youth ballot and a women's ballot. All men and all women voted for one candidate from each ballot, electing someone from each ballot to represent the whole constituency.

To conclude, Powley reiterated that these three mechanisms are designed with the sole purpose of bringing women into the political process. They are designed to mainstream gender concerns, and there has been some real success. In 1999, women in Rwanda, not politically visible before the genocide, won 13.7 percent of the seats in local elections. In 2001, in district elections after the institution of the Women's Councils and their training and awareness-raising activities, women won 26 percent of seats in the general elections, thereby doubling initial figures. Most

recently, in the election of *gacaca* judges, women won 35 percent of judge-ships at the cell level. Due primarily to the government's major efforts to recognize gender concerns at every level of the process, women in Rwanda have made significant advances and now hold prominent leadership positions in all levels of government in the country.

The panel moderator, **JOHANNA MENDELSON-FORMAN, Director of the Peace, Security and Human Rights Program of the United Nations Foundation**, added that, in her experience at USAID, the Women in Transition Program in Rwanda was implemented for precisely the reasons Elizabeth Powley discussed. Women and women's organizations truly managed not only their own lives, but those of extended families and others in their communities in the aftermath of the genocide.

### **CASE STUDY: EL SALVADOR**

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**EUGENIA PIZA-LOPEZ**, currently **Head of the Conflict Prevention Unit for United Nations Development Programme in Indonesia**, also presented a case study conducted as part of the overall research for the Policy Commission of Women Waging Peace. This particular study focused on the role of women in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process in El Salvador.

El Salvador was chosen as a case study, in part, due to the high percentage of female guerrillas in the armed opposition, the FMLN – 30 percent, according to Piza-Lopez. The United Nations-led DDR operation lasted four years – one for the disarmament and demobilization and three for the reinsertion and reintegration process. The ONUSAL DDR program is widely heralded as a success in that there was a significant reduction in the proliferation of arms, and the government military force was reduced from 65,000 troops to 30,000. It is this perception of success that also drew this research study to focus on El Salvador. Lastly, as there has been significant research already conducted on the general facets of the war and peace in El Salvador, this case was selected to draw out the gender considerations not previously focused upon.

Reiterating earlier comments, Piza-Lopez noted in the case of El Salvador, women's experiences affected both their public and private persona and cut across gender, class and ethnic identities. Women, as agents in the war as well as the peace, participated in the Salvadoran conflict which was supported by approximately five million of the six million residents of the country. The war was primarily a liberation movement composed of a coalition of left-oriented political parties; for many Salvadorans, the war was the way to peace.

Democratization and demilitarization were two key issues driving the liberation movement, according to Piza-Lopez. At the war's peak, there were 65,000 members of the government armed forces and 250,000 government-supported paramilitaries. The war was incredibly violent and left no one in the country unaffected. In Piza-Lopez's opinion, each citizen was both a victim and an agent.

It is important to note that for many Salvadorans, including those that have formed the post-war feminist movement, the war and the peace process was a success. A negotiated peace, signed in 1992, brought an end to the violence and a new climate for human rights and full participation of all citizens in each facet of society. In this context, the demobilization and reintegration of soldiers played a key role in the reconstruction of Salvadoran society.

The reconstruction laid out in the peace accord biased the security, political, judicial and human rights dimension to the detriment of the economic dimension of democratization. It is important to note in these discussions that women were present in the negotiating tables for the peace accord and for the subsequent "technical" DDR tables which designed the DDR programs and implementation approach. Three senior women commanders of the FMLN participated in the peace accord negotiations, but were very clear that they were representing an armed group, not other women.

"You know why I was listened to? Do you think I was listened to because I was a woman? No! I was listened to because I had 10,000 armed men behind me. The more men you have, the more power you have."

Furthermore, in the "technical" tables initiated to design the DDR programs, at one table, six women were present – three negotiation for the FMLN, three for the Salvadoran government – along with one man, the UN representative. Again, however, these women recognize openly that they negotiated as representatives of their respective parties, not as women.

To understand women's role in the DDR process, it is important first to understand more fully their role in the war. Women served both as combatants and as *colaboradoras*, performing functions as diverse as radio operations to weapons stockpile management to driver to coordination and consultation with communities. Women acquired new skills and a new-found independence that included greater sexual freedom. Despite these advances, the machismo of the FMLN continued to express a lack of complete acceptance of women in leadership roles and an unwillingness to make gender issues a priority.

According to the figures, approximately 30 percent of the demobilized FMLN combatants were women. The reintegration program encompassed a much larger swatch of the population of El Salvador, including the demobilized combatants, supporters in the communities, and internally-displaced persons and returning refugees from neighboring countries.

Piza-Lopez's study concentrated on women's contribution to DDR and to the reconstruction process, both at the micro-level in communities and at the national level. The demobilized women faced a variety of challenges. For instance, during the implementation of reinsertion programs, community leadership and the FMLN political party resumed discrimination against women. Based on these men's stereotypes of appropriate women's roles, women's access to training, to tools, and to credit was subjugated to their identities as wives and mothers. Interestingly, in some cases, women themselves decided to return home to the role of mother and wife, rather than taking advantage of DDR programs. After the many hardships, to be in a familiar role was preferred by some women former combatants.

According to Piza-Lopez, gender-sensitive DDR is not possible without gender-sensitive peace. Women's contributions to the peace were through reconstruction, not only in their communities in the public sphere, but in the private sphere, as well. As a result of their parties' post-war discriminatory practices and women's marginalization, women decided to create an autonomous feminist movement. This women's movement is now articulate and powerful, although it remains in the informal sphere of non-government organizations. Still, women's organizations have been quite effective in widening the agenda of democracy, bringing issues of women's rights, domestic violence, child abuse and homosexual rights into the public eye. In addition, women's organizations set up services for women unattended to by the official post-war reintegration process.

Piza-Lopez suggested approaching DDR as a more comprehensive process of reintegration, peacebuilding and democracy building. In this definition, the question of women's participation in the peace negotiations and reconstruction becomes even more paramount. Improvements in reconstruction programming and a more intense commitment by the political parties could lead, not to the marginalization of women in the post-war environment, but to women's empowerment.

“Gender-blind peace leads to gender-blind DDR.”

## CASE STUDY: LEBANON

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**ELIZABETH PICARD**, Director of Research at the Institut d'Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman, presented the case of women's roles in post-war Lebanon and their contributions to national reconciliation. Despite appearances of relative gender equality in Lebanon – women have access to education and to salaried employment and have long had the right to vote – the reality is that a vivid patriarchy continues to exist. Women's absence from the decision-making sphere is not consistent with their advancements in education and employment. A recent UNDP report showed that 50 percent of college graduates in Lebanon are women, but only 27 percent of the total labor force are women. Out of 128 parliamentary members, only three are women – and these are relatives or friends of the Prime Minister.

According to Picard, fifteen years of war did not change the position of women in Lebanese society. With some exceptions, women were confined to logistical and subordinate tasks, and a taboo on speaking of violence against women, particularly rape, continues to exist in Lebanese society.

During the war, the Lebanese state almost completely disappeared from the scene. Its responsibilities and tasks were subsumed by a rapidly growing number of sectarian and non-sectarian non-government organizations. Thus, a vibrant and outspoken civil society continues to exist in the country. According to a recent report, there are approximately 4,000 active non-government organizations in Lebanon. While women represent more than 55 percent of the total staff and volunteers of these organizations, generally there is no defined gender perspective. Women are a driving force in the social revival of the country, but are not expected to go beyond that.

Picard described one non-government organization where women did play a major role, and their contributions were to post-war reconciliation. "National reconciliation" became a catch phrase in post-war Lebanon to promote a peaceful order and to impose a governmental reconstruction plan at the expense of social priorities. Reconciliation was based on a 1991 amnesty law that granted pardon for political crimes and even general crimes, including kidnapping, torture or harassment.

"So the people in power – men in power – imposed amnesia on the war period. They forbid any notion of retribution for the war crimes. They denied compensation for the victims and the suffering of the society."

The women were especially active in an association of the families of kidnapped and disappeared. At the height of the war, more than 1,000

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**“So the people in power – men in power – imposed amnesia on the war period. They forbid any notion of retribution for the war crimes. They denied compensation for the victims and the suffering of the society.”**

**—Elizabeth Picard**

people disappeared in one year. That year, women whose husbands disappeared began to meet together, created a committee to gather information and worked to have the abducted returned. The committee was originally formed in Muslim Beirut, but eventually it reached to Christian Beirut, as well. The women demonstrated together on the separation line, the Green Line, as it was called during the war. There were practically no difficulties or tension between the Muslim and Christian women, despite their religious and class differences, according to Picard. For these women, feelings for their lost loved ones and families eclipsed any competition for power or sectors or divides.

The current figures from the Lebanese government estimates missing persons number approximately 18,000. On a practical level, this creates the usual legal difficulties for families, such as inheritance, remarriage, payment of pensions and salaries, etc. On an emotional level, it is impossible to enter the mourning period and to emerge from it. The committee of women has very precise demands. At the end of the war, they demanded an official inquiry by a parliamentary commission. They demanded compensation for the victims and asked the government to send a message to the perpetrators of human rights abuse.

The government completely avoided the question, refusing to examine the problem. So, the committee decided to mobilize a public campaign entitled “A Right to Know.” They held regular sit-ins every Wednesday in front of the Council of Ministers building. They received popular support in their demand that the anniversary date of the beginning of the war become a day of common mobilization against war dedicated to the collective memory and mourning for civilian victims. The committee of women took their cause to the international level, receiving support from Amnesty International and from the United Nations and networking with other organizations of mothers, wives and sisters of the disappeared.

Within a few months of the launch of the 2000 campaign, ten years after the war, the Prime Minister agreed to create a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the fate of the missing. However, the commission was headed by an army general and was hardly independent from political power. Its findings were weak and exempted the government from any responsibility. The women publicly remobilized, forcing the re-opening of the Commission of Inquiry in 2001. Once again, military and security branches of government lead the commission and have produced very little information.

Through the example of the Committee of the Disappeared, Picard presented one case of how women have appeared on the public sphere in



Lebanon. The definition of public space is no longer only masculine, while the domestic space is only feminine. An opening has been created for a new type of politics in Lebanon.

“[Solidarity] frees women’s initiative. It makes them equal partners in peacebuilding initiatives.”

Although the activities of the women’s committee are informal or may be defined as pre-political, according to Picard, they do represent a qualitative change in the understanding of the meaning of politics in Lebanon. They have addressed questions directly linked to public interests, have advanced inter-sectarian communication and are a legitimate civilian partner of the government.

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD**

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To elaborate on the joint efforts of Muslim and Christian women in Beirut, Elizabeth Picard responded that, in 1987, after trying for years to meet, women succeeded in joining together on the Green Line separating Christian and Muslim Beirut. This was near the end of the war, and the women were able to meet and demonstrate together. These joint activities allowed them to quickly unify efforts following the war, as well.

In response to points raised on women’s situation in Rwanda, Eugenia Piza-Lopez pointed out that there is often a false dichotomy in discourse and practice between basic needs and poverty issues as opposed to political power and empowerment concerns. She gave the example of El Salvador where a revolution ended in a negotiated peace, granting citizens additional resources to come out of extreme poverty and live a life free from abusive, powerful political regimes. When the issues of basic needs – health, education and income – are not coupled with substantive changes in political power, Piza-Lopez noted, the two are unsustainable and, furthermore, do not provide women with the essential element of autonomy. This includes individual autonomy – of sexual identity, of personal identity, of movement, of the state, of parties, of men. Responses to particular contexts must be more effective in weaving together issues of poverty reduction and alleviation with reconciliation and political participation.

In response to a request for elaboration on the importance of long-term reintegration planning, Piza-Lopez pointed out that some women she interviewed in El Salvador described the brief DDR process as “androcentric” by nature. The model for reintegration is conceptualized as disarming a male combatant to establish a degree of state security. According to Piza-Lopez, this definition is problematic. A human security approach to rein-

tegration would create a more inclusive process and would build greater security from the ground up, opening spaces for political participation. Programs should encompass not only those bearing arms, but also abducted women and children, in the case of Africa. Despite recognizing the great expense of comprehensive reintegration programs and the limited number of donors to fund them, Piza-Lopez continues to feel it is necessary to recognize the complexity of the various players in a conflict and consider reintegration more holistically. Johanna Mendelson-Forman, the moderator, added that the international community spends approximately \$800 million a year on DDR. Perhaps a more holistic conception of reintegration programs would lead to increased sustainability.

Responding to question regarding the degree of autonomy of Rwandan institutions, Powley reiterated the conclusions from her collected data. Powley feels that it is truly the Rwanda government driving the inclusive process and not the international community, for several reasons. First, the RPF which now dominates the government, encouraged women's participation in decision making roles during their struggle from 1990 to 1994 and before their ascendance to power. Secondly, Rwandans themselves claim the agenda, and representatives from international agencies in Rwanda concurred that they were not the ones bringing gender issues to the table – it is the Rwandans themselves.

## NOTES

1. The population of Rwanda is more than 90 percent rural.
2. Opening speech to the session: “*Rural Women: Crucial partners in the fight against hunger and poverty*” at the World Food Summit: five years later, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 10-13 June 2002, Rome, Italy.

## Conclusion to “More than Victims: The Role of Women in Conflict Prevention”

**C**ARLA KOPPELL, Consultant to Women Waging Peace and Hunt Alternatives, noted that the issue of women and peacebuilding, while in no way a new concept, is certainly new to the policy world of Washington, D.C. New resolutions, forums such as this, ongoing research and innovative advocacy tools have begun and continue to mainstream and advance the agenda of women and peacebuilding.

Koppell presented two outstanding challenges. The first concern is fostering integration and implementation of this agenda. A first step, according to Koppell, is to be sure that women’s names and faces are prominent. For example, in Ambassador Hunt’s experience as the U.S. representative in Austria, she was always sure to add women’s names to invitation lists. Sometimes it is as simple as that – ensuring that women interact with the power brokers.

A second concern raised in the day’s panels is how to mainstream this discussion. Gender units are often marginalized from the rest of the organizational units in the United Nations and at USAID, for example. Although this is beginning to change, as evidenced by the diverse group gathered today, there is much still to do. Anita Sharma said that the Woodrow Wilson Center hopes to continue their efforts at mainstreaming the important topic of women’s roles in peacebuilding.

As the presentations indicate, women’s experience of war and post-war recovery, especially in civil wars and internal conflicts is varied and complex. They represent the majority of the victims. But they are also the most active peacebuilders. Despite this, women continue to be ignored, marginalized and excluded from the international peace and security discourse.

“After fifty years, the Council recognized that international peace and security is advanced when women are included in decision-making...and peacebuilding,” noted Felicity Hill of UNIFEM. In spite of this watershed resolution, Hill and others highlighted the challenge that remains in terms of moving beyond rhetoric to implementation. “Words alone cannot ensure women a seat at the peace table,” said Donald Steinberg, Principal Deputy Director for Policy and Planning at the State Department. There is a significant discrepancy between the more traditional military-based security agenda and the emerging human security agenda. As a result the inclu-

sion of gender perspectives is still considered an “add-on” or a “soft issue” in the context of more traditional security and military concerns. But speakers emphasized that human trafficking issues and the spread of HIV/AIDS, both of which impact women most dramatically, are by no means “soft” issues. They drew attention to women’s qualitative contributions to peacemaking in Kashmir, Nigeria, and elsewhere.

Reflecting on the role and contributions of women to conflict prevention and resolution in various conflicts, participants explored the complex reality of women’s experiences in war and peacebuilding. The nexus between victimhood and agency, family caretaker and political activist, fighter and peacebuilder was addressed in depth by the speakers. Many noted the lack of options available to women during times of war. While they experience trauma and violence, they continue to have dependents who rely on them for survival, so women often have to carry on with their work. But speakers emphasized that it is not enough to be satisfied with the “crumbs of victimhood.” Moreover they noted the innovative strategies that women have used to initiate dialogue, build trust and communication across conflict lines, and promote peace in places like Kashmir, where the conflict is intractable.

Finally, speakers noted that the dilemma facing women is that conflicts often create windows of opportunity for their activism and agency. But these windows are often too small and shut too quickly, excluding women from the recovery process. Reflecting on women’s active participation in the El Salvador conflict, Eugenia Piza-Lopez spoke of the marginalization of women’s needs and concerns in the context of post conflict recovery. She drew attention to the opportunities lost from relegating women back to traditional roles, rather than harnessing the social capital of the thousands of women who had acquired skills during the war. In contrast, Elizabeth Powley examined the proactive role that the Rwandan government has taken in promoting women’s political participation and recognizing their vital contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. She highlighted the critical roles that women in government, parliament and civil society are playing to bring reconciliation to communities in Rwanda and to foster peace and conflict prevention.

The myth of women as passive victims of war must be dispelled. Women not only have a right to voice their concerns and opinions, but they can make a difference. The international resolutions and laws demanding the inclusion of women in peacemaking are in place. It is time to match the rhetoric with reality. Ultimately, argued the speakers, it is in the interest of all concerned with the prevention of conflict and the building of peace to better understand the needs and support the peace efforts of women.

**MORE THAN VICTIMS: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN  
CONFLICT PREVENTION**

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*September 12, 2002*

**8:45 – 9:00 A.M.                    REGISTRATION AND CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

**9:00 – 9:15 A.M.                    WELCOME**

**Lee Hamilton**, Director, Woodrow Wilson  
International Center for Scholars

**Hattie Babbitt**, Senior Vice President, Hunt  
Alternatives

**Jane Holl Lute**, Executive Vice President,  
United Nations Foundation and Consulting  
Director, Conflict Prevention Project, Woodrow  
Wilson International Center for Scholars

**9:15 – 10:45 A.M.                    SESSION ONE**  
**Setting the Stage: Revisiting Women, Peace  
and Security Issues**

*Where We Are: UN Security Council Resolution  
1325*

**Carolyn Hannan**, Director, Division for the  
Advancement of Women

*The Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and the  
Role of Women in Peacebuilding*

**Felicity Hill**, Peace and Security Adviser,  
United Nations Development Fund for Women  
(UNIFEM)

*Promoting Women's Political and Economic Participation: A U.S. Foreign Policy Perspective*  
**Donald Steinberg**, Principal Deputy Director, Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of State

Moderator: **Sanam Anderlini**, Director, Policy Commission, Women Waging Peace

**10:45 – 11:00 P.M.**

**COFFEE BREAK**

**11:00 – 12:30 P.M.**

**SESSION TWO**

**Women During Wartime: Organizing for Peace**

*Kashmir*

**Sumona DasGupta**, Senior Program Officer, Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP); Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

*Nigeria*

**Yomi Oruwari**, Professor of Architecture, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Moderator: **Haleh Esfandiari**, Consulting Director, Middle East Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

**12:30 – 1:30 P.M.**

**WORKING LUNCH AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

*Peacemakers, Peacekeepers and Peacebuilders: The Importance of Women in Conflict Prevention*

**Swanee Hunt**, Director, Women and Public Policy Program, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Director, Hunt Alternatives

**1:30 – 3:00 P.M.**

**SESSION THREE**

**Women in Post-Conflict Situations:  
Building Capacity for Peacebuilding**

*Afghanistan*

**Homira G. Nassery**, Health Specialist, The World Bank

*Rwanda*

**Elizabeth Powley**, Associate Director, Policy Commission, Women Waging Peace

*El Salvador*

**Eugenia Piza-Lopez**, Head of Policy, International Alert and Lead Researcher, El Salvador Case Study, Policy Commission, Women Waging Peace

*Lebanon*

**Elizabeth Picard**, Institut d'Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman

Moderator: **Johanna Mendelson-Forman**, Director, Peace, Security, and Human Rights Program, United Nations Foundation

**3:00 – 3:10 P.M.**

**COFFEE BREAK**

**3:10 – 3:30 P.M.**

**WRAP UP**

**Carla Koppell**, Consultant, Woman Waging Peace and Hunt Alternatives

**Anita Sharma**, Deputy Director, Conflict Prevention Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

## APPENDIX II

# Biographies of Presenters and Moderators

### **SANAM ANDERLINI**

Sanam Anderlini joined Women Waging Peace as the Director of the newly formed Policy Commission in 2002. Prior to Waging she was the Senior Policy Advisor at International Alert on the global campaign Women Building Peace, advocating for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. She has written numerous pieces on the role of women in peace processes including *Women at the Peace Table: Making a Difference* for UNIFEM in 2000, *Women's Leadership, Gender, and Peace* for the Ford Foundation in 2001, and a plan of action for mainstreaming gender in post conflict reconstruction for UNDP in 2001. She has also been an expert contributor to the Secretary General's report on women, peace and security. Prior to her work on women and peacebuilding, she was the managing editor at the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, a conflict early warning network. In 1996, she co-authored *Civil Wars, Civil Peace: An Introduction to Conflict Resolution*. Sanam Anderlini holds an M.Phil. in Social Anthropology from Cambridge University. She was born in Iran and currently lives in Washington, D.C.

### **HARRIET C. BABBITT**

Harriet (Hattie) Babbitt, Senior Vice President of Hunt Alternatives, directs the Washington, D.C. office of Women Waging Peace and the broader Hunt Alternatives. She joined the foundation early in 2002. Ambassador Babbitt previously served as Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). As the second most senior official overseeing the U.S. foreign assistance program, she oversaw a vast array of programs in the democratization, women's empowerment, economic growth, education, health, environmental and agriculture fields. Among her responsibilities was oversight of USAID efforts to assist post-conflict reconstruction in the Balkans.

Prior to joining USAID, Ms. Babbitt served from 1993 to 1997 as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States. While in that role she led the U.S. negotiating team to completion of the world's first anti-cor-



ruption convention and helped strengthen the Inter-American Human Rights Commission.

Ambassador Babbitt has served as a Senior Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and was Executive Director of AIDS Action, a national AIDS advocacy organization. She also spent almost 20 years as a practicing attorney. Ambassador Babbitt has and continues to serve on numerous Boards of Directors including the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the American Bar Association Central Europe and Eurasia Legal Institute, the Council for a Community of Democracies, the Inter-American Foundation and the Baltic-American Partnership Fund. She is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Ambassador Babbitt is married and has two children.

### **SUMONA DASGUPTA**

Sumona DasGupta is the Senior Program Officer at WISCOMP (Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace), an initiative of HH the Dalai Lama. WISCOMP works to provide a unique interface between academics and practitioners in the NGO sector and to promote participation and leadership of women in matters related to peace and conflict.

She received her Doctorate in Political Science from the University of Hyderabad. Mrs. DasGupta has lectured in the Department of Political Science at Loreto College in Calcutta and in the Department of Civics at St. Thomas College in Hyderabad. She has also spent six years researching during her M.Phil. and Ph.D. at the University of Hyderabad.

Her recent publications include two joint papers with Meenakshi Gopinath, “Gender and Conflict Resolution in South Asia” presented in December 2001 at the international workshop on *Alternative Paradigms of Conflict Resolution in Karachi, Pakistan* and “From Conflict to Transformation: The Road Less Traveled” presented at the July 2001 international conference on *States Sovereignty in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, in New Delhi, India. In addition, she has published the 2001 WISCOMP report entitled “Breaking the Silence: Women and Kashmir.”

### **HALEH ESFANDIARI**

Haleh Esfandiari is the Consulting Director of the Middle East Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. She worked as a journalist in Iran, and was active in the Iranian women’s movement and taught at the College of Mass Communication in Tehran. Dr. Esfandiari is the author of *Reconstructed Lives: Women and Iran’s Islamic Revolution*, and

editor of *Iranian Women: Past, Present and Future*. Among her other writings are chapters in the books, *In the Eye of the Storm: Women in Post Revolutionary Iran* (1992) and *Iran at the Crossroads* (2001).

### **LEE HAMILTON**

Lee Hamilton is the Director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Director of the Center for Congress at Indiana University. He served as a member of the U.S. Congress, for the Ninth District in Indiana from 1965 to 1999. During that time he held numerous congressional positions including Chairman of the Committee on International Relations, the Joint Economic Committee and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Mr. Hamilton was recently appointed to the President's Homeland Security Advisory Council. He received his B.A. from DePauw University and a J.D. from Indiana University.

### **CAROLYN HANNAN**

Carolyn Hannan is Director of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. She was formerly the Senior Policy Advisor on Gender Equality in the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (1992-1998) and the Chair of the OECD/DAC Working Party on Gender Equality (1995-1997). During the 1990s, Ms. Hannan was also part of a national gender mainstreaming advisory group in Sweden. More recently, Ms. Hannan worked for two years as the Principal Officer for Gender Mainstreaming in the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues at the United Nations in New York.

Ms. Hannan has also lived and worked for more than ten years in Africa, and within the context of her work with Swedish development cooperation, has worked on gender and development in many countries in Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. She has a Ph.D. in Social and Economic Geography from the University of Lund in Sweden and has the title of Associate Professor.

Ms. Hannan's work experience covers advocacy and policy development for gender equality as well as methodology and competence development for gender mainstreaming and she has published widely in these areas. Her work has covered gender perspectives in many areas, including water supply and sanitation, health, population, statistics, human settlements, natural resource management, governance and poverty eradication.

## **FELICITY HILL**

Before joining UNIFEM, Felicity Hill worked for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, in Geneva from 1996 – 1997 monitoring the Conference on Disarmament, and then in New York from 1998 - 2001 as the Director of WILPF's United Nations Office. She coordinated the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, a coalition of NGOs that worked towards Security Council resolution 1325, and served on the Steering Committees of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council and the Global Action to Prevent War initiative. Ms. Hill's activism started in Australia where she worked on campaigns to raise awareness about violence against women, the privatization of tertiary education, uranium mining and the arms trade.

## **JANE HOLL LUTE**

Jane Lute currently directs the program on Peace, Security, and Human Rights at the United Nations Foundation and is senior advisor to the Program on the Role of American Military Power at the Association of the United States Army. Prior to assuming these positions, Ms. Lute was the executive director of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. Before joining Carnegie, she was the director for European Affairs on the National Security Council Staff at the White House, serving under both President Bush and President Clinton. A career Army officer, she served in the Persian Gulf during Desert Storm, at the United States Military Academy at West Point, in Berlin, and held command. Ms. Lute retired from the Army in 1994. She holds a Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University and a J. D. from Georgetown University Law Center.

## **SWANEE HUNT**

Swanee Hunt is the Director of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where she also teaches. Prior to that appointment in 1997, she did work in American domestic policy, followed by four years as the American Ambassador to Austria, where she led a dialogue about the emerging security structure of a new, united Europe. Upon her departure from Vienna as the longest serving U.S. ambassador in decades, she received unprecedented decorations from three governmental bodies.

At the Kennedy School, Hunt leads the Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP), which emphasizes women's role within the public policy process as citizen initiators of the policy agenda, as policy-makers in the process, and as clients affected by the outcome. This academic year, her

work is also focused on the commercial sexual exploitation of women, producing a worldwide database on legislation against trafficking in women and children; women working in the “informal sector” of the economies of the developing world; the interaction of gender and information technology; and the impact of the gender gap in electoral politics worldwide.

Swanee Hunt has contributed scores of articles for American and international newspapers and professional journals including the *International Herald Tribune*, *Boston Globe*, *Dallas Morning News*, and *Rocky Mountain News*, and she is a contributing editor to *The American Benefactor*. A photographer, she has had more than a dozen one-woman shows in five countries; her “Sarajevo Soccer Field” is in the permanent collection of the Brooklyn Museum. Her musical composition, “The Witness Cantata,” has been performed in Vienna, Salzburg, and Washington, D.C., among other cities.

Ambassador Hunt holds a B. A. in philosophy, two Masters degrees (in psychology and religion), and a Ph.D. in theology.

#### **CARLA KOPPELL**

Carla Koppell currently serves as a consultant to Hunt Alternatives and Women Waging Peace. She assists the foundation with strategic planning and outreach within the Washington, D.C. policy community. Ms. Koppell also works with the Wilson Center’s Conflict Prevention Project, helping facilitate a working group to analyze non-traditional threats to national security.

Previously Carla Koppell served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs at the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development where she oversaw a portfolio of cooperative programs that included efforts to assist humanitarian aid and reconstruction in Central America, and post-conflict reconstruction in South Africa. Ms. Koppell was also Special Assistant to the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development and Director of the USAID climate change program. She has worked for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the European Union.

#### **JOHANNA MENDELSON-FORMAN**

Johanna Mendelson-Forman is the Co-Director of the Post Conflict Reconstruction Project, a joint program with the Center for International and Strategic Studies and the Role of American Military Power, Association of the United States Army. She formerly served as the Senior

Advisor for the Assistant Administrator at the Bureau for Humanitarian Response, United States Agency for International Development and the Social Scientist and Attorney in the Post Conflict Unit at the World Bank.

Ms. Mendelson is also currently teaching as an Adjunct Professor at the Center for Peace and National Security Studies at Georgetown University and is a Scholar-in-Residence at the American University's Inter-American Defense College. She received her B.A. with Honors in Latin American Studies and History from Queens College in New York, her M.A. and Doctorate in Latin American history from the University of St. Louis, Missouri and her J.D. from the College of Law at American University.

### **HOMIRA NASSERY**

Originally from Kabul, Afghanistan, Homira Nassery has a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Biology, and a Master's in International Health and Development. She is the recipient of the 1993 Myra E. Barrer Journalism Award for her report on the situation of Afghan women and children in the refugee camps in Pakistan. Following 15 years of clinical work, she joined the World Bank in 1993 to work on health and gender issues in post-conflict situations. In addition to her on-going operational work in Africa and Asia, she currently runs the Health and Population Advisory Service, writes HNPFLASH, and advises on gender issues. She was a member of the Joint Donor Preliminary Needs Assessment for Afghanistan in December, 2001, led by the World Bank, as well as subsequent missions to Afghanistan since then. Most recently, she obtained funding from the Development Marketplace to conduct a multi-country study on drug donations in post-emergency situations, which is to be published shortly.

### **YOMI ORUWARI**

Yomi Oruwari is presently a Professor of Architecture at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST), Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Architects. She graduated from: Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria in 1971 with a B. Arch (Hons) in Architecture; The University of Minnesota, in 1978 with an M. Arch (Urban Design) Degree; Institute for Housing Studies (IHS), Rotterdam, Holland in 1986 with a Ph.D. in Housing; and University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria in 1994 with a Ph.D. in Geography. She worked as an architect in both the private sector and the public service for ten years and from 1981 to present, she has been a lecturer and researcher at RSUST.

To date she has edited: three books; 18 chapters in research books; 18 articles in refereed journals and conference-refereed proceedings and four technical reports emanating from sponsored studies both locally and from international agencies. She was recently a distinguished scholar at the Rutgers State University, New Jersey. She has also acted as consultant for Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Her areas of professional competence include: Gender and Development; Architectural Education; and Urban Studies.

She will be speaking about her work: “Gender, Ethnicity and Violence and Their Effects on Livelihoods in the Niger Delta Region, Nigeria: The Case of Dere (Ogoni) and Bolo (Okrika) in Rivers State.”

### **ELIZABETH PICARD**

Elizabeth Picard is the Director of Research at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Aix-en-Provence, France. She has previously served as a Research Fellow at the Center of International Studies, Princeton University and the Director of the Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain in Beirut & Amman. Ms. Picard has taught as the Maître de conférence at the Institut d’Etudes Politiques, Paris & Département de Science Politique, Université Paris I Sorbonne and as a Professor of the Graduate school at the Institut d’Etudes Politiques in Aix-en-Provence, France.

She is the author of several books including *Lebanon, a Shattered Country* and *La question de l’eau au Moyen-Orient*. She has also authored numerous articles such as “Les Kurdes et l’autodétermination. Une problématique légitime à l’épreuve des dynamiques sociales” in the *Revue Française de Science Politique* and “Relations between Iraq and its Turkish Neighbours: From Ideological to Geostrategic Constraints” in *Iraq, Power and Society*. Ms. Picard holds a Doctorate in Political Science from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques in Paris and a B.A. in Arabic Language from the Université Saint Joseph in Beyrouth. Her current research is in political violence in Eastern Mediterranean societies and questions of legitimacy and sovereignty in the Arab East.

### **EUGENIA PIZA-LOPEZ**

Eugenia Piza-Lopez was the Global Issues Director at International Alert managing a program on peace and security, development and peacebuilding and women and peacebuilding. Her department focuses on policy research aimed at enhancing the international community commitment to conflict prevention. Previous to her position, she was the coordinator for

Oxfam UK program on the UN Conferences and before that the Head of Oxfam's Gender and Development Unit. Ms. Piza-Lopez has written extensively on women in armed conflict since 1986. Over the last years, her own work has focused on gender and early warning, gender and peacekeeping and broader policy analysis on small control, privatization of security and security sector reform. Ms. Piza-Lopez has worked in South East Asia, Central America and Southern Africa.

Eugenia holds a M.Phil. in Mass Communication Research from the University of Leicester, an Honors degree in Sociology from the University of Costa Rica and an Honors degree in History of Art from the Royal School Art, University of London. Ms. Piza-Lopez belongs to several boards including the International Action Network on Small Arms, International Action to Prevent War, Peace Workers International, Human Rights Watch Arms Program and the World Bank external Gender consultative Group. In October 2002, Ms. Piza-Lopez moved to Indonesia as the Senior Program Officer for Conflict Prevention with UNDP. Eugenia was born in Mexico.

### **ELIZABETH POWLEY**

Elizabeth Powley has been with Women Waging Peace for two years, serving first as Policy Program Officer and now as Associate Director of the Policy Commission. She is the lead researcher and author of the Policy Commission's forthcoming case study on women's political participation in post-genocide Rwanda.

Her areas of interest and expertise include the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, specifically the Great Lakes region. While with Waging, she has worked with women peacebuilders in Nigeria, South Africa, and Rwanda, organized the transitional justice specialty track for the most recent colloquium, and worked to develop the initiative's advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C. and New York. An experienced trainer and educator, she worked previously for the Fulbright Teacher Exchange program, designing and conducting cross-cultural communication training programs for students and teachers from more than thirty countries. She earned her M.A. in international conflict resolution from American University.

### **ANITA SHARMA**

Anita Sharma is the Deputy Director of the Conflict Prevention Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center. She has previously worked as a Senior Research Analyst for Foreign Policy, Gore Lieberman 2000; a Research Associate at the Role of American Military Power with the Association of

the U.S. Army and a Program Associate and Research Coordinator with the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict.

She is a member of Women in International Security, Women in Foreign Policy, the Alliance for American Leadership, and the Council for Emerging National Security Affairs (CENSA). She received a M.A. in International Affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University and a B.A. with Honors in Geography and International Relations from Syracuse University.

## **DONALD STEINBERG**

Ambassador Donald K. Steinberg is Principal Deputy Director of Policy Planning for the Department of State. In this role, Ambassador Steinberg helps formulate and coordinate long-term policies to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives, participates in policy planning talks with foreign governments, and assists with speech writing for the Secretary of State. Since September 2001, he has focused on building and maintaining the international coalition in the fight against global terrorism and on the security, political, and reconstruction needs for a post-Taliban Afghanistan.

Ambassador Steinberg previously served as the Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for Global Humanitarian Demining (1998-2001), Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration (2000-01), Special Coordinator for Haiti (1999-2001), Ambassador to the Republic of Angola (1995-98), Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council (1994-95), and Deputy White House Press Secretary (1993-94).

A career senior Foreign Service officer with the rank of Minister-Counselor, Ambassador Steinberg has had diplomatic postings in South Africa, Brazil, Central African Republic, Malaysia, and Mauritius. In 1989-90, he was senior policy advisor for foreign affairs and defense to then-House Majority Leader Richard A. Gephardt under a State Department fellowship program. He was also the first director of the House of Representatives Task Force on Trade and Competitiveness in 1989, and acting Chief Textile Negotiator at the Office of the Trade Representative in 1988-89. He was a congressional fellow with the American Political Science Association in 1986-87.

Ambassador Steinberg received his B.A. degree in economics from Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and M.A. degrees in political economy from the University of Toronto and journalism from Columbia University.



**MORE THAN VICTIMS: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN  
CONFLICT PREVENTION**

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*Thursday, September 12, 2002*

**Raoul Alcala**, Hunt Alternatives  
**Abdulmalik Al-Hajjri**, Embassy of The Republic of Yemen  
**Samah Alrayyes**, Islamic Institute  
**Hilary Anderson**, Pan-American Health Organization  
**Farida Azizi**, Vital Voices Global Partnership  
**Erin Bair**, US Institute of Peace  
**Judy Barsalou**, US Institute of Peace  
**Deanna Bearden**, American University  
**Marta Beltran Martinez**, Organization of American States  
**Virginia Bouvier**, Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas  
**Matthew Bowles**, Peace and Justice Studies Association  
**Brenda Bradbury**, International Crisis Group  
**Michelle Brown**, Refugees International  
**Joan Caivano**, Inter-American Dialogue  
**Dawn Calabria**, United Nations Information Centre  
**Michele Chargois**, SGI-USA  
**Carol Cohn**, Wellesley College  
**Jennifer Droseller**, Vital Voices Global Partnership  
**Clarissa Duvigenan**, German Embassy  
**Anne Edgerton**, Refugees International  
**Rachel Edmonds**, Woodrow Wilson Center  
**Herman L. Edwards II**, Global Investments and Traders, LLC  
**Patricia Ellis**, Women's Foreign Policy Group  
**Sherri Goodman**, CNA Corporation  
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**Anne Henderson**, United States Institute of Peace  
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**Miki Jacevic**, Women Waging Peace  
**Jennifer Kaczor**, Woodrow Wilson Center  
**Lorelei Kelly**, Stimson Center  
**Mykhailo Kirsenko**, Woodrow Wilson Center  
**Stanley Kober**, CATO Institute

**Carla Koppell**, Women Waging Peace  
**Elizabeth Latham**, Center for Strategic and International Studies  
**Renee Latour**, Woodrow Wilson Center  
**Jennifer Leonard**, International Crisis Group  
**Karen Li**, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
**George Liston Seay**, Woodrow Wilson Center  
**Laura Liswood**, Kennedy School of Government  
**Carmen Lomellin**, Organization of American States  
**Denise Marsh**, Department of State  
**Erin McAlister**, World Resources Institute  
**Steve McDonald**, Atlantic Council of the United States  
**Laura McGrew**, Consultant  
**Homeyra Mokhtarzada**  
**Joseph Montville**, Center for Strategic and International Studies  
**Gillian Morejon**, Inter-American Dialogue  
**Mary Mullen**  
**Susan Myers**, Better World Campaign  
**Homira Nassery**, World Bank  
**Alyse Nelson**, Vital Voices Global Partnership  
**Deepa Ollapally**, United States Institute of Peace  
**Catherine O'Neill**, United Nations Information Centre  
**Rosemary D. O'Neill**, Department of State  
**Jennifer Orbitz**, Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service  
**Camille Pampell**, Women Waging Peace  
**David Pollock**, Department of State  
**Nicole Renner**, Department of State  
**Andrew Robarts**, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
**Joan Rohlfing**, Nuclear Threat Initiative  
**Pilar Rueda**, Colectivo Maria Maria  
**Diana Sitt**, Department of State  
**Michael Stanisich**, Refugees International  
**Channa Threat**, George Mason University  
**Noy Thrupkaew**, Independent Journalist  
**Francesco Tornieri**, World Bank  
**Spica Tutuhaturunewa**, Embassy of Indonesia  
**John Tyler**, Woodrow Wilson Center  
**Molly Wallace**, Institute for International Mediation and Conflict Resolution  
**Shelly Weinstein**, NETO/EDSAT Americas  
**Anita Wright**, Woodrow Wilson Center  
**Trina Zwicker**, USA for UNHCR

We would also like to welcome the delegation of Russian women sponsored by Women in International Politics at American University.

## Bringing Women to the Table: Identifying Strategies for Enhancing the Role of Women in Peace Processes Around the World

*November 13, 2002*

Guest speakers were: **FARIDA AZIZI**, Senior Advisor for the Afghan Women's Program with the Vital Voices Global Partnership; **RITA MANCHANDA**, Senior Program Executive for the South Asian Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR); **SABINE SABIMBONA**, Member of Parliament; Burundi; **THANDI MODISE**, Chair of the Portfolio Committee on Defense and the Joint Standing Committee on Defense, Parliament of South Africa

**T**his roundtable was co-sponsored by the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues at the U.S. State Department, the Middle East and Conflict Prevention Projects of the Woodrow Wilson Center and Women Waging Peace. **ANITA SHARMA**, the Deputy Director of the Conflict Prevention Project, gave opening remarks and called the forum part of a "continuing discussion of women in conflict prevention," that followed the September conference at the Woodrow Wilson Center entitled: "More than Victims: The Role of Women in Conflict Prevention." **CARLA KOPPELL**, of Women Waging Peace, moderated the meeting, which focused on lessons learned by women during conflict, peace processes and democratization.

**HATTIE BABBITT**, Senior Vice President, Hunt Alternatives, **HALEH ESFANDIARI**, Consulting Director, Middle East Project and **CHARLOTTE PONTICELLI**, Deputy Director, Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues at the U.S. State Department gave introductory remarks to facilitate the roundtable nature of the event. Ms. Babbitt expressed a "deep understanding that women have a right to be involved in the formal and informal peace processes" and "underscore[d] the foolishness of leaving women out of the process." In her remarks Ms. Esfandiari focused on the importance of understanding gender issues and stated that she "could not have a Middle East program without devoting a lot of time to gender issues in the Middle East." Ms. Ponticelli spoke of the stand-alone status of the State Department's International Women's Issues

office. Recently other offices have been incorporated into one of the U.S. State Department's bureaus but the International Women's Office has remained independent since its establishment in 1994. To Ms. Ponticelli, this demonstrates the commitment of the Administration to women's issues.

Having just participated in the Women Waging Peace Colloquium at Harvard University (for more information see <http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/whatwedo/colloquium/>) the speakers were ripe to identify concrete strategies to enhance the role of women in peace processes. The featured speakers were women from the front lines of peace processes in India, Afghanistan, Burundi and South Africa. Ms. Koppell asked the women to speak on different aspects relating to their backgrounds to ensure that all gained the benefit of their experiences.

**RITA MANCHANDA**, Senior Program Executive for the South Asian Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) in India, encouraged academics to engage in rigorous research to prove the positive effects of women in conflict situations. Again and again, in her experience, women have shown their leadership capacity on the front lines and in peace processes only to have their efforts "marginalized" when the processes are formalized. Manchanda suggested economic incentives as a way for women to be allowed to extend their informal participation into authority while also emphasizing the need for a larger economic plan that does not box women into micro credit loans. The international community, according to Manchanda, could increase the stability of the peace processes by encouraging the incorporation of multiple stakeholders (i.e. women) in the formalized process.

**SABINE SABIMBONA**, a Member of Parliament in Burundi, spoke of the problem of representation. In Burundi, during the conflict in 1993, women were the first to organize peace marches and conferences for peace. The women of Burundi face a great challenge in gaining meaningful representation because their ethnicity is determined through their husband (whether they are Hutu or Tutsis). In times of ethnic conflict women became vulnerable to violence due to their ambiguous ethnic identities. Sabimbona insisted that we "cannot solve the situation unless we take it into account" and realize the magnitude of under representation in Burundi. Sabimbona spoke of creating associations and learning exchanges to encourage participation in political parties and lobbying efforts.

**THANDI MOSES**, Chair of the Portfolio Committee on Defense and the Joint Standing Committee on Defense in the Parliament of South Africa recounted that although women have been members of the African

National Committee (ANC) since the 1940s and 1950s, there was a debate whether women should have special representative status during the first ANC conference. The ANC did not want to convey a special status upon its women members. The women left the conference, in protest, and reminded the ANC that *women* were the majority in South Africa. In less than two weeks the ANC had changed its mind and granted women special status, requiring that one-third of its Parliament be women. Though their representation is ensured, recruiting women to fill these positions and retaining a focus on women's issues is a challenge. Moses spoke of the lobbying effort in South Africa to change the definition of security in order to increase the positive elements of peace. Only once the positive elements of peace are in place, such as low (or no) poverty and healthy children, will South Africa truly be at peace. To Moses, the gains in South Africa should be transferred to other countries in an effort to tie together peace and democracy.

**FARIDA AZIZI**, the Senior Advisor for the Afghan Women's Program with the Vital Voices Global Partnership stressed that all Afghans, especially women, are suffering from insecurity. Women have the ability to enhance Afghanistan's security but they lack the resources and require capacity development to learn new techniques and new technology. Azizi recommended increasing literacy and equalizing the balance between men and women in the existing governmental structures.

During the discussion **DONALD STEINBERG**, Deputy Director, Office of Policy and Planning U.S. Department of State asked, "How many more peace processes have to blow up before we ask the women?" His question was rooted in his experience recovering land mines. In the recovery process they quickly learned to consult not military maps but local women to discover mines. While maps supplied by the military were often less than adequate, the women who had to travel the treacherous minefield knew the location of the mines.

In conclusion meeting participants agreed that greater networking and information was needed. Furthermore, future meetings will continue the dialogue on women, conflict and peacebuilding.

**ANITA SHARMA**

Deputy Director, Conflict Prevention Project  
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**EMILY MCLEOD**

Intern, Conflict Prevention Project

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